

Food Safety Team
Contact Details:

General Enquiries
Nicky Woolley
01737 276417

Food Safety Team Manager
Alex Lisle
01737 276412

EHO - Specialist Premises and Pest Control
Pamela Howard
01737 276419

EHO - North Area
Russell Jenner
01737 276415

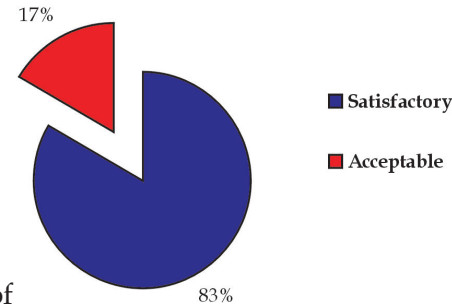
EHO - Central Area
Kirk Holmes
01737 276365

EHO - South Area
Lisa Wareham
01737 276416

Email:
food.safety@reigate-banstead.gov.uk

E.Coli found in cheese

Back in October we participated in the EU sampling programme looking at soft cheese made from pasteurised milk from production and retail premises (did not include large supermarkets). We sampled six cheeses from retail shops around the borough. Five were satisfactory and one was acceptable but borderline due to the high numbers of E. Coli. The shop was advised to buy from a reputable supplier.



Sandwiches tested for Listeria

Although listeriosis is a rare disease in the UK, a rise in the number of listeriosis cases in England and Wales has occurred over the last three years. Two recent outbreaks of *L. monocytogenes* were associated with sandwiches purchased from or provided in hospitals.



There is a scarcity of published information on the prevalence, levels and types of *L. monocytogenes* that may be found in sandwiches purchased or provided within hospitals and residential/care home premises. We took six samples from the local hospitals and residential care homes. All were found to be satisfactory.

The sampling studies help fill this gap in current knowledge, and provides an opportunity for local authorities to highlight to proprietors issues linked to temperature control and the growth of Listeria, and the importance of good hygiene practices.

Who does what?

Most of you get several inspections by different government departments and we often get calls saying that an officer visited today, Then we found that it wasn't anyone from this Council.

When an officer visits, check their I.D. This will tell you who they are and where they come from.

Some of the inspections and where they come from:

Health & Safety Executive:

Health & Safety Officer - health and safety of higher risk premises.

Surrey County Council:

Trading Standards Officers - (labelling) quality and composition.

Fire Officer - checks fire risk assessments.

Reigate & Banstead Borough Council:

Environmental Health Officer - food safety, health & safety in lower risk premises, licensing, environmental protection (noise)

Other: *Environmental Health Officer (Private)* - employed by some large companies to check compliance with in its outlets.

Commission for Social Care Inspection - carries out inspections of social care organisations e.g. Nursing Homes

Customs & Excise

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Advice Leaflet:

Are we tough enough?

Some of the businesses we visit complain saying we are being too tough with our enforcement. Are we? Mason Jones aged five was a healthy normal boy but on the 4th October 2005 he died because a food business may not have handled cooked meat properly allowing cross contamination. The cooked meat was distributed to several local schools injuring a further 161 people in the same outbreak.



Mason Jones died of food poisoning

Twenty people, died in the E. coli 0157 poisoning outbreak in Lanarkshire in late 1996 and early 1997. It was because of this that the government tightened the law and required butchers to be licensed; this meant they had to have training in food hygiene and maintain a documented "Hazard Analysis" system. This was repealed on 1st January 2006 when new legislation required most food businesses to introduce a documented food safety management system based on the principles of Hazard Analysis. If rigorous enforcement helps businesses to avoid deaths from food poisoning is there really a basis for complaint?

If you are purchasing for your business particularly for a high risk group such as the elderly, immuno-compromised or under fives, are you satisfied your supplier is providing safe food? Have you audited them? Have you checked their documented procedures? This should be part of your proactive hazard analysis/food safety management system.

Glass found in pizza makes the local newspaper

A disgruntled customer went to the newspaper when they felt a local pizza takeaway had not handled the complaint seriously. The customer complained about the shops lack of guidance for dealing with the complaints and found a letter offering a free pizza insulting.



The newspaper article may have been avoided if all staff were trained to deal with customer complaints effectively. Here are some points to help you stay out of the papers:

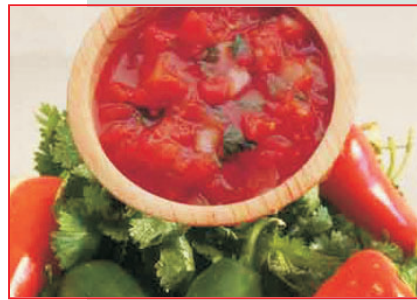
- Put yourself in the place of the customer
- Say you are sorry that the problem has happened and you will ensure a full investigation will be carried out
- Let the customer finish telling you all the relevant information, as this will help them feel they have been listened to
 - Don't automatically go down the free gift route as the customer may feel you are fobbing them off rather than taking the complaint seriously. If you do offer "compensation" then assure the customer that the complaint will be fully investigated
- Offer an explanation and say what you have done to put things right
- Always respond promptly.

*For a fact sheet on complaint handling contact the Institute of Customer Services:
Tel: 01206 571716
Email: enquiries@icsmail.co.uk
Website:
www.instituteofcustomerservice.com*

Facts about Foodborne Illness

Hepatitis A

The USA's biggest known outbreak of Hepatitis A caused such a panic that people were lining up by the thousands for antibody shots and no longer eating out - In 2003 over 600 people became infected and three died after eating at the same restaurant which had used contaminated spring onions. Most of the spring onions were used in a mild salsa and a cheese dip.



Hepatitis A virus infection causes a range of illness from mild non-specific nausea and vomiting through to hepatitis (liver inflammation, jaundice, or icterus) and rarely liver failure. Symptoms and severity of the illness are generally worse the older the person is when they become infected.

It can be spread by an infected person who does not wash their hands before handling food or utensils. It can also be spread in food, such as salads and shellfish. Therefore it is important to wash salads properly and ensure shellfish is cooked properly.

If you are a food handler and suffering from food poisoning then you **MUST NOT** work with food until 48 hours after all symptoms have ceased. An employer of a food handler affected by or connected with a case of food poisoning must be notified immediately and not allow that person to come into contact with food.

Legal Action

Mislabelled paste triggered serious allergic reaction



Morrison's Supermarket pleaded guilty to Waltham Forest magistrates of selling Shippam's potted salmon mislabelled as Shippam's potted chicken.

A member of public, who is allergic to fish, ate some of what she believed to be chicken paste, triggering a serious allergic reaction. Her entire body was covered in red weal's, leaving permanent scarring. If she had eaten more, she could have had a fatal anaphylactic shock.

Waltham Forest EHO, found that Shippam's had told Morrison's there was a problem with labelling and that the product should be withdrawn, in September 2004, but the Chingford store failed to remove the product. Morrison's was fined £7,500, with £7,813 in costs, and was told to pay £1,000 compensation to the shopper.

If you receive a Food Alert from either the manufacturers or us then you must act on the advice given. Last year a Food Alert was released regarding a brand of Pizza due to Sudan 1. An EHO from Reigate and Banstead managed to purchase some from a local retailer as a member of staff who thought they were being helpful had put the pizza back onto the shelf after it had been taken off! They were unaware of the recall.

Local rag 'sells out' after cockroach report

Two brothers were accused of buying all the copies of their local paper after it ran a story about a severe cockroach infestation in their Chinese restaurant.

Cam and Kiem Mu were fined £20,000 after their restaurant in Western-super-Mare was found teeming with cockroaches. The story was splashed on the front page of the Bristol Evening Post but, mysteriously, all the copies within a 64km radius disappeared. All 1,400 editions of the Bristol Evening Post sold out in two hours.

The tactic failed, however, when the story was picked by the BBC and national papers including the Times, the Sun and the Daily Mail and now Reigate and Banstead Borough Council's food safety newsletter. The brothers were fined £14,000 for seven food hygiene offences and a further £6,000 for serving food unfit for human consumption, between March and September 2005.

Be vigilant. Employ a reliable pest control contractor and take any steps they recommend.



Fighting illicit trade – unfit chicken

We are on the lookout for illegal chicken after the Food Standards Agency issued a Food Alert involving a meat store in Northern Ireland.

The Agency was informed on Wednesday 9 November of an investigation by both the police and Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) centred on a coldstore for meat and poultry, Euro Freeze (Ireland) Ltd, Lisnaskea, County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland.

A search warrant was obtained to enable police and DARD officials to search the coldstore. Following the search, DARD and FSA are carrying out a full investigation. The coldstore has been sealed and no consignments of meat or poultry can leave or enter the premises.



Since 2005 it has been a legal requirement for food businesses to be able to trace and follow food through all stages of production, processing and distribution (in-house traceability not required). As most of you are the last point in the chain you must be able to prove from whom you purchased the food.

If someone is trying to sell you some cheap meat and they cannot prove to you that it is from a reliable source then do not accept it as you are putting your business and customers at risk. If anyone does try to sell you illegal meat please let us know right away.

Paper Towels

The Food Standards Agency has issued a report on the incorrect use of paper towels containing malachite green. The Agency is concerned that paper towels containing malachite green, if used in food preparation areas, may indirectly contaminate food. Malachite green is considered to be a potential genotoxic carcinogen and as such there would be no safe level of intake.



A previous case of food contamination through misuse has been identified, where the paper towels were used to wrap raw fish overnight in a retail establishment. Therefore, contamination through the misuse of this product is possible.

The paper towels concerned are coloured green but it does not follow, of course, that all green paper contains malachite green. This shouldn't discourage you from using paper towel providing it is for food use, the 'blue' or 'white' roll is still preferred to the reusable cloths.

Check your paper towels now. If they contain malachite green do not use them in any food rooms. If you are uncertain contact the manufacturers.

Tables turned as health inspectors tell Ramsay: 'Clean that freezer now'

That was the headline of a national newspaper back in January when the media got hold of Gordon Ramsay's inspection report for one of his restaurants. The media are using the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to obtain copies of information* councils hold on businesses. This includes food hygiene inspection reports, complaints, sampling visits etc.

So far we have had requests for food reports from the members of the public for the following businesses:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Vojan Indian restaurant | 6. The Beefeater |
| 2. The Bridge House Hotel | 7. Le Raj |
| 3. The Chequers | 8. The Dining Room |
| 4. The Blue Ball | 9. The Indus |
| 5. El Rincon | 10. Lotus Room |

*Data protection still applies so personal details will not be revealed.

Be aware that if we get a request for information we are legally obliged to provide it. Therefore it is even more important to avoid a bad inspection report by being compliant with the law at all times

