

HOSPITALITY NEWS

THE COLORADO RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION



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You want to serve safe food and prevent food borne illnesses, and so does the Denver Department of Environmental Health and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment! Keep your customers healthy AND avoid fines! The following Type 1 (“critical”) violations were the most common violations (listed in order of prevalence) cited by Denver Environmental Health investigators in 2014.

1 | KEEP YOUR COLD FOODS COLD!

Routinely monitor your refrigerators and make sure potentially hazardous foods are held at or below 41°F. The air temperatures of your refrigerators usually need to be between 36°F-38°F. Better yet, get thermometers for your employees and have them log refrigeration temperatures a few times every day. That way, you’ll find any refrigeration problems before the health department does!

2 | KEEP DRINKS COVERED AND PROPERLY STORED!

Employees need beverages (kitchens are hot!), but make sure they are covered and are stored below and away from foods and/or food equipment.

3 | KEEP YOUR FOODS FRESH!

Regularly check produce for mold and keep alcohol bottles capped to prevent fruit fly contamination.

4 | USE SANITIZER!

This is one of the first things a health inspector looks for. If active food handling is occurring, sanitizer needs to be set up and used to wipe down utensils, cutting boards, etc. Use your test strips to ensure proper concentrations: 50-200 ppm chlorine or 150-400 ppm quaternary ammonia.

5 | STORE TOXICS BELOW AND AWAY!

To prevent any chemical contaminations, toxic chemicals need to be stored below and away from foods, food equipment, and food preparation areas.

6 | HAVE A THERMOMETER!

You are required to have and use a food thermometer. Your food thermometer can be a dial, metal-stemmed type that ranges from 0-220°F, or a digital thermometer. Regularly test your thermometer in ice water to ensure it reads exactly 32°F.

7 | LABEL YOUR TOXICS!

If you take a toxic chemical out of its original container and put it in a spray bottle, make sure the spray bottle is clearly labeled.

8 | KEEP HANDSINKS STOCKED!

Employees can't wash their hands if the handsink doesn't have soap and/or paper towels! Keep 'em stocked!

9 | USE SINKS PROPERLY!

Handsinks shall be used for handwashing only! Make sure employees aren't using handsinks to rinse utensils/rags, dump food/ice, or to fill containers. Misuse of a handsink can prevent another employee from washing their hands when needed. Also, don't use the produce washing sink as a handsink – that's unsanitary!

10 | KEEP HOT FOODS HOT!

Hot potentially hazardous food shall be held at or above 135°F. Use your thermometer!

11 | PROVIDE HOT/COLD WATER!

It is very important for sanitation that your facility has enough hot water - handsinks need 100°F or above and three-compartment sinks need 110°F or above.

12 | WASH YOUR HANDS!

Wash, wash, wash! Teach employees to do proper 20-second hand wash:

- Upon arriving at work
- After returning from restroom
- After coughing, sneezing, eating, drinking, touching their skin/hair
- After handling raw meats
- After taking out the trash
- Before donning gloves and between glove changes
- After handling soiled dishes

13 | PESTS...EEK!!

Prevent pest infestations by keeping your facility clean and uncluttered, and by sealing wall holes and having tight-fitting exterior doors. If you do need to control pests, try traps or glue boards (open bait/poison not allowed).

14 | COOL YOUR FOOD!

Taking too long to cool off cooked foods is a frequent cause of foodborne illness. During lengthy cooling, disease-causing bacteria may grow in potentially hazardous foods. If the food isn't cooled from 135° F to 70° F in two hours or less, then from 70° F to 41° F in four hours or less, enough bacteria may grow to cause a foodborne illness. Again, use your thermometers! Use good cooling methods, such as ice baths, ice wands, and shallow, uncovered metal pans.

15 | NO BARE HAND CONTACT!

Touching ready-to-eat foods (i.e. foods that will not go through a further cooking process prior to serving) with bare hands increases the risk of foodborne illness. Train employees and bartenders to use gloves or utensils when handling foods such as salads, garnishes, cooked foods, breads, or when plating foods.