

# Food for Thought...



*A Newsletter for our foodservice establishments*

Spring 2010

Published by the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency

## **2010: A Year of Change**

Maybe you haven't heard, but this is a year of significant change for foodservice facilities in Michigan. Shortly after you receive this mailing enforcement begins on the Manager Certification Rules and in just about a month all licensed foodservice facilities in Michigan become smoke-free. Although these are significant changes, I believe we are well prepared for both.

The food service sanitation staff have been holding manager certification courses for the past few years to provide foodservice establishment owners and operators a local opportunity to obtain the training that is required. If you haven't heard about our certification classes or would like more information about when the next class will be offered, check our website at [www.bhsj.org](http://www.bhsj.org).

The smoke-free workplace requirement becomes effective May 1, 2010, and requires that all licensed foodservice facilities, including bars and clubs, be smoke-free. We, the local health department, will be the enforcing agency for this new law.

This newsletter contains brief articles on these and a couple of other information pieces. We look forward to working with you again this year. Please feel free to contact us at any time with your questions or concerns.

Rebecca A. Burns, R.S.  
Director of Environmental Health

## **Do You Have A Certified Manager?**

The Michigan Food Law, P.A. 92 of 2000 as amended, required that all foodservice establishments have a certified manager by June 30, 2009. The Michigan Department of Agriculture with Local Health Department input, promulgated rules for manager certification that became effective on October 2, 2009 and provided a 6-month period, until April 2, 2010, for foodservice establishments to comply with this rule.

As of April 2, 2010, foodservice establishments that do not have a variance for the manager certification requirement, will be cited during a routine inspection as in violation of this requirement of the law. To return to compliance, a foodservice facility must work to ensure that a staff member becomes certified within a 90-day period. Certified manager classes are held at our offices, by some food suppliers, and online. If you have questions about manager certification, please contact the sanitarian that works with your facility or call our office.

### **In this issue:**

**2010: A Year of Change**

**Rebecca A. Burns, R.S.**

**Director of Environmental Health**

**Do You Have A  
Certified Manager?**

**Smoke-free By  
May 1, 2010**

**Rebecca A. Burns, R.S.**

**Water Quality: Have You Tested  
Your Well Water Lately?**

**Joe Frazier,**

**Environmental Health Sanitarian**

**Emergencies:**

**Are You Ready to Respond?**

**Rob Stauffer, REHS  
Senior Sanitarian**

**Employee Health and  
The "Big Five"**

**David Wagoner**

**Environmental Health Sanitarian**

**Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph  
Community Health Agency**

Three Rivers (269) 273-2161

Coldwater (517) 279-9561

Hillsdale (517) 437-7395

**See the Fall edition  
on our web site at:**

**[www.bhsj.org](http://www.bhsj.org)**

## ***Smoke-free by May 1, 2010***

By now, everyone has heard that all bars and restaurants must be smoke-free by May 1, 2010, but you may not have heard what your requirements will be under the new law or how the law will be enforced. The postcard included in this mailing provides some of this information, but your best source of current and accurate information is either our agency or the state's web-sites at: [www.bhsj.org](http://www.bhsj.org) or [www.michigan.gov/smokefreelaw](http://www.michigan.gov/smokefreelaw).

Our agency has requested copies of a no-smoking sign that you can use to post at each entrance and will have them available at our offices. Your inspector will also have a supply of the signs when they visit your establishment.

How far away from the building may an individual smoke? The law does not provide a distance, so this distance is at your discretion. If you choose to provide an outdoor smoking area, it may not be an area where customers are served food and/or beverages.

Your inspector will be talking with you about what you are doing to ensure that your facility is smoke-free and will be able to provide signs and additional information on the requirements, when they next stop by.

Rebecca A. Burns, R.S.

## ***Water Quality: Have you tested your well water lately?***

Did you know that food establishment's not utilizing a municipal water supply are responsible for routine water sampling? When restaurant operators provide water to the public; they are required to ensure that the water they are supplying is safe to drink.

Two tests are commonly required; coliform bacteria and nitrates. If coliform bacteria are present in the water supply, it could be an indication that the water supply is vulnerable to other, more

harmful bacteria or chemicals. In a food establishment the areas of concern are; cross connections in the drinking water supply, and damage to the well casing or well cap. These problems can easily be prevented by inspecting your well in the spring and fall ensuring the well has not been damaged. Or, whenever you have new plumbing installed make sure that is done by a licensed plumber and according to code.

Nitrate water sampling is the other required test. Nitrate is commonly found in fertilizers used by the public and farmers. Over time, when used incorrectly, nitrate can leach down through the soil and reach unprotected aquifers. Routine water sampling in conjunction with proper well construction are some of the ways to prevent nitrate contamination from becoming a problem for your food establishment.

Please contact our agency or ask your inspector about your water supply.

Joe Frazier, Sanitarian

## ***Emergencies: Are you ready to respond?***

About three years ago our Agency distributed to all foodservice establishments a yellow manual with red ring binder titled "Emergency Action Plans for Retail Food Establishments". This manual explains what to do in specific emergency situations when faced with one of the following crisis's: lost electric service, lost water service, contaminated water supply (Boil Water Alert), sewage back-up, fire, flood, and vomit and stool cleanup.

This manual is a critical tool in keeping your customers, employees, and your facility safe during such emergencies. Step by step instructions and tips are offered in the manual for each crisis so that you may be prepared for such an event, respond quickly and safely, recover quickly, and possibly prevent future scenarios.

If you no longer have this important manual, you can access an online copy

at [http://www.bhsj.org/eh/Food/eh\\_food.htm](http://www.bhsj.org/eh/Food/eh_food.htm), or you may be able to obtain a hard copy from the county office in which your business is located.

Rob Stauffer, REHS

## ***Employee Health and the "Big Five"***

As many food service owners and managers know, employee health plays an important role in helping to prevent foodborne illness outbreaks. All facilities should have a sign titled "Food Employee Foodborne Illness Guidelines" that would have been provided by your inspector. It lists certain illness symptoms, the actions taken by the manager or owner, the return to work criteria for food employees, and if local health department approval is needed for the employee to return to work. The sign provides information that would be a good basis for development of an employee health policy for your establishment. If you have not received this sign or it has been damaged or lost, contact your facility's inspector to see about getting another copy.

On the bottom of the sign, it lists the five excludable illnesses or "The Big Five". The five excludable illnesses are Salmonella, Shigella, E-Coli, Hepatitis A, and Norovirus. If a food employee has one of these illnesses or if a family member has one of these illnesses, they should be excluded from work, and the local health department notified.

It is very important that all owners, managers, and the person-in-charge know what the Big Five are. Knowing what they are, will help the owner, manager, or person-in-charge make an appropriate decision if a staff member states that he or she, or a family member, has been exposed to one of the Big Five. If you have any questions about employee illness or the "Big Five", please contact your facility's health inspector.

David Wagoner, Sanitarian