

## Team update

Welcome to the latest edition of the newsletter produced by the Food & Safety team at EHDC. In addition to our regular updates on safe2eat, sampling, food hygiene training and health & safety, this edition features an article on temperature control. Issues with temperature control have been found during many inspections this year. We hope that you will find the information provided informative and helpful. If you would like to see a particular topic covered in the next edition, please contact the team. Contact details are overleaf.



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## safe2eat update

Our food hygiene rating publication scheme was launched in the summer. This 'scores on the doors' information system is being operated in conjunction with most Environmental Health Departments in Hampshire. Information can be accessed via

[www.easthants.gov.uk/foodsafety](http://www.easthants.gov.uk/foodsafety) and [www.safe2eat.com](http://www.safe2eat.com). We are pleased to advise that since the launch of the scheme the number of premises in the unsatisfactory category has more than halved. There has also been a marked increase in the number of 'excellent' premises. At the time of writing there were 167 premises in the excellent category, 600 in the satisfactory category and 28 in the unsatisfactory category.

In line with Government policy to focus our resources on businesses that fail to comply with legal requirements, we inspect premises in the unsatisfactory category every 3 months. During this inspection the risk rating is reassessed, giving the opportunity for improved standards to be recognised and the

premises to change category. Once premises move from 'unsatisfactory' to 'satisfactory' an unannounced spot check will take place 6 months later to check that the improvements are being maintained.

### Becoming excellent

We would like to see a lot more businesses in this category. To inform you of what's required and to encourage you to work towards this standard, here are the characteristics of an 'excellent' premises:

In terms of food handling practices & procedures and temperature control the business must demonstrate a high standard of compliance with relevant legislation. It must also be able to demonstrate a high standard of compliance with any industry codes of recommended practice and accepted good practice in the trade.

The same standard must also be met by the business in terms of the structure and cleanliness of the premises. Please note that high standards must not be limited to the kitchen but they must also be found in the bar areas, food stores, the cellar and the premises as a whole.

## SFBB packs and diary refills



Please note that replacement SFBB packs, diary refills and copies of the multi language DVD that now accompanies the pack, can all be ordered direct from the Food Standards Agency on Tel: 08456060667 or by emailing: [foodstandards@ecgroup.co.uk](mailto:foodstandards@ecgroup.co.uk). They are provided free of charge.

The premises would need to achieve a moderate or high 'confidence in management' score. In order to achieve this it must make use of any technical advice available to the business, have a satisfactory documented and implemented Food Safety Management System, be able to demonstrate effective control of food safety hazards and possibly be subject to internal and/or external audits. It must also be able to show a continued commitment to maintaining high standards over a period of time.

Generally, an excellent premises is one seen as a model for others to follow, although the scoring does allow for an element of 'almost there' as well.

# Sampling results

The Food Safety Team has participated in a number of sampling projects recently. These are organised in conjunction with a number of neighbouring local authorities so that all together the various foods are sampled regularly throughout the year. Here are the results for the samples taken by the team from food premises within the East Hampshire District.

## Salmonella contamination of raw shelled egg mix and environmental samples

Samples of prepared mixes of raw shelled egg mix which are prepared in advance for use in the preparation of egg fried rice and omelettes were taken from a variety of restaurant and take-away premises. These samples were taken in conjunction with environmental swabs of the preparation surface where the egg mix was prepared or used and the cleaning cloth used to clean such surfaces. Both the egg and the environmental samples were tested for the presence of Salmonella and all results were negative.

## Microbiological condition of salad from open displays in preparation areas and restaurants

Samples of salad items such as tomato, cucumber, lettuce and grated carrot were taken from display units in restaurants and cafés. These chilled displays were either in the kitchen for staff to use in preparation, or, in the restaurant where customers serve themselves. The microbiological condition of the samples were tested and compared to the hygiene practices in the individual premises. All of these results were satisfactory.

## Cleanliness of Nurseries and pre-schools

A number of swabs of food preparation surfaces and work tops as well as the cloths used for cleaning these surfaces, were taken from various children's nurseries and pre-schools within the District. Results for some of the environmental swabs and the cloths showed unsatisfactory levels of bacteria including Enterobacteriaceae, E coli and Staphylococcus aureus. The premises were re-sampled and advice given.

Enterobacteriaceae is a family of related species of bacteria capable of causing diarrhoea. These bacteria are widely distributed in nature and high levels may be found in raw meat and fish and also on raw vegetables. Contamination with E coli. and Staphylococcus aureus indicate poor personal hygiene standards.

All of these groups of bacteria are easily killed by heat and sanitizers. Hand and food contact surfaces should be thoroughly cleaned before a sanitizer is used. Please make sure that only clean cloths or disposable kitchen roll is used to wipe surfaces that have been sanitized.

## Speciality meats

Samples of Biltong, Chorizo, Salami and other dried, cured or continental meats were taken from retail businesses during May. Similar samples were taken by neighbouring authorities throughout the year to help identify any seasonal variations in the microbiological quality. Seasonal variations are found in the microbiological quality of speciality



meats as they are often stored at ambient temperatures particularly at markets. They were tested for the presence of Salmonella, Listeria and E. coli. All of the results taken in East Hampshire were acceptable in that only very low levels of bacteria were detected.

## Training Matters

The Food Safety Team will be teaching the CIEH Level 2 award in Food Safety in Catering in conjunction with Alton College on the following dates in 2009:

04 Feb 2009  
11 March 2009  
22 April 2009  
13 May 2009  
10 June 2009  
08 July 2009

Places can be booked by contacting Alton College direct on 01420 592211/0.

Courses in Food Safety and Health & Safety are also available at South Downs College, Waterlooville. For further details and a copy of their brochure call freephone: 0800 056 0511.

## Health & Safety

# NOISE at work

Employers need to think about the level and duration staff are exposed to noise, for example music.

Exposure to loud noise over a period of time and also from one off events can cause permanent hearing damage and must be assessed. Those at risk include: DJs, sound engineers, door supervisors, bar staff, restaurant workers and musicians.

The key requirements and responsibilities for employers under the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2006 are to:

- Assess/measure the levels of noise employees are exposed to
- Eliminate the noise at source or, where this is not possible, reduce it to as low a level as reasonably practicable
- Provide employees with suitable hearing protection where noise cannot be controlled at source

- Ensure that the following new legal limits on noise exposure are not exceeded:

(Lower Exposure Action Value 80dB (A) (Daily Exposure) and/or 135dB (C) (Peak Sound Level) and Upper Exposure Action Value 85dB (A) (Daily Exposure) and/or 137dB (C) (Peak Sound Level))

- Provide employees with information, instruction and training
- Carry out health surveillance where the risk assessment indicates there is a risk to the health of employees. (Health Surveillance (hearing checks) must be provided to employees regularly exposed to noise levels above 85dB (A))

Establishing whether there is a noise hazard can be undertaken quite simply. Just ask yourself whether you have to shout to be heard above the noise. If the answer is yes and employees are exposed to these noise levels for more than half an hour per day, the risk needs to be properly assessed.

If the answer is no, and an employer is satisfied that the risk from exposure to noise has been reduced to as low a level as is reasonably practicable, it is sufficient to record that fact and take no further action.

### Key messages

- 1 There is evidence that exposure to live music can cause hearing damage
- 2 Noise Regulations require each employer to manage the risk to their employees
- 3 Control, reduce and monitor exposure to noise
- 4 Many of the controls are simple and cost-effective
- 5 The audience can still enjoy the performance with the controls in place.

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## Smoking in the workplace

July 2007 saw the introduction of laws which made virtually all enclosed public places, workplaces and work vehicles in England smokefree. The aim of the law was to provide a healthier environment for people to work, relax, socialise and travel in.

Compliance with the smokefree requirements has been very high across East Hampshire. However, the last few months has seen a sudden increase in the number of complaints received about people smoking in places that should be smokefree.

To help businesses ensure that they are complying, here are a few reminders –

Smoking is not allowed in premises/places that are **enclosed** (ceiling/roof present and except for windows/doors are totally enclosed) or **substantially enclosed** (ceiling/roof present together with more than 50% of the wall surfaces around its perimeter).

Public vehicles and work vehicles used by more than one person must also be smokefree.

‘No smoking’ signs must be displayed in prominent positions at all entrances to smokefree premises and also in vehicles.

Remind staff about the smokefree requirements and how they affect your business.

Ideally persons in control of premises should develop a smokefree policy, adopt procedures for dealing with people who smoke or attempt to smoke within the premises, and keep a written record of any incidents and the action taken.

If you provide a smoking shelter for your staff/customers it may require planning permission and it must not be enclosed or substantially enclosed.

Smoking in smokefree premises and vehicles can attract fines for both individuals (up to £50) and people in control of premises (up to £2500).

Further advice can be obtained from East Hampshire District Council on 01730 234302.

Focus on...

# Temperature control



A number of problems have been found during inspections this year regarding temperature control (foods being stored at incorrect temperatures, raw and cooked/ready to eat foods being stored in direct contact with each other and a lack of temperature monitoring). Below are a series of questions and answers to help you assess your level of knowledge and to help you make any improvements necessary.

## What temperature should my fridge be operating at?

Generally all foods which are likely to support the growth of food poisoning bacteria or the formation of toxins must be kept at or below 8°C. To achieve this, we recommend that your fridge, cold room or chilled display is set to operate between 2°C and 5°C. Exemptions to this rule include raw food which is to be cooked before it is eaten providing that process will ensure it is fit to eat.

## How do I know if my fridge is running at the right temperature?

The only way to know for sure is to check the temperature with an independent gauge or probe thermometer. Don't rely on the gauge or digital reading for any equipment integral to the fridge without making independent checks on a regular basis. This is because integral gauges may be faulty or set to monitor the flow of cold air into the unit. We recommend that you use a calibrated probe to take the temperature of a food in the fridge or probe a dummy food such as an unopened tablet of jelly. Dummy foods should be labelled 'do not

use' and rotated onto different shelves over a period of time so that you monitor the temperatures throughout the unit. Cold air sinks, warm air rises meaning that foods at the top may be several degrees warmer than those at the bottom. Details on how to calibrate temperature probes are provided in the 'Management' section of Safer Food Better Business.

## How often should I check the temperature?

As often as you consider necessary in order to be confident that the foods are being stored at the correct temperatures. We recommend that units are checked daily but at different times as it may be much cooler at the beginning of the day compared to early afternoon when the doors have been frequently opened during lunch time.

## How can foods become contaminated in the fridge?

During inspections we often find raw and cooked/ready to eat foods being stored/stacked together in direct contact, or raw foods being stored above cooked/ready to eat foods. Both practices expose the cooked/ready to eat foods to the risk of cross-contamination whereby bacteria on raw foods or packaging will transfer onto cooked/ready to eat food, its packaging or container it is in contact with. Alternatively contamination may occur from thawing juices and blood from raw foods dripping onto the food below.

## How can I prevent contamination?

- By storing raw and cooked/ready to eat foods in different fridges.
- If using the same unit, by storing raw foods at the bottom and cooked/ready to eat foods at the top.
- By covering, wrapping foods or storing them in containers with lids.
- By labelling shelves or units so all staff know where the different types of foods should be placed.

# Contact details

If you would like any further information on the articles featured in this newsletter please contact the team as below. We would also appreciate your feedback on the newsletter and details of any food hygiene, health and safety or licensing issues you would like to see covered in future editions. Please contact:

Food / Health & Safety /  
Licensing Team

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If you have any comments about our service please contact: David Robertson, Environmental Services Manager (Food, Health & Safety and Licensing) Tel: 01730 234307. Further information on Food Safety, Health & Safety and Licensing is available at [www.easthants.gov.uk](http://www.easthants.gov.uk).