



# ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT 2013 NEWSLETTER

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[www.emd.saccounty.net](http://www.emd.saccounty.net)

Your source for  
current information on food handling  
and environmental health in Sacramento County.



## Can Sacramento County Restaurants be Dog Friendly?

The California Retail Food Code does not allow live animals inside a food facility (*patios are not a part of the food facility*). However, CalCode makes exceptions for some animals, including service animals. Questions often arise as to what qualifies as a service animal. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines service animals as dogs and miniature horses individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. A food facility operator can ask the following questions to determine if a customer has a legitimate service animal:

1. **Is this a service animal? If yes,**
2. **Has the animal been trained? (can be trained by the individual) If yes,**
3. **Can you tell me something about the nature of the services provided?**

**Note: No documentation, tags, vests or certification are required.**

If the customer gives credible answers to these questions, the animal is a service animal under the ADA. Customers utilizing trained service animals have a right to be accommodated. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.

Trained service animals should not pose a health or safety hazard, but if a hazard does occur, the service animal can be excluded from your food facility.

## Gloves- The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

We often get complaints when food handlers are seen preparing food without gloves. The caller will usually ask, "aren't they supposed to be wearing gloves?" The answer is not so simple.

The code requires that **gloves be worn** when contacting food and food contact surfaces if the employee has;

- **cuts, sores, rashes,**
- **uncleanable orthopedic support devices, or**
- **artificial nails,**
- **fingernails that are not clean smooth or neatly trimmed.**
- **rings (other than a plain band),**

In addition, whenever gloves are worn, they shall be changed, replaced, or washed as often as handwashing is required. The code also requires that gloves be used for one type of task and then thrown away before moving to another task. Handwashing is also required whenever gloves are changed.



# California Food Handler Law Overview

The California Food Handler Card law became effective in July 2011. The law is designed to ensure that all food handlers receive a reasonable level of training in food safety practices to reduce the potential for foodborne illness.

**Who needs the card?** All food handlers need the card, including individuals involved in the preparation, storage, or service of food and beverage in a food facility. There are several exceptions for food handlers working in specified facilities such as licensed health care facilities, certain chain restaurants, and convenience stores – which can be found at [www.EMD.SacCounty.net](http://www.EMD.SacCounty.net).

**How are Food Handler Cards obtained?** Cards are obtained by taking a course from an accredited provider, and passing an assessment with a score of at least 70%. Cards are valid for three years. Most courses range from \$10-20. Check the EMD website for a list of approved providers.

[www.emd.sacounty.net](http://www.emd.sacounty.net)

**What are Facilities required to do?** Facilities must maintain records showing that each food handler they employ has a valid food handler's card. We recommend keeping a copy of each employee's food handler card in a binder, separate from personnel files. These records must be made available at the time of inspection.

## Salad Bars, Buffets, and Self-Service Foods

*Who hasn't been at a some type of self-service buffet where the person in front of you wipes their nose, scratches their head, eats a piece of food, and reaches for the spoon you were about to use?*



Although we have all seen unsanitary practices, self-service food remains as popular as ever. Recently we have seen self-service yogurt bars, soup bars, pizza buffets, and salsa bars being installed throughout the county. Love them or hate them, they are here to stay. Here are a few requirements that will assist in operating a safe self-service operation.

1. Assign at least one employee to supervise the salad bar. This person is responsible for ensuring that regulations are followed.
2. Keep clean plates and other tableware available. Remind customers to get a clean plate when returning to the buffet.
3. Replenish food properly. Switch out pans of food. Never add freshly prepared food to food already on display. Display smaller quantities of food to keep food fresh.
4. Keep sneeze guards and covers in place. Food must be shielded to block the area between the customer's mouth and the food. A securely attached, self-closing lid can also be used to protect food.
5. Maintain proper temperatures. Use a probe thermometer to check food temperatures in the outer layer of food as well as deeper into the food product. Cold foods should be kept at or below 41F and hot foods at or above 135°F.
6. Store wiping cloths in sanitizing solution whenever they are not in active use. Employees should be made aware of the dangers of spreading bacteria and viruses through wiping cloths.
7. Remember, customers do notice and appreciate when a restaurant promotes food safety!

# EMD Response to Unpermitted Food Vendors

Every summer EMD receives numerous complaints from food facility operators and the public about unpermitted food vendors selling in neighborhoods and in front of businesses. The EMD Unpermitted Food Vendor Team investigated or responded to 41 complaints in 2012. In coordination with Code Enforcement, Environmental Specialists answered these complaints by conducting 24 sweeps during which, unsafe food and equipment was impounded and vendors were provided bi-lingual information about how to legally sell food.



Two carts impounded after an unpermitted food vendor sweep

Although cut fruit from these carts appears to be a healthy snack, it can pose many risks. Sliced melon that is not kept refrigerated can easily grow bacteria that cause foodborne illness. Another major concern is lack of access to handwashing and/or restrooms. Proper hand washing is the best way to prevent the spread of most viruses. Carts and equipment are also poorly constructed and often do not have cleanable sanitary surfaces.

One of the most difficult aspects of this type of enforcement is that many unpermitted vendors are dropped off to sell food all day by a central kingpin. If the food and equipment are confiscated, the vendor walks away and the kingpin puts out a new cart the next day.

Encourage your friends and family to only buy food from permitted food facilities or vendors. For fresh produce, check out your local market or certified farmers market. If you are not sure whether the food facility or vendor has a permit, you can ask the owner or call our office at (916) 875-8440. Eat well! Eat safe!

## Food Safety Education

**Classroom Training** - Food school is available several times a month in *English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese and Punjabi*. These classes cover the basic food safety requirements for food handlers. Classes are approximately 3 hours long and cost \$20 per person. (***This class does not meet state requirements for food safety certification or food handler card training.***)

**DVD Available** - The EMD website has the "How to Get a Green" video available for viewing. Go to [www.emd.saccounty.net/EnvHealth/FoodProtect/FoodVideoTraining.html](http://www.emd.saccounty.net/EnvHealth/FoodProtect/FoodVideoTraining.html) to watch the video. The DVD is narrated in English, Spanish, Cantonese and Vietnamese.

**Pocket Cards** - EMD has developed food safety quick reference cards that include useful information such as, cooking and holding temperature requirements. These laminated cards are great to tuck into a pocket, or hang on a lanyard for quick reference. Cards are available in *English, Spanish, Korean, Russian, Cantonese, Tagalog, and Vietnamese*. Ask your Environmental Specialist for one during your next inspection or call EMD at (916) 875-8440.

## Business Recycling and Storm Water Inspections

Your Environmental Specialist is required to complete a business recycling inspection and a storm water inspection at most facilities once every three years. If you have questions regarding these inspections or the requirements, please call our office at (916) 875-8440 and ask to speak to a Specialist in the Business Recycling program or the Storm Water program.



# The inspector is HERE...what should I do?!?



- Pick one...**
- A) Run to the back and tell everyone to start cleaning!
  - B) Suggest that the inspector make an appointment.
  - C) Be cool....**



*Ever wonder what to do when the health inspector shows up? Here are a few tips to help you be cool during inspection time.*

## First, know what to expect.

- Inspections are conducted approximately 3 times a year for facilities that do food preparation. Routine inspections are “unannounced”.
- The inspector will ask for an owner, manager, or person in charge. (A “person in charge” is required to be available at all times).
- If you don’t recognize the inspector, you may ask for a photo ID and business card.

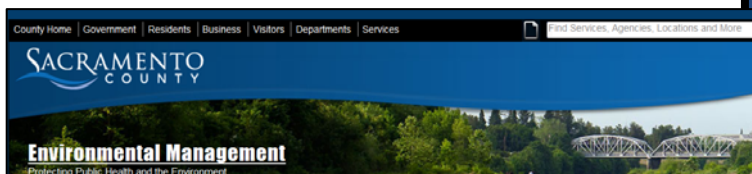
## Next, do what works for you...

- If you are busy, you do not have to accompany the inspector.
- Walking with the inspector is helpful for answering questions and correcting problems immediately.
- Answer questions to the best of your ability – you can get back to us if you don’t have an answer right away. If something doesn’t make sense – ask for clarification....or ask how you can explain this requirement to your staff.
- As you walk with the inspector, take notes – it will help you remember any problems that were pointed out. Sometimes minor items are not violations, but may need attention so they do not become violations.
- During the exit interview, discuss and understand the violations and how to correct them.
- Commit to correction and time frame. Discuss reinspections or requirement for proof of correction.
- Always keep a copy of the last inspection report available in the facility.

## Before your next inspection, make sure you are prepared!

- Know what a major violation is and where major violations can occur in your facility
- Institute procedures that will reduce or eliminate chances for major violations
- Train Staff. Be Prepared. Use Available Resources. Check out the EMD website!

FYI - The Sacramento County EMD website has been remodeled! The site was designed to make finding the information you need easier. Look up inspection reports, sign up for classes or download handouts by logging on to:  
[www.emd.saccounty.net](http://www.emd.saccounty.net)



# Proper Food Storage in Refrigerators and Freezers



|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Top shelf:</b><br/>Produce,<br/>Cooked and<br/>Ready-to Eat<br/>Foods</p>  |  |
| <p><b>Fish, Eggs</b><br/>Cook temp: 145°F</p>  |  |
| <p><b>Raw Beef,<br/>Raw Pork</b><br/>Cook temp: 145°F</p>  |  |
| <p><b>Ground Meats</b><br/>(hamburger,<br/>sausage)<br/>Cook temp: 155°F</p>   |  |
| <p><b>Bottom Shelf</b><br/><b>Raw Poultry</b><br/>(chicken, turkey,<br/>duck)<br/>Cook temp: 165°F</p>   |  |
| <p>→ All food must be covered (except when cooling)<br/>→ All foods must be stored 6 inches above the floor<br/>→ Air must be well-circulated<br/>→ Do not line the shelves with cardboard or foil</p> |  |



**Helpful Handout:** Post this diagram on the refrigerator to remind staff about proper food storage.

## News Flash

**Cottage Foods** - Assembly Bill 1616-Cottage Food Operations (CFO) became effective January 1, 2013. This law allows certain non-potentially hazardous foods to be made in a private home and sold directly to consumers or restaurants and markets. Please see our website for more information on permit requirements: [www.emd.saccounty.net/EnvHealth/FoodProtect/CottageFood.html](http://www.emd.saccounty.net/EnvHealth/FoodProtect/CottageFood.html)

**Awards of Excellence** - Did you know EMD has an Awards of Excellence program recognizing facilities that have a record of exemplary food safety practices? Each September, during National Food Safety Month, awards are mailed to facilities that have met the award criteria over the previous three routine inspections. To review the criteria and see a complete list of 2012 awardees go to [www.emd.saccounty.net](http://www.emd.saccounty.net).



**EMD Smartphone App** - Download the “Sac Food” app today to find restaurants near you, to view the inspection reports of your favorite restaurants, and to check the color placard status of a restaurant.



**Facebook** - It's not just for friends anymore. EMD is on Facebook under the name “Sacramento County Environmental Management Department.” We will be posting links and information on the latest hot topics. Go ahead and “like” us!

**EMD Payments Online** - You can use your credit card to pay health permit fees from your business or your home. Log on at: [www.emd.saccounty.net/EMDpayments.asp](http://www.emd.saccounty.net/EMDpayments.asp)



## WELCOME TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT FOOD SAFETY NEWSLETTER

Sacramento County Environmental Management Department  
Environmental Health Division  
10590 Armstrong Ave, Suite B  
Mather, CA 95655



Environmental Health Specialists are available in person or by phone (916) 875-8440 from 8am to 5pm.