



Veterinary Services, Preventive Medicine and Public Health Newsletter

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Staff Veterinarian Departure:

Unfortunately, I will be departing AAFES shortly after the publication of this quarterly newsletter. The Army has not identified a new Director of the Exchange Food & Drug Safety Office so SMSgt Sigley will fill this role at the Dallas Headquarters. Please continue to consult with her and MAJ Agresta in Europe for all food and drug safety concerns within the Exchange enterprise.

I want to thank you all for your support during the short time I was with the organization and I wish you all the best.

BG Topping

ServSafe® Training: A reminder for all Exchange employees: All SBMs, AFMs, GMs, FBMs, Express managers, food facility managers, and shift leaders in charge of a food facility or food operation (defined as Person-In-Charge IAW the Tri-Service Food Code (TSFC) are required to renew their ServSafe® certification every five years. If you need assistance in obtaining or renewing your certification, contact your local learning facilitator or explore this opportunity in the LEX portal.

“Big 5”:

Even though food establishments work hard to prevent foodborne outbreaks, these events still occur. Outbreak investigations consistently reveal that there are five major risk factors related to employee behaviors and food handling practices, in both retail and food service establishments, that contribute to foodborne illness. The “Big 5” are:

- Improper hot or cold holding temperatures
- Inadequate cooking
- Contaminated equipment
- Food from unsafe sources
- Poor personal hygiene

Ways to mitigate the risk posed by the “Big 5” are outlined within the TSFC and are covered in the various training programs offered through ServSafe®, LEX, or through installation level food handler training. Ensure that when planning both initial and refresher training these topics are stressed to associates and food handlers.

Boil Water Alerts:

Two recent events involving a contaminated water supply resulted in military installations mandating a “boil water

alert”. It is critical that Exchange facilities are prepared for such an occurrence. If Exchanges facilities are placed under a “Boil Water Alert/Notice” follow the below procedures:

- Immediately notify HQ AAFES Staff Vet (Food and Drug Safety Office) and Region Food Manager.
- Do not use or allow the use of tap water in the facility. If any food or drink products were prepared after announcement of the alert, the items should be discarded. Any surface or utensil cleaning performed after notification must be re cleaned and sanitized as outlined below.
- Use only bottled water from an approved source or potable water provided by the installation for drinking purposes. Drink dispensers, iced tea, coffee machines, and ice machines connected to the contaminated water supply may not be used. Discard all ice from machines connected to the water supply.
- Use disposable supplies and utensils to the greatest extent possible to reduce ware washing. If ware washing is required, use bottled water or water from an approved supply and follow washing with proper sanitization. The same holds true for water used to clean food contact surfaces. For any cooking/serving utensils that must be washed, utilize the three compartment sink method using potable water and appropriate sanitizer.
- Wash hands with soap and use bottled water or potable water provided by the installation. Hands may be further sanitized by the use of sanitary wipes or hand sanitizer but neither is a substitute for hand washing. Wear gloves for all food prep and service.
- Toilet facilities must be available and must be maintained in a sanitary manner.

Once a potable water supply has been restored:

- Follow the guidance and direction of local regulatory authorities.
- Flush all water lines including drink dispensers, all equipment containing water reservoirs, tea machines and coffee machines prior to use. Replace any filters attached to the water supply.

- Clean and sanitize ice machines. Replace any filters to prevent recontamination of the machine. Discard the first batch of ice produced.
- Rewash and sanitize all food or drink contact items (knives, forks, plates, etc.) with “cleared” system water.
- Run dishwasher through a two cycles before washing dishes.

What is a Potentially Hazardous Food?

The actual definition of a potentially hazardous food (PHF) recognizes that there are multiple factors that can make a food potentially hazardous including the pH and water activity of the food, whether it has been treated to prevent bacterial or mold growth, and whether the food is packaged or how it is packaged.

The basic definition for PHF is “a FOOD that requires time/temperature control for safety (TCS) to limit pathogenic microorganism growth or toxin formation.” Normally these are foods of animal origin, heat treated plant foods, raw cut fruits & vegetables, etc.

Quite often we receive non-compliant inspection reports that identify expired PHFs or PHFs without date/time labeling as critical discrepancies when in fact, the foods described in the report do not meet the PHF definition. We have seen bread, baked goods, pickled peppers, and many other non-PHF identified as potentially hazardous. Doing so has resulted in a non-compliant inspection report given in error to the establishment.

Both food establishments and the installation regulatory authorities must be able to differentiate between a PHF and a non-PHF. When there is any doubt, these entities should work together and seek outside assistance to get to the correct answer.

Self Inspections:

Receiving an unsatisfactory inspection report from your local inspector should be a rare occurrence. Food facility managers, to include concession managers, are required to perform a daily self-evaluation for sanitation, sanitary practices and sanitary procedures and document the inspection on AAFES Form 6500-006, Food Facility Sanitary Checklist or a modified version of franchise checklist. Retail food facility (Express store) managers will also perform daily facility evaluations on their facility. At least once a week, facilities will document their sanitary evaluation and file for review IAW the TSFC. All facilities will keep self-evaluation reports on file for at least 1 year

Temporary Food Establishments:

As defined in the TSFC, a temporary food establishments is one that operates for a period of no more than 14 consecutive days in conjunction with a single event or celebration. For the most part, temporary or seasonal food establishments must comply with the TSFC with limited exceptions as outlined in Chapter 10 of that document. Establishments that operate for more than 14 consecutive days or that operate on a routine basis i.e., not in conjunction with a specific event or celebration, are not considered temporary events and thus must comply with Chapters 2-8 of the TSFC. An example of this would be a mobile food truck that serves an installation a few days every week.

Cleaning and Sanitizing Clipper Blades:

Operators should be cleaning and disinfecting their hair clipper blades and guards between each and every customer. Clippicide® or a similar product works well since it cleans, disinfects, and lubricates all in one spray product. Prior to using such a product all debris must be physically removed with either a brush or compressed air. After applying, the spray must remain on the equipment for a minimum of 10 minutes and then allowed to air dry before using. With our high customer demand for hair care services, this means each operator should possess a minimum of 2 sets of clippers and clipper blades at their station.

The Exchange Food Safety & Defense Internet Portal:

Are you looking for past newsletters on food safety, food defense and barber/beauty/spa sanitation? Previous editions are found by accessing either of the Staff Vet/Food & Drug Safety links at the end of this newsletter. Associates are also able to consult the site for quick access to commonly required AF and DA regulations, references, Exchange policies, and guidance.

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Useful links (control-click to use links):

- [Worldwide Directory for Sanitarily Approved Food Establishments for Armed Forces Procurement](#)
- [Staff Vet/Food & Drug Safety Program \(AAFES Associates Only\)](#)
- [Staff Vet/Food & Drug Safety Program \(Non-AAFES Associates\)](#)