

Session Abstracts

National Environmental Health Association (NEHA)
71st Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition

Food Safety and Protection

Thursday, June 21

8:30 – 9:20am

Transferring the Knowledge—Food Safety Employee Training Programs

LeAnn Chuboff, Director of Science and Regulatory Relations, National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation, IL

A foodhandler is an individual working in a food establishment responsible for following food safety polices and procedures. Having the knowledge, skill and ability to perform that function is essential to food safety and the protection of the customer. But what drives meaningful food safety behavior? Many times having the knowledge doesn't necessary lead to action.

This session will share the research conducted that examines the current practices in employee training in food safety, including topics, training methods and key components to a successful food safety training program from recognized industry and regulatory leaders in the restaurant industry.

9:30 – 10:20am

Sacramento County Environmental Management Department's Comprehensive Food Safety Program Enhancements—Targeted Improvements for Food Safety and Disclosure Methods at Retail Food Facilities

Alicia Enriquez, REHS, Environmental Program Manager, Sacramento County Environmental Management Dept., CA

The Sacramento County Environmental Management Department (EMD) is responsible for administering the Retail Food Program in Sacramento County in accordance with the California Health and Safety Code.

In an effort to improve food safety in retail food facilities and improve public disclosure methods, several food safety program enhancements (Phase I and II) were implemented during the course of a five-year period. Phase I was implemented in 2003 and included: 1) Requirement to post full inspection reports at the food facility, 2) Risk-based inspections and increased inspection frequencies, 3) Awards of Excellence, and 4) Mandatory Food Safety Education.

EMD identified that a significant percentage of food facilities in Sacramento County had documented *major violations*. The rate of noncompliance for posting the most current

inspection report was also significant. In May 2005, Phase II was implemented and included: 1) Posting of Color-Coded Placards to Disclose Inspection Results, 2) Increased Inspection Frequencies, 3) Personnel, 4) Outreach and Education 5) Standardization Training, 6) Enforcement, 7) Posting of Placard Results at www.foodinspect.SacCounty.net.

10:30 – 11:20am

Beyond Enforcement: Techniques for Compliance Control in Food Safety

Steven J. Lipton, MEd, LEHP, CFSP, President, Biotest Services Inc., IL

Ever met an employee who never washes their hands? Ever met a cook who never cools foods properly? Has code enforcement helped? What can you do? While code enforcement is a critical part of environmental health, it is not always the most effective way to accomplish the task. In this presentation, techniques adapted from adult learning theory, behavioral and social psychology will be surveyed as ways of bringing operators into compliance and protect the public health. In this presentation, these principles will be applied to two of the fundamental risk factors, temperature control and handwashing, to demonstrate different ways to maintain food safety and obtain compliance with local codes and ordinances. Drawbacks and controversies revolving around these methods will also be discussed.

1:00 – 1:50pm

Fundamentals of Water Activity and its Usefulness in Conducting Food Service Inspections and Audits

Robert W. Powitz, PhD, MPH, RS, CFSP, DLAAS, Forensic Sanitarian, R.W. Powitz & Associates, PC, CT

The 2005 Food Code included Water Activity and its relationship to pH in the definition of potentially hazardous foods. This presentation outlines the fundamentals to understand water activity and its relationship to the wholesomeness of food as well as its measurement and interpretation in the field.

2:00 – 2:50pm

Illness, Investigation, and Information—A Case Study of Foodborne Illness Response

Barbara Kowalcyk, MA, Director of Food Safety, Center for Foodborne Illness Research and Prevention, PA

Patti Waller, MS, Epidemiologist, Marler Clark, LLC, PS, WA

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an estimated 76 million Americans are sickened, 325,000 are hospitalized and 5,000 die each year from foodborne illness. Yet, only a fraction of these cases are reported to public health officials, who play a critical role in America's food protection network. As a result, public health response to foodborne illness is inadequate. In addition, since public health does not fully appreciate the scope of foodborne disease, necessary resources are not allocated to address this serious public health issue. Yet, there are ways that the system

can be improved. This presentation will focus, through one case study, on the scope of national foodborne illness surveillance, public health's responsibility when investigating a laboratory confirmed case of foodborne illness and ways in which local and state public health departments can improve foodborne illness surveillance and respond more appropriately to foodborne illness victims.

3:00 – 3:50pm

Enhancing Food Program Capacity with Meaningful Measurements: The 2006 Samuel J. Crumbine Consumer Protection Award Winner

Lila Wickham, RN, MS, EH Director, Multnomah County Health Dept., OR

Jon Kawaguchi, REHS, Senior EH Specialist, Multnomah County Health Dept., OR

James Mack, MPA, RS, Foodborne Disease Outbreak Investigator/Oregon EHS-Net Site Coordinator, Oregon State Health Division, OR

Multnomah County Environmental Health transitioned from license fees as their sole resource to a program receiving enhanced license fees, general funds and grants based upon a changed perception of the value of public health/environmental health at the community, state and federal perspective. The pursuit for excellence led to receipt of the Crumbine Award and the strategies used have continued to be enhanced for future improvements.