

REGS CORNER

A learning tool to increase our knowledge of Food Safety best practices, as seen through the eyes of actual Health Department Food Safety Inspectors.

STANDARD: Adequate handwashing facilities supplied and accessible.

VIOLATION: Soiled pizza cutters inside handwash sink.

CORRECTIVE ACTION: Handwash sinks are to be used only for handwashing. Items inside the sink can deter food handlers from using the sink to wash hands. It also creates an unclean environment in the handwashing area, allowing cleaned hands to possibly become recontaminated from soiled water splash. Manager was advised to remove dirty utensils from the sink, to provide an appropriate area for them to be placed, and to train staff accordingly.

STANDARD: Food in good condition, safe, and unadulterated.

VIOLATION: Several gallons of milk in retail sales case past manufacturer's sell by date.

CORRECTIVE ACTION: Sell by date is the date after which product is not to be offered for sale. This is not to be confused with use by date, which is when the product should be used or consumed. In this case, milk gallons had Sell By Dates that were three days prior to the inspection date. Manager was advised to pull these items from the retail case. It was recommended that a specific person be made responsible each day to check expiration dates on all products in the retail area, especially those products that are subject to spoilage.

STANDARD: Food contact surfaces cleaned and sanitized.

VIOLATION: Soda machine nozzles and ice chute at soda machine observed with mold-like residue.

CORRECTIVE ACTION: Soda nozzles should be dismantled and cleaned daily at the three-compartment sink, using the wash-rinse-sanitize procedure. If there is a heavy buildup of debris, they may need to be soaked first in hot, soapy water. The procedure for the ice chute is different because it cannot be removed from the machine. The chute should be wiped with a detergent solution, then rinsed with clear water, and finally wiped with a sanitizer solution and allowed to air dry. Manager was advised to designate someone each day to perform this task.

STANDARD: Thermometer provided and accurate.

VIOLATION: Several refrigerated reach-in display cases on the sales floor do not have visible thermometers.

CORRECTIVE ACTION: All refrigeration units must be supplied with a thermometer that shows the internal air temperature of the unit. The thermometer must be placed in an easily readable position (not hidden), must be accurate to +/- 3°F., and should be in the warmest part of the unit, typically at the front. Manager was able to locate the thermometer buried behind food product in two of the cases. She was advised to move them to an appropriate position in the case. She also was able to provide thermometers for cases where they were missing. It was recommended that several thermometers be kept on-hand as backup.

STANDARD: Contamination prevented during food preparation, storage, and display.

VIOLATION: Pizza boxes stored on floor at front counter.

CORRECTIVE ACTION: Food containers in storage must be protected from contamination by storing at least 6 inches up off the floor. Manager was advised to provide a designated area for proper storage of the pizza boxes that would keep them protected. It was suggested that a smaller number of boxes could be assembled at any one time, enough to carry through the lunch hour, and then again through the dinner hour.

STANDARD: Single-use and single-service articles properly stored and used.

VIOLATION: Single-serve sandwich containers stored at front counter had food contact surfaces exposed.

CORRECTIVE ACTION: Single-use food containers that are brought out to the front prep area for the day's usage should be stored inverted (upside down) so the food contact surface is not exposed to contamination. Manager was advised that only enough containers for the day should be taken out of the original packaging in the back room storage area and brought out to the front prep area.

STANDARD: Non-food contact surfaces clean.

VIOLATION: Interior of oven noted with buildup of food debris on sides, bottom and top surfaces.

CORRECTIVE ACTION: Interior surfaces of equipment must be kept clean to prevent food placed inside from becoming contaminated. Bits of food that are clinging to the inside surfaces can fall into food placed inside the unit, thus contaminating it. Manager was advised to have the interior of the oven checked for cleanliness on a regular basis, and to include it on the Master Cleaning Schedule. Oven cleaning* should be scheduled during a time of day when it is least used.

*Patco Food Safety offers Patco Oven Cleaner-excellent for fast removal of built-up or carbonized grease or food soils. Provides easy removal without scraping with a no-drip foaming action that rinses easily and leaves no residue.