

Quarterly Scoop

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Public Sanitation & Retail Food Safety

DSHS Northwest Texas
dshs.texas.gov/region1

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Trending Violations:

- **Improper cleaning and sanitizing of equipment**
- **Improper handwashing.**
- **Improper glove usage.**

Letter from the Editor

By Kassi Anthony

Over the summer, amongst inspecting youth camps and snow cone stands, our inspectors were faced with responding to some disasters that occurred within our communities. Our hearts go out to those directly impacted by these weather events (see page 3).

Also, long-time inspector, Mayra Vargas, is trying out some new types of inspections with the Drugs and Medical Devices program. We are proud of her but will miss her terribly. As of August 1st, we have a new team member, Kandace McNeese, to cover the vacant area. She will be focused on completing her training over the next several months. We are super excited to add her to the group. Additionally, this will be winding up the time we had with our summer intern, Ravi Kotlla. He learned much and is excited to join the field of retail food safety when he graduates this December with his master's in food science. He has been a huge asset for us and has worked hard on many projects, including this newsletter.

On another note, our Public Health Regions are in the process of rebranding. The regional number will be replaced with a name representative of our geographical location. We have also chosen a color to represent our area and make our region easily distinguishable from the other seven public health regions of Texas. Moving forward, our region has chosen the name DSHS Northwest Texas and the color red. You will start seeing these changes implemented in our newsletters and business cards very soon.

As always, we would love to hear any feedback from you on this newsletter. Topics for upcoming issues are welcome. Just reply to your inspector at this [email](#).

Did you Know?

By Melissa Hardin, Brittiany Bowling, Leslie Morgan

Tea Dispensers and Fountain Nozzles (M. Hardin)

Surface areas of all equipment must be cleaned on a routine basis to prevent the development of slime, mold, or soil residues that may contribute to an accumulation of germs. Areas that are often overlooked or forgotten including equipment such as iced tea dispensers, carbonated beverage dispenser nozzles, beverage dispensing circuits or lines, water vending equipment, coffee bean grinders, ice makers, and ice bins. Some equipment manufacturers and industry associations develop guidelines for regular cleaning and sanitizing of equipment. If the manufacturer does not provide cleaning specifications that are readily visible, the person in charge should develop a cleaning and sanitizing regimen that is based on the soil that may accumulate in that equipment.



How to Calibrate a Dial Probe Thermometer (B. Bowling)

All food establishments must have a probe thermometer on hand to verify the internal temperatures of foods. A common probe thermometer used is a dial probe thermometer. Over time your dial probe thermometer can stop reading accurately due to use, temperature fluctuations, or if it is dropped.

To test the accuracy of your probe thermometer, start by filling a glass with ice and adding just enough water to cover the top of the ice.

1. Place the thermometer in the cup of ice water, keep the probe from touching the bottom or sides of the glass.
2. Once the dial stops moving, take a reading. If the thermometer is reading the freezing point at 32°F, then your thermometer is reading accurately. If it is reading higher or lower than 32°F, then it needs to be calibrated.
3. Most dial thermometers can be manually calibrated by adjusting the nut on the back side of the dial. Adjust the dial however many degrees the thermometer is off and retest the thermometer to ensure it is reading 32°F. If the thermometer does not have the ability to be adjusted, then you will need to replace it with a new thermometer that is reading accurately.



Handwashing and glove use (L. Morgan)

To handle ready-to-eat foods (i.e., bread or sliced tomatoes) with your hands, the double barrier method will be employed. The two barriers necessary for foodservice are: 1) proper handwashing, and 2) donning disposable gloves. These are the only two barriers available without a written bare-hand contact policy in place in your facility.

Changing tasks will always require re-handwashing and donning a fresh set of gloves. For example, before you grab the bun for a hamburger and put it on a plate, you will need to wash your hands and put gloves on first. Then, if you knock a knife on the floor and pick it up, but still need to put tomatoes on the burger, you will need to stop, wash your hands, and put new gloves on prior to handling the tomatoes.

In a busy kitchen where you are multi-tasking, using utensils or deli paper to facilitate grabbing ready-to-eat food may be a more appropriate option. Since your hands are a vessel for contamination, the use of utensils or deli paper removes the risk so that food is never directly handled.

Handwashing procedure: 1) Dispense paper towels, if needed to prevent contamination of clean hands, 2) wet hands with running water, 3) apply soap, 4) scrub for 10-15 seconds, 5) rinse under running water, 6) dry clean hands and arms, and 7) turn off faucet with a disposable towel.

Disaster Response Update

By Lindsey Eudey

Over the past month, towns in DSHS Northwest Texas have been hit hard by severe weather. Our hearts and prayers go out to Perryton and Matador.

During this time, inspectors have responded to both cities. Inspectors responding to disaster could have many jobs on location including checking that volunteers are serving food in a safe manner, checking that shelters are providing proper sanitary accommodations to prevent illness or infection, educating establishments about how to operate without certain utilities like gas or water, among other duties.

First and foremost, we are there to help in any way possible. Secondly, we want to make sure that the food that is being given away or sold is safe. The worst-case scenario is that the volunteers and people of the town become sick with a foodborne illness on top of dealing with an already difficult situation.

We will also provide educational documents on how to temporarily operate while minimizing the risk of foodborne illness without water, gas, electricity, or in any other situation that might present itself. We are equipped with the scientific knowledge to assess the situation and adjust accordingly.



"Little known fact, gentlemen. Tacos are the food of genius."

- Heather Brewer

Here are 6 simple things you can do to ensure that the food served in your city is safe after a disaster:

1. Ensure that food trucks coming to your city are licensed and inspected by a health authority. Some may come from other jurisdictions and are welcome in emergency situations only.
2. Ensure that food served or given away is prepared in a licensed and inspected kitchen (not in a home). Food can also be prepared onsite if it's done safely and in accordance with the Food Code. (Like a credit union or insurance company cooking burgers/hot dogs outside of a building, and then giving them away).
3. Ensure people cooking have access to potable, clean water to wash their hands. At a minimum, there should be hand sanitizer present.
4. Ensure people preparing and handing out food are wearing gloves when they touch ready to eat food.
5. Ensure cooked foods meet proper cooking temperatures.

- Poultry - 165°F, Ground meat - 155°F, Whole intact meats - 145°F

6. Ensure that those serving food have ways to keep hot foods above 135°F and cold foods below 41°F. Perishable food should never just be sitting out on a table for long periods of time.

Below is a quick checklist that we use to make sure that minimum standards of safety are being met.

If you see an inspector in your town after a disaster, don't panic! We want to make sure that the people who show up to your town will provide, not only food to your town, but **safe** food. Leslie, Kassi, Brittiany, Lindsey, and Melissa are happy to answer any of your questions and help in any way we can!

[Foodestablishments/Applications/Temporary/Temporary-checklist.pdf](#)

Links and & Contacts

[DSHS Northwest Texas - Retail Foods Contact Info](#)

[Texas Interactive Jurisdictional Map](#)

[Retail Food Establishments | Texas DSHS](#)

[Starting a New Retail Food Establishment in Texas](#)

[CFM Examination Providers | Texas DSHS](#)

[Accredited Food Handler Internet \(Online\) Training Programs](#)

[Cottage Food Production Operations](#)



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