

# Food *for thought*

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A newsletter for Fairfax County food establishment owners and operators and their employees

## Holiday Catering - 'Tis the Season

During the holiday season an establishment's catering events can increase and with it the volume of food produced. This can often exceed its capacity to safely prepare, cool, reheat, and hold food. Before taking on catering events, there are a few items every facility should verify. The kitchen equipment should be adequate to prepare the foods for the event. Adequate refrigeration space is needed, not only for added inventory, but also for shallow pans and other containers used to cool various items of food. Verify there is adequate capacity to reheat foods and to safely hot hold the food after reheating and prior to service.

Food preparation a day or more in

advance adds major food safety concerns, particularly when it involves cooking and cooling processes. Hot foods must be quickly cooled to 70°F in two hours and 41°F in 4 hours using sheet pans, shallow hotel pans (2" deep or less), ice baths or other approved processes. Foods cooked in advance and cooled must be reheated to 165F for hot holding. Use a calibrated food thermometer to verify that the temperature has reached 165°F. Use food temperature logs to monitor and record food and equipment temperature. Use approved hot and cold holding container to transport the foods to offsite catered events.

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## Permit Renewals Are Due

All Permits to Operate a Food Establishment expire on December 31, 2019. Renewal applications for the Permit to Operate are being sent to all food facilities beginning the first week of November. There is no grace period for renewing the permit. On January 1, 2020, a \$10.00 late fee will be added to the original fee. After January 1, a food establishment may not operate without a valid Permit to Operate. **Remember to include your email address when completing the renewal application forms.** The Fairfax County Health Department will soon launch an **online permit renewal system** and renewal notices will then be sent only by email with a link to renew permits online. If you have any questions about your permit renewal or you do not receive a renewal application, please contact the Health Department at 703-246-2201, TTY 711.

## Norovirus: What Can You Do?

Norovirus is a highly contagious virus and is a leading cause of acute gastroenteritis (inflammation of the stomach and intestines) in the United States. The virus is usually spread by the fecal-oral route by contaminated food and water or person-to-person contact. It may also spread via contaminated surfaces or through the air. Norovirus is very contagious because it only takes a small number of viral particles (fewer than 100) to make you sick. Symptoms of norovirus can include abdominal cramps, nausea, diarrhea and vomiting.

So how does this relate to a food operation? Infected workers may frequently be a cause of norovirus outbreaks in food service settings. When a person is sick with norovirus, he or she will contaminate his or her surroundings, including co-workers, surfaces and the foods they handle. Steps that can be taken to prevent an outbreak include:

### Training and monitoring employees

A good preventive measure against spreading the virus is an effective employee health policy and training. Food Service employees must be trained to report to their manager when they have vomiting, diarrhea, jaundice, sore throat with fever or

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# Active Managerial Control Awards

Congratulations to the food service operators who were recognized with an Active Managerial Control award over the last three-month period! During their recent inspections, there were no violations cited and it was observed that good active managerial controls were in place. Congratulations to:

- *Ana Reyes: Chipotle, 9447 Lorton Market St., Lorton*
- *Roberto Pereira: Burger King 5980 Kingstowne Centre, Alexandria*
- *Ron Schmidt: Carrabba's Italian Grill, 5805 Trinity Pkwy, Centreville*
- *Anayeli Mendez: Panda Express #1408, 14220 Centreville Square, Centreville*
- *Lara Berenji: Rare Bird Coffee Roasters, 230 W Broad St., Falls Church*
- *Geo Lopez: Moe's Southwest Grill, 5855*

*Leesburg Pike, Falls Church*

- *Hyunyi Min: Westlawn Elementary School, 3200 Westley Rd., Falls Church*
- *Amjad Farachi: Five Guys Burgers and Fries, 3541 South Jefferson St., Falls Church*
- *Mauricio Martinez: Carrabba's Italian Grill 12192 Sunset Hills, Reston*



See pictures and read details about how they are reducing the risk of foodborne illness in their food establishment on the Health Department website [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/food/awards-programs/active-managerial-control](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/food/awards-programs/active-managerial-control). If you have questions about active managerial control in your food establishment, please speak to your area inspector.

## Health Department Stamp of Approval

The Fairfax County Health Department's new recognition program, Safety Through Actively Managing Practices (STAMP), is for restaurants that meet standards of food safety excellence. Congratulations to our latest STAMP enrollee

- Hyatt Regency Main Kitchen, 1800 Presidents St., Reston, VA
- Contact your inspector if you have any questions or would like help with your application. Food service operators can learn more about the STAMP program and apply for it at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/food/awards-programs/stamp](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/food/awards-programs/stamp).



## Dispose of FOG (Fats, Oils & Grease)

FOG (Fats, Oils and Grease) comes from food such as cooking oil, lard, shortening, meat fats, sauces, gravy, mayonnaise, butter, ice cream, soups and others. When not disposed of properly, FOG can cause blockages in the sewer line in the street. This can then cause sewer backups into restaurants. How can you control the possible damage from FOG? Following are some recommended best practices:

1. Wipe off dishes, pots, pans and cooking utensils before rinsing or washing;
2. Collect cooking oil in grease barrels and schedule pickups before they are full; and
3. Know where your grease trap or grease interceptor is located. Clean the grease trap/interceptor regularly – at least every two months. Odors coming from the area of the grease trap are good indicators that the trap needs cleaning. Cleaning may be done by the restaurant itself or by a licensed sewage handler.

Keep a record of the regular grease trap cleaning. The Health Department or the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services may ask to see these records during routine inspections. The grease trap/interceptor is considered part of the overall plumbing system of a restaurant. Proper maintenance is important in the overall operation of the food service. If you have any questions about the use of your grease trap, contact the Health Department at 703-246-2201, TTY 711.



*Holiday Catering:*

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Sometimes temporary staff need to be brought in to help an establishment manage catered events. This can include wait staff, bartenders, kitchen staff and others. Be sure to review employee health policies with these staff. Keeping ill employees away from food and maintaining safe practices throughout food preparation will help keep everyone safe and happy this holiday season.

*Norovirus*

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infected lesions. This training should be part of the illness policy, and all employees should be aware of their responsibility. It is important not to work while sick and to manage employees effectively when they return to work.

### Adequate handwashing

All employees especially those returning to work after a norovirus illness should understand the importance of handwashing in conjunction with proper glove use to prevent the spread of disease

### Cleaning and sanitizing

If a norovirus infection is suspected, it is important to conduct a thorough and daily cleaning of all surfaces that your guests and associates touch such as door handles, drinking fountains, kitchen equipment, counters, condiments stands etc.

### Proper clean up procedure if there is a vomiting or diarrhea incident

Have a biohazard clean up kit in place in your facility and conduct periodic training with your staff on proper procedure in using the cleanup kit. Ensure that regularly used cleaning equipment from the kitchen like brooms and mops are not used—not only will these also become contaminated, but they will send norovirus particles into the air.