

SIMPLY SAFE – AUGUST 2008

BARBECUE SAFETY

The weather is getting warmer, and at this time of the year, you may decide to cook outdoors for your customers. Bacteria such as *E.coli* O157, Salmonella and Campylobacter can cause serious illness, but you can steer clear of food poisoning by taking some simple steps. When barbecuing, the biggest risks of food poisoning are from cross-contamination and raw or undercooked meat. There are also health and safety hazards due to the open flames and hot coals. Following these tips, will help you ensure that your barbeque is safe and hygienic:

1. Set up your barbecue on level ground away from bushes and buildings and do not allow children or animals anywhere near.
2. Light the barbecue well in advance, and make sure you use enough charcoal and wait until it is glowing red (with a powdery grey surface) before starting to cook. This will prevent food from cooking quickly on the outside, giving the impression that it's cooked
3. Keep meats, salads and other perishable food in a cool box with plenty of ice packs or if possible, in the fridge until just before you are ready to cook or eat them. This will ensure that they are kept at the correct temperature for as long as possible. Remember to always serve salads at the last minute.
4. During cooking, turn food often. If it starts to burn on the outside raise the grill height or reduce the heat of the charcoal (dampen coals slightly or partially close air vents).
5. Cook poultry, burgers, sausages and pork throughout - no pink bits in the middle. If possible, fully pre-cook all poultry and sausages in the oven then take them straight to the barbecue to add the final barbecue flavour.
6. Keep raw and cooked foods and utensils apart at all times, and don't handle cooked foods with utensils that have touched raw meats or put cooked or ready-to-eat food on plates that have held raw meats.
7. Make sure frozen food is properly defrosted before cooking.
8. Only use recommended fluids or fire lighters and **never** petrol.
9. If using gas barbecues, make sure that the gas bottle is contained, and any hoses are secured and clipped to prevent gas leaks
10. Be careful when cooking fatty foods, the dripping fat can cause the barbecue to flare up.
11. When finished, make sure the coals are cool before you move the barbecue. Once cool, dispose of the ashes safely - never place them in dustbins.

This list is not exhaustive, but will get you off to a good, safe start. Always ensure that there is an up to date risk assessment in place for barbecues, as this will highlight the hazards and control measures associated with your specific premises. For more information on risk assessments, contact Perry Scott Nash on 01743 745771.

THE A-Z OF FOOD SAFETY

B is for.....Burgers

Ensure burgers (beef, lamb, pork and poultry) are always cooked through to the centre; they should not be served 'rare' or pink. This is because burgers are prepared from meat which has been minced. As bacteria are usually found on the surface of meat, once the meat is minced, the bacteria are distributed throughout the meat, and are no longer just on the surface. This is different to steak which, once the outside is sealed, the bacteria on the surface are killed. When cooking burgers, the centre must reach 75°C, for a minimum of 30 seconds, and the juices must run clear. There should be no evidence of blood remaining. You must advise customers that it is against company policy to serve burgers rare, even if they insist!

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YOUNG PERSONS RISK ASSESSMENTS

The law considers a 'child' to be anyone younger than the minimum school-leaving age of 16 and a 'young person' to be anyone over school-leaving age, but under 18. Young people, especially those new to the workplace, will be faced with lots of unfamiliar risks from the jobs they will be doing and from the working environment. It is a fact that everyone is at particular risk of injury in the first six months of a job as they may be unaware of existing or potential risks, however, young people, due to lack of experience or maturity may be more at risk. In certain cases, they may not have reached physical maturity and therefore lack the strength demanded to perform certain tasks, whilst in other cases, they may not take their jobs seriously, and may be more eager to impress or please people with whom they work. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, state that employers must carry out risk assessments to include risks to young person's **before** they are employed. On the first day of employment, the Manager must ensure that all necessary training has been completed, and the employee must be made aware of the key findings of the assessment, and sign the front sheet of the Risk Assessment Manual to confirm this prior to work. This will include students on unpaid work experience. Where the young person is a child, the risk assessment must also be brought to the attention of their parents or carers. All training given must be based on the risk assessment and safe working procedures in the Health and Safety Policy. Further information can be found in your Health and Safety Manual or by contacting our Client Services Team on 01438 745771.

LADDER EXCHANGE – STARTS SEPTEMBER 2008

Falls from height continue to be the main cause of death in the workplace, and one of the main causes of serious injury. Around a third of "falls from height" accidents are as a result of a fall from a ladder. From September 2008, a large number of Local Authority Enforcement Officers will be checking ladders as part of their visits and where they see an unsafe ladder they may take it away. The HSE will be working with the ladder association and the following companies on ladder exchange to highlight the risks associated with using a "dodgy" ladder and provide employers with the opportunity to exchange their sub-standard ladder for a new one at a discounted price:

- * SGB Hire and Sale
- * Ladderstore.com
- * HSS Hire
- * Speedy Hire

If you use a ladder in your day to day work, make sure that it is the right ladder for the job. If it is not the right ladder or it is broken or bent contact one of the companies above and exchange it. Remember....ALWAYS check your ladder before you use it.

RECENT PROSECUTIONS

HOTEL FINED £33,000 FOR FOOD HYGIENE OFFENCES

During a routine inspection carried out by EHO's last October, serious problems including mouldy food past its use-by date, surfaces contaminated with dried food debris and a butter dish with a fly in it, were found in a country hotel and restaurant used as a venue for corporate customers. The company which owns the hotel recently appeared in court on charges including failing to ensure the food premises was kept clean and maintained in good repair, and to ensure fittings and food equipment were clean and disinfected. The council's solicitor accused the company of not keeping records of when food should be thrown away or regularly checking fridge temperatures. The company admitted nine food hygiene offences, and was ordered to pay £3,500 on each count. Costs of £2,288 were awarded to the council.

MAJOR SUPERMARKET CHAIN GIVEN MAXIMUM FINE FOR SAFETY BREACH

The maximum penalty allowed by a magistrate's court has been levied against a supermarket chain after a 17-year-old broke two bones in his arm when he became trapped in a cardboard compactor. He was operating the machine with a colleague at a store when the banding around a bale snapped. As he reached into the compactor to try and fix the problem, his colleague tried to eject the bale. This moved the compact bale upwards and crushed the teenager's arm against the top of the machine. An investigation by the local authority found the injured worker had not received proper training to use the compactor, and a young person's risk assessment had not been carried out. It also found that there had been two previous accidents involving similar machines. The company pleaded guilty, and was fined £20,000 for failing to provide a safe system of work for using the machine, £5,000 for not carrying out the required risk assessment and costs of £4,792 were awarded to the council.

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