



July 2009
Volume 7, Issue 7

The Everclean Report

Summer Foodborne Illness

Question: What else besides the temperature increases during the summer months? If you answered the number of foodborne illness complaints then you are correct. Bacteria are present throughout the environment- in soil, water, and in the bodies of people and animals. They need moisture to flourish, and summer weather is often hot and humid. 98F, human body temperature, is the ideal growth temperature for most bacteria. However, foodborne bacteria grow fastest between 70-125F. In order to decrease and/or eliminate the number of foodborne illness complaints follow these four simple steps to ensure safer food in the summertime:

Special Interest Articles:

Summer FBI

Ice: Is it considered food?

Proper Temperatures

- **Clean & Sanitize:** Thoroughly Wash hands with soap in warm water; clean and sanitize food contact surfaces often. Unwashed hands are a prime cause of foodborne illness.
- **Separate: Don't Cross-Contaminate.** Cross-contamination during preparation, grilling, and serving food is a prime cause of foodborne illness (keep raw proteins separate from ready to eat).
- **Cook: Cook to Proper Temperatures.** Food safety experts agree that food is safely cooked when it is heated for a long enough time and at a high enough temperature to kill harmful bacteria that cause foodborne illness. Reaching the appropriate cooking temp for 15 seconds will effectively kill foodborne bacteria.
- **Chill: Refrigerate Promptly.** Holding food at an unsafe temperature is a prime cause of foodborne illness. Keep cold food at 41F or less!

If you have any doubts, throw it out!!!

Ice: Is it considered Food?

"Studies have shown that bacteria and viruses can survive inside ice cubes used for drinks (including alcoholic drinks)." Ice contamination has been associated with many outbreaks of Hepatitis A, Salmonella and E. coli O157:H7. Ice should be treated as if it were a ready-to-eat food and must be handled accordingly. Here are some tips on ice safety:

- Mold and slime build up inside ice machines and ice chutes allow bacteria to grow and contaminate the ice. Ice machines need to be cleaned and serviced regularly.
- Washing hands before handling and avoiding bare hand contact with ice are essential.
- Ice scoops may be stored in the ice with the dispensing scoop handle extended out of the ice, in a clean container, in a self draining scoop holder, or on a clean surface.
- Ice dispensers need to be cleaned and sanitized ("burned out") on a routine maintenance schedule, ice bins need to be cleaned and sanitized daily.
- Train your staff to close the lid of the ice bin when not in use and immediately after dispensing ice into glasses or cups.
- Never scoop ice with glasses or glassware as pieces of chipped and broken glass can accidentally get into the ice supply. A chipped or notched glass rim may result in a customer's cut and bloody lip.
- Ice that is used to chill beverages in wells (and other locations) is considered non-potable, not for consumption, and can not be used in customer's drinks or beverages.

Proper Temperatures

Did you know: As the temperature of the ambient air outside increases the temperature inside also increases. Everclean observed that cold holding violations increased by 13% in Quarter 3 (2008) when compared to Quarter 2 (2008). Please take the proper measures in order to keep hot food hot and cold food cold. Make sure that all employees understand the importance of keeping cold foods cold at all times. An excuse of "It is hot outside, which is why the temperature reading is higher" is not an acceptable response and is definitely not okay. Here are some methods to ensure the proper temperature of food regardless of the ambient air temperature: Use Ice, Stir often, turn down the thermostat, and don't over fill.

Any comments or questions should be directed to info@evercleanservices.com.

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