

Alexandria Food Safety Advisory Council

Minutes for Meeting held 9/9/2009 at 2:15 pm

1) Gathering on September 9

2) Introduction of Participants

- Bob Custard, EH Division Manager
- Kristin Garcia, EH Division Supervisor
- Seyra Hammond, EH Technical Specialist
- Becky Domokos-Bays, ACPS
- Jennifer Lehman, RAMW
- Susan Grandgeorge, Joe Theismanns
- Declan Conroy, Food Talk Editor
- Emily Major-AHD H1N1 Specialist
- Livia Navon-AHD District Epidemiologist
- Regina Poteat-Starbucks QA
- Lisa Ross-Shoppers Food Warehouse QA

3) Introduction of New Food Safety Evaluation Report Form-Kristin Garcia

The purpose of the new risk evaluation form is to link violations to CDC foodborne illness risk factors and public health interventions. Kristin introduced the form by specifically discussing each section. The top half of the form addresses risk factors and interventions. The bottom half of the form addresses good retail practices (GRP). EHS must assess compliance status of all 27 items contained in the risk factor/intervention section of the form. Compliance status is assessed using the following terms: IN, OUT, N/A, or N/O. On the GRP portion of the form, boxes will only be checked if a deficiency is noted by the EHS. The temperature section follows the GRP portion of the form. After temperatures, observations and corrective actions are noted. This section is identical to the old format for inspection reports. Section numbers corresponding to violations are listed followed by a description of the observation and correction action needed. Finally, there is a place for the person in charge (PIC) and EHS to sign, a follow-up scheduling section, and a comments section. Handwritten and electronic versions were shown. Kristin also noted that the basis for the new form was Form 3-A from the 2005 FDA Food Code. Guide 3-B lists all the sections numbers applicable to each item number on the new form. Guide 3-C provides marking instructions for the inspection form. Hard copies of the Food Code cost \$65, but electronic copies are free and can be accessed at this web address: <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/foodcode.html> Click on 2005 Food Code. The new form has been use in Alexandria for a month.

4) Baseline Survey-A Brief Summary-Seyra Hammond

The baseline survey is a study of compliance with foodborne illness risk factors and public health interventions within different types of food establishments. The study was initially conducted in 2003. In March 2009, a follow-up study was commenced by Seyra Hammond to enable the Health Department to assess overall trends and identify areas of improvement or areas where more intervention is needed. One hundred forty restaurants were randomly selected to be a part of the study. Surveys have been conducted in all but 23 restaurants. These should be completed by next month. A more detailed discussion of the process will be given at the next AFSAC meeting. Based on the preliminary data, the top five items observed out of compliance at fast food restaurants were written employee health policy (noted at 27 establishments), separation of raw animal foods from ready-to-eat foods (noted at 20 establishments), proper handwashing

(19 establishments), proper cold holding of PHF (TCS) foods (19), and date-marking of commercially prepared foods (18). The top five items observed out of compliance at full service restaurants were separation of raw animal food from ready-to-eat food (30), cold holding of PHF (TCS) foods (27), date-marking of prepared foods (26), written employee health policy (24), and proper handwashing (19). Data is collected by Seyra Hammond by conducting survey inspections at each establishment that is randomly selected to be included in the survey.

5) Proposed demonstration of knowledge questions in Bon Appetit-Seyra Hammond

Council members suggested the following: reinforcing knowledge of foodborne illnesses by asking questions that relate foodborne disease to how foods are mishandled, providing a note in the *Bon Appetit* article that EHS will pose questions that are tailored to suit operations of specific food establishments, and that the next issue of *Bon Appetit* should provide questions pertaining to handwashing and prevention of bare-hand contact with foods. It was suggested that questions be provided in a multiple choice format. It was decided that open-ended questions would be a better format because that is how an EHS would pose a question to a PIC during an inspection. The council suggested that the Health Department provide H1N1 information to restaurants. The Health Department noted that an information brochure on pandemic flu will be sent out with permit renewal applications before the end of the year. The Health Department's H1N1 specialist, Emily Major, may be able to provide more specific information to restaurants.

6) Report on ORS Food Safety Training-Seyra Hammond

ORS Interactive is providing a series of free 3 hour food safety educational sessions in various locations in Northern Virginia. Alexandria Health Department was asked to host two sessions on 8/19 and 11/18. Both will be held at the Lee Center in Gold Room 2 from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm. Pre-registration is required. Contact ORS for details. Seyra Hammond attended the first session on 8/19. About 12 people attended. They were mostly employees sent by their respective food establishments. The instructor showed a ServSafe video for most of the session, pausing between sections to ask for questions from the attendees. The major tenets of food safety were addressed. A large amount of information was condensed in the 3 hours. It was asked if someone who did not speak English would understand the videos based on visual queues. Seyra did not think so. Council members said that they had not heard that the classes were being offered. Members present from the restaurant industry said that they would consider sending their employees to the class. Alexandria Health Department did blast fax the announcement and send a copy of the press release in the last issue of *Bon Appetit*. Restaurant industry representatives said they often do not receive *Bon Appetit* in the mail. It was asked if *Bon Appetit* could be emailed. The Health Department stated that they are working on creating an email list to have this capability in the future. It was suggested that ORS provide certificates to attendees who complete the class.

7) Expected Changes in the 2009 FDA Food Code-Bob Custard

Violations will be identified as "Priority" and "Priority Foundation." Cut leafy greens will be considered a PHF (TCS) food. Produce must be washed in running water. Employees must be trained in allergy awareness. Undercooked comminuted meats (such as hamburger) may not be served from child's menu. Non-heated forced-air hand drying devices will be an accepted means of hand drying. The 2009 Food Code has not been published yet.

8) Food Safety Training format for the 2009 Food Code-Bob Custard

A council member suggested that the format used in the past by Health Department (multiple speakers presenting different topics followed by questions) worked well. Suggestions were made to offer 2 English classes and one class in Spanish, make the training interactive, and try to tie messages into context. Becky Domokos-Bays said that Alexandria City Public Schools has headsets that could be used to provide interpretive services. Even if the class is offered in English, a handout could be provided in Spanish that would highlight the changes in the new food code.

9) Food Safety Month Outreach-What works?

Declan Conroy commented that programs seem to run out of steam and have a finite lifespan. Jennifer Lehman said that she preferred continuing food safety promotion year round by providing new messages each month. Becky Domokos-Bays stated there are many other campaigns during September, and that ACPS have many other tasks requiring their attention during that month. Lisa Ross noted that she had been involved in yearly handwashing programs at public schools during the month of September. She recalled that children remembered their message year to year and found a once a year focus brings more attention to the topic.

10) Upcoming Council Tasks-

Bob Custard provided the Welcome Packet contents draft and asked the council to review it and come prepared to discuss suggestions at the next meeting.

Upcoming AFSAC Meeting Dates-All meetings will be from 2:15-3:45 pm at Alexandria Health Department, 4480 King St. 5th Floor.

Wednesday, **October 21, 2009**

Wednesday, **December 9, 2009**