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The Everclean Report

Minimizing Critical Violations

A critical violation means a provision in the Food Code that if in noncompliance, is more likely than other violations to contribute to food contamination. Examples of critical violations include improper holding temperatures and unclean food contact surfaces.

Critical violations have been proven, through scientific methods, to increase the likelihood a customer might become ill. Critical violations have weighted point values that result in lower scores during health department inspections. Also, they are “red-flags” for media sensationalism across the country.

Minimizing critical violations must be a high priority of restaurant operators. To minimize these violations one must understand the reason they occur. Take ownership of the violation and search out corrective actions to eliminate repeat violations. If a critical violation is uncovered during a food safety inspection, managers should create an *ACTION PLAN* (contact Everclean for samples) that outlines the course of action needed to eliminate the violation from occurring again. An *ACTION PLAN* should be another way to provide focused training to staff.

Another effective way to minimize critical violations is to understand the violation. Ask questions and solicit assistance from the inspector. Inspectors are highly trained individuals with great insight into food safety.

Chemical Poisoning = Food Borne Illness

Chemical residues can enter the food supply and cause illness. Detergents, cleaning compounds, drain cleaners, polishes and sanitizers are just a few of the chemicals necessary for the maintenance of a sanitary food establishment. Improper concentrations or improper rinsing of detergents and cleaners from food contact surfaces such as equipment, utensils or tables can leave behind a toxic residue.

Sodium hydroxide, a chemical found in most of the aforementioned cleaning supplies, is the most common culprit in foodborne illnesses caused by chemical poisoning. The first symptoms - burning of lips, mouth and throat - begin within a few minutes. Vomiting, abdominal pain and diarrhea are additional signs of the illness. Severe burns, lung damage, and even death could result. Prevention of contamination is best achieved by:

- Properly training personnel on cleaning and sanitizing.
- Reading and following label instructions on cleaning chemicals.
- Storing cleaning chemicals away from food and food contact equipment.
- Maintaining cleaning chemicals in the original, properly labeled container.
- Prohibiting the use of empty chemical containers for food storage.

Please educate your employees on the importance of properly handling chemicals in order to keep food safe and ultimately protect the Brand.

Any comments or questions should be directed to info@evercleanservices.com.

Special Interest Articles:

Minimizing Critical Violations
Chemical Poisoning = FBI

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