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Food Inspection Checklist and Training Resources

Dear Fitchburg Food Establishments,

The Fitchburg Health Department is currently working on initiatives to assist food establishments with Massachusetts State Sanitary Food Code requirements, and how to better prepare for Health Department food inspections. The following list highlights some of the areas that are reviewed for compliance by the Food Inspector during Health Department inspections. This is not an all-inclusive list of what is reviewed during a food inspection but a list to help your establishment prepare for an inspection. The photos are to give visual guidance of what you should look for when purchasing approved equipment. Please be advised that the Fitchburg Health Department does not endorse any of the specific brands pictured. If you're unsure if items are approved for commercial use, it is always best to check with the Food Inspector before purchasing.

If you have any questions regarding this list, please contact Sean-Michael Tantinarawat by e-mail at stantinarawat@fitchburgma.gov or at 978-829-1873.

Ensuring all of these listed items are completed should help assist in shortening the inspection times at your food establishment:

- All copies of current non-expired training records must be posted or filed on site and available upon request by the food inspector during inspection. These training records would include: Food Protection Manager Certifications, Allergen Awareness Certifications, and Choke Save or CPR certifications. It is encouraged that you post these certifications on the wall in an area clearly visible to the staff or general public so they are readily available during inspection.

- All permits and licenses must be posted in a location clearly visible to the general public. The following permits and licenses applicable to your establishment must be posted in a location clearly visible to the general public: Food Permit, Certificate of Inspection, Common Victuallers license, Liquors Licenses, Tobacco Permits and licenses, Sales Tax on Meals and Beverages (MT-1 form), and any other state or local license that your establishment may hold.

- Refrigerator/freezer thermometers must be hanging in all refrigeration and cooler units to monitor air temperatures. Thermometers should be hung in the front of the units so that they are visible for frequent monitoring and ensure units are still maintaining the required air temperatures in the warmest part of the units. Even if the unit has a built in temperature gauge, it is encouraged to have a secondary method of monitoring air temperatures as built in temperature gauges are often not accurate.

Example of a refrigerator/freezer thermometer to monitor air temperatures:



- Time and

Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) Foods must be maintained at an internal food temperature of 41 degrees F or below or 135 degrees F or above. Establishments need to monitor internal food temperatures daily with a clean and sanitized probe food thermometer. It is strongly encouraged that temperature logs are created to hold staff accountable for taking internal food temperatures daily. Even if a temperature gauge is reading below 41 degrees F, it is important to ensure the internal food temperature is 41 degrees F or below with a probe food thermometer:



- All food

establishments must have a calibrated probe food thermometer on site. If a dial thermometer is used, food employees must be able to demonstrate how to calibrate the probe thermometer. It is encouraged that establishments purchase NSF approved digital probe thermometers for accurate instant readings. 70% isopropyl alcohol swabs/pads should be provided to clean the thermometer probe between taking food temperatures.

Example of digital probe food thermometers to take internal food temperatures and isopropyl alcohol pads to clean the probe between taking internal food temperatures:

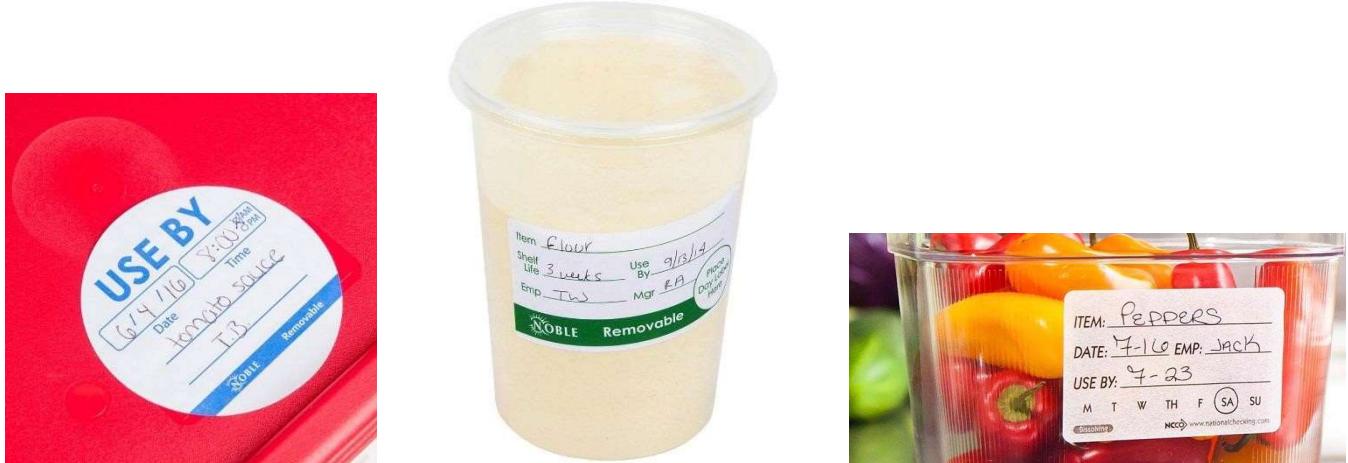


Infrared thermometers are a good solution to monitor air temperatures and surface temperatures for establishments such as grocery stores and convenience stores that sell **commercially pre-packaged foods**. **Infrared thermometer measuring food surface temperature:**



- Food being stored out of the original manufacturer's packaging must be labeled with the common name of the product and a "best by" or "use by" date.

Example of food labels that state the common name of the food and a "use by" date:



- Cooking utensils and other kitchen tools must be in good repair and free of defects, cracks, nicks, etc. Commercial grade stainless steel utensils and high heat utensils are required.

Examples of commercial grade kitchen tools:



Wiping cloths must be stored in sanitizer at the required sanitizer concentration between uses. Most establishments will purchase “red sanitizer buckets” designated for wiping cloth storage. Sanitizer buckets must be cleaned between uses. Soiled wiping cloths must go into a designated laundry bag or laundry bin.

Example of a labeled sanitizer bucket to store wiping cloths in between uses:



○ Once the sanitizer

bucket is filled with the sanitizer solution, you must check with your sanitizer test strip the sanitizer concentration to ensure the solution is at the correct concentration. Testing sanitizer should be done with every batch. Sanitizer solution typically needs to be changed out every 2-3 hours. The wiping cloths should also be changed out and replaced with clean wiping cloths once the solution is changed.



- Wiping cloths may not come into contact with food or be used to cover food while in storage. Wiping cloths are for cleaning purposes only.
- Wiping cloths may not be used as a nonslip device under cutting boards. Cutting board mats can be purchased to prevent a cutting board from slipping.



Cutting boards must be free of cracks, nicks and scratches. Cutting boards must be smooth and easily cleanable. If cutting boards are damaged, they will have to be replaced or sanded.



- Cardboard, cloth liners, wiping cloths and any absorbent materials may not be used to line shelving, floors, and equipment. All food establishment surfaces must be smooth, water resistant and easily cleanable.
- Once a can of food is opened, the contents must be immediately removed from the can. Food may not be stored in opened cans.
- All food must be completely covered between uses while in storage. Food must be completely covered while in freezer units, cooler units, hot holder units, and refrigeration units. Dry stock shelf stable ingredients must also be completely covered between uses.
- Food removed from the original packaging for storage must be stored in commercial grade durable food storage containers. NSF approved food grade polycarbonate storage containers with fitted lids and stainless steel containers with fitted lids are recommended.

Example of commercial grade food storage with lids:



All food, and supplies in an establishment must be stored at least 6 inches off of the floor on approved commercial grade shelving. Storage shelving must be in good repair, smooth, water resistant and easily cleanable. Here are examples of approved commercial shelving:

Aluminum Dunnage Rack:



Stainless steel wall mounted shelf: NSF approved chrome shelving:



- Milk crates, soda crates, and bread crates are not approved for use as shelving. Wood shelving is also not approved. These items are not approved as shelving due to the fact that these items are not easily cleanable and it is difficult to clean the floors with an item such as a milk crate being used as a shelf.
- Wall surfaces and floors in cooking areas, food preparation areas, food storage areas and warewash areas must be smooth, free of holes and cracks, water resistant, durable and easily cleanable. Examples of cleanable wall surface material would be fiberglass reinforced plastic (FRP) wall panel or stainless steel.

FRP wall panel:



- Floor surfaces must be smooth, water resistant, durable, and easily cleanable and free of defects, cracks, and other damage. Baseboard must also be tightly sealed on the wall and water resistant and in good condition and free of defects.

There must be an adequate supply for approved cleaning devices such as scouring pads and cleaning brushes. Sponges are prohibited for use in a food establishment. Used scouring pads and food service wipers must be disposed of daily or more frequently if heavily used and soiled.

Stainless steel scouring pad:



Heavy duty green scouring pad:



Foodservice Wiper:



- Spray bottles and cleaning chemicals must be labeled with the contents. Your cleaning chemical distributor can often provide your establishment with spray bottle labels.
- Purchasing green detergent buckets to fill with detergent/degreaser and water is a good alternative to spray bottles to clean surfaces. Remember: All food contact surfaces must be washed, and rinsed with a commercial grade cleaner such as detergent/degreaser before being sanitized.



- Having an adequate supply of commercial grade cleaning chemicals will assist with cleaning a food establishment. Having heavy duty commercial grade grill cleaners, fryer cleaners and other heavy duty degreasers will ensure surfaces are being adequately cleaned daily to remove daily soil accumulation on surfaces. It is required that there is no more than 1 days' worth of soil accumulation on all surfaces in a food establishment. This requires a complete cleaning of all surfaces every day.

Three Compartment Sink Information

Three compartment sinks must be set up for warewashing and soiled equipment may not pile up throughout the day at the warewash area. All staff must be properly trained on how to set up a three compartment sink and how to test sanitizer. Here are some tips on how to ensure that your establishment is properly washing, rinsing and sanitizing at the three compartment sink:

- 1) The three compartment sink must be washed, rinsed and sanitized before and after use. The interior and exterior of the sinks, faucets, hoses, drain boards and back splash must be fully cleaned and free of soil, food debris and other build up before filling the three compartment sink to warewash. Please ensure the drain covers are also fully cleaned and sanitized also.
- 2) After the cleaning and sanitizing of the three compartment sink surfaces, fill the wash bay $\frac{3}{4}$ full with warm or hot water and a commercial grade degreaser detergent. Soiled equipment can soak in this solution if needed.
- 3) The second bay may be filled with warm or hot water to rinse equipment off after being washed or simply rinsed in the middle bay with a hose to remove all detergent and remaining soil.
- 4) Once your piece of equipment or utensil is fully cleaned and free of visible soil, grease, and debris and detergent, place in the sanitizer bay fully immersed in sanitizer solution. The sanitizer bay should be filled $\frac{3}{4}$ or more to ensure the piece of equipment is fully immersed. Sanitizer solution must be tested with the sanitizer test strips to ensure the proper concentration before using.

-Chlorine sanitizer required concentration: 50 PPM – 100 PPM. Chlorine sanitizer concentration must be verified with chlorine test strips.

-A quaternary ammonium sanitizer shall have a concentration as indicated by the manufacturer's use directions included in the labeling. Quaternary sanitizer must be verified with quaternary (QT) test strips.

-Frequent monitoring of sanitizer concentration will be required to ensure the sanitizer is at the proper concentration. Often establishments will change out the sanitizer at a frequency of every 2 hours or more frequently if needed.

-If soil and debris accumulation builds up in the sanitizer bay, drain the sanitizer and wash the sanitizer bay. Remember, the sanitizer bay is where clean equipment goes and the sanitizer will not be effective if the sanitizer bay is unclean.

-The clean side drain board must be free of soil and debris accumulation at all times. Drying racks must also be maintained free of visible soil and debris accumulation.

Fitchburg Health Department Food Inspection

5) Once the equipment has been sanitized, the equipment must be air dried on a drain board or drying rack. Wet equipment may not be nested.

- Before washing, all equipment must be pre-scraped into a waste receptacle to remove soil, grease, and food debris. It is advised that a rolling waste receptacle is placed at the warewash station to serve this purpose.

-Floor drains must be cleaned daily to remove daily soil and debris build up.

-Grease traps in most food service establishments will require a monthly professional cleaning or more frequently depending on the operation.

-Floors and walls must be frequently cleaned in warewash areas. Floors and walls below a 3 compartment sink must also remain clean and free of soil and debris build up.

Training Resources for Food Establishments

One of the major influences on food code compliance would be designation of a person in charge (PIC) or an alternate PIC during all hours of operation. During the day-to-day operation of a food establishment, a person who is immediately available and knowledgeable in both operational and Code requirements is needed to respond to questions and concerns and to resolve problems. Providing adequate food safety training of all individuals in your food service operation assists with ensuring compliance in a food establishment. The Fitchburg Health Department has developed a list of methods to assist in the training of all individuals in your food establishment operation. This is not an all-inclusive list and is intended to be used as a guidance document:

1) Utilization of the FDA training resources. Please contact the Fitchburg Health Department Food Inspector if you would like to obtain copies of the FDA training resources. Please visit the following websites for educational information:

[ainingResources/ucm212661.htm](https://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/RetailFoodProtection/IndustryandRegulatoryAssistanceandTrainingResources/ucm212661.htm)

<https://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/RetailFoodProtection/IndustryandRegulatoryAssistanceandTrainingResources/default.htm>

2) Reviewing the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Retail food resources and Massachusetts State sanitary Food Code. This can be obtained by visiting:

<https://www.mass.gov/lists/retail-food>

3) Having individuals in management and supervisory positions to obtain Food Protection Manager Certification training and examination. There is now the option to take the class and exam online with a webcam on: <https://www.statefoodsafety.com/>

4) Having individuals obtain the Massachusetts Allergen Training. This training can be obtained on the following websites:

<https://www.servsafe.com/access/SS/Catalog/ProductDetail/ALLERGENMA>

<http://www.berkshireahec.org/programs/ma-food-allergen-training/>

5) Having employees in non-managerial roles take an online “Food Handler” class and exam. These online courses typically are 1 – 1.5 hours and employees obtain a Food Handler card upon completion. Several websites offer this training and the cost is typically \$10 - \$15 per person. Here are some websites that offer the Food Handler training: <https://www.statefoodsafety.com/food-handler>

<https://www.servsafe.com/ServSafe-Food-Handler>

<https://www.360training.com/food-beverage-programs/food-handlers-certificate>

6) Utilizing the Food Inspector, Sean-Michael Tantinarawat, as a food safety resource and to assist your establishment with food safety training. Please utilize Inspector Holinko as a food safety resource for your establishment. Inspector Holinko is happy to meet with you at your establishment or at the Health Department to go over information, inspection reports, answer questions and be a resource and partner to your establishment. You may e-mail her at sholinko@fitchburgma.gov with any questions or ideas you may have for your establishments operation or give her a call on her cell phone at 978-956-3142.