2015 TFER - Requirement for Food Handler Certifications

It is estimated that 48 million cases of foodborne illness occur each year in the United States, resulting in approximately 128,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 deaths. Over half of all foodborne disease outbreaks reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are associated with eating in restaurants or delicatessens.

Education plays a major role in the prevention of foodborne illnesses. Due to these facts, new Texas Food Establishment Rules (TFER) have been accepted and went into effect Oct. 11, 2015. One major change that will impact the food service industry will be the addition of the rule that except in a temporary food establishment and in the case of the certified food manager, all food employees will be required to successfully complete an accredited food handler training course within 60 days of employment. This new rule will go into effect as of Sept. 1, 2016, but compliance prior to that date is strongly encouraged by the state and local health authorities.

For more information on the Texas Food Handlers Certification course, contact the AgriLife Extension office in your county or go to http://foodsafety.tamu.edu. The course is available both face to face (English and Spanish) as well as online (English, Spanish, and Chinese/Mandarin).

To access the new rules and supporting documentation, go to the “Laws and Rules” tab at the Texas Department of State Health Services Food Establishment Group website, http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/foodestablishments/default.aspx.


2015 TFER - First Aid Kits

The passing of the 2015 version of the TFER has brought many changes. One of the requirements is for a fixed retail food establishment to provide a first aid kit for food employees. First aid supplies that are in a food establishment for food employees’ use shall be labeled as required and stored in a kit or container that is located to prevent contamination of food, equipment, utensils, linens, and single-service/use articles. The TFER did not explain what needs to be included in the first aid kit but did refer to Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and American National Standards Institute (ANSI); it is recommended to follow the ANSI minimum requirements for a Class A kit.

Class A - 2015 ANSI requirement for supplies includes: 16 - 1"x3" adhesive bandages, 1 - 2.5 yd. adhesive tape, 10 - .14 fl. oz. antibiotic treatment, 10 - .14 fl. oz. antiseptic, 1 - breathing barrier, 1 - 4"x4" burn dressing, 10 - 1/32 oz. burn treatment, 1 - 4"x5" cold pack, 2 - eye coverings, 1 - 1oz. eye wash, 1 - first aid guide, 6 - hand sanitizer, 4 - medical exam gloves, 1 - 2"x4" yd. roller bandage, 1 - scissors, 2 - 3"x3" sterile pads, 2 - 5"x9" trauma pads, and 1 - 40"x40"x56" triangular bandages.

For more information and supporting documentation, go to the Texas Department of State Health Services Food Establishment Group website: http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/foodestablishments/guidance.aspx and click on “Guidance Documents” and then “First Aid Kits”.

Source: http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/foodestablishments/guidance.aspx Article By: Julie Prouse
TFER 2015– Mobile Food Units (MFU)

There is a growing trend of Mobile Food Units (MFU). By definition a MFU is a vehicle mounted, self or otherwise propelled, self contained food service operation, and designed to be readily moveable at all times. It can include catering trucks, trailers, push carts, and roadside vendors. It does not mean a stand or booth. The TFER has some newly added or changed requirements for Mobile Food Units. Some of the changes are:

- Mobile Food Units are required to demonstrate they are readily moveable at license renewal,
- During initial permitting they must provide documentation of a Certified Food Manager (CFM), an approved central preparation facility, if needed, a copy of the last central preparation facility inspection report, a servicing area authorization, and a menu.
- MFU’s must have sufficient equipment for cooling, heating, and hot/cold holding capacities to provide food temperatures.
- Mobile food establishment’s outlet tanks must now be labeled as “Waste Water”.
- Toilet rooms (restrooms) must be conveniently located and accessible to employees during all hours of operation.

A requirement was removed for a signed letter of authorization to “may” require, to allow the regulatory authority the ability to require the signed letter of authorization.

Source: TFER

Article By: Julie Prouse

TFER 2015– Inspection Report

As mentioned there were numerous changes to the TFER but also to the inspection report. The previous inspection report had 27 violations that ranged from 3-5 points but the new inspection report has 47 violations that range from 1-3 points. So there are more violations you can be deducted for but the points are lower.

I am only highlighting a couple of points in the inspection report since there are so many, a major definition change and defining the groups the different point violations are under. First off, Potentially hazardous foods (PHF) are now called Time/Temperature Control for Safety foods (TCS), remember these are foods that require time/temperature control for safety to limit germ growth or toxin formation. These include animal food that is raw or heat-treated, plant food that is heat-treated or consists of raw seed sprouts, cut melons, cut leafy greens, cut tomatoes or mixture of cut tomatoes (that are not modified in a way to prevent germ growth), or garlic-in-oil mixtures (not modified in a way to prevent germ growth).

**Core item** - includes an item (violation) related to general sanitation, operational controls, sanitation operating procedures (SSOPs), facilities or structures, equipment design, or general maintenance - assigned 1 point on the inspection report and subjects under this area are: prevention of food contamination, proper use of utensils, food identification, and physical facilities. Violations under this section require corrective action not to exceed 90 days or next inspection, whichever comes first.

**Priority Foundation item** - includes an item that requires the purposeful incorporation of specific actions, equipment or procedures by industry management to attain control of risk factors that contribute to foodborne illness or injury - assigned 2 points on the inspection report and subjects under this area are: demonstration of knowledge/personnel, safe food and water, conforming to approved procedures, consumer advisories, food temperature control/identification, and utensils, equipment, and vending. Violations under this section require corrective action with in 10 days. These items application supports, facilitates, or enables 1 or more Priority Items.

**Priority Item** - application of these items contributes directly to the elimination, prevention, or reduction of hazards associated with foodborne illness or injury to an acceptable level. Includes items with a quantifiable/calculable measure to show control of hazards such as cooking, reheating, cooling, and handwashing - assigned 3 points on the inspection report and subjects under this section are: time and temperature for food safety, approved sources, protection from contamination, employee health/good hygiene practices, prevent contamination by hands, highly susceptible populations, chemicals, and water/plumbing. Violations under this section require immediate corrective action not to exceed 3 days.

Source: TFER and Inspection report

Article By: Julie Prouse

Upcoming Food Protection Management Course

To find the next Food Managers or Food Handlers course in your area, please go to our website: http://foodsafety.tamu.edu or visit us on Facebook www.facebook.com/foodprotectionmanagement

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