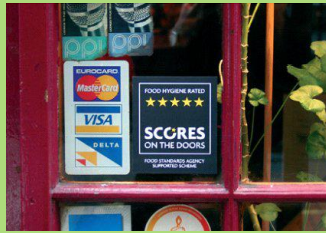




PERRY SCOTT NASH
associates limited

SIMPLY SAFE – OCTOBER 2008

SCORES ON DOORS – WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?



Scores on the Doors schemes aim to motivate food businesses to raise food safety standards by naming and shaming the good, the bad and the ugliest places to eat. Although the Food Standards Agency may create a national scheme in time, various schemes currently exist. Some councils use stars, some smiley faces, some points, and even tulips. The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) has recently told the Food Standards Agency (FSA) that no decision can be made on a national *Scores on the Doors* scheme without further evidence. Responding to the FSA consultation on a preferred national scheme, the CIEH states that: "Given the apparent weakness of the evidence in the FSA commissioned evaluation reports, particularly in relation to the effectiveness of different schemes in improving hygiene standards, a true objective assessment of the relative merits of the differing opinions does not appear possible." The consultation response goes on to state that the lack of definitive evidence appears to have greatly divided stakeholders and seriously threatens the likelihood of agreement on a single national scheme.

The CIEH is also disappointed that the FSA cut the evaluation period from two years to six months and in so doing prevented proper assessment from being conducted. "While it is acknowledged that there were good reasons for wishing to limit the multiplication of schemes, by moving rapidly towards recommendations for a national model, this did have consequences." The CIEH asks that the five star, six tier scheme be considered fairly with all other options and states that a: "transparent and objective comparison of the effectiveness of different schemes is essential if the case is to be made for a single national scheme". A single national scheme is in the interests of consumers, business and regulators to ensure consistency, however, the CIEH believe that the benefits of this consistency, rather than having a number of different schemes operating across different boroughs, could be lost.

THE A-Z OF FOOD SAFETY

D is for.....Defrosting

When cooking pre-packed frozen foods always follow instructions on defrosting and/or cooking from frozen. If cooking from frozen, allow sufficient time for food to be thoroughly cooked and check it before serving. When defrosting foods make sure they are fully defrosted before cooking and allow food enough time to thaw. Never re-freeze food once it has started to thaw. Thaw food by placing it on the bottom shelf of the fridge in a container to catch any juices. These juices can be contaminated so wash dishes - and hands - thoroughly after use, and always use sanitizer to reduce bacteria to a safe level.

Perry Scott Nash Associates Ltd, Perry Scott Nash House, 2 Arlington Court, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FS
Tel: 01438 745771 Fax: 01438 745772 Email: info@perryscottnash.co.uk www.perryscottnash.co.uk



WARNING....ULTRA VIOLET KITCHEN EXTRACTION SYSTEMS!!!

Please be aware that there is a type of kitchen extraction system that contains UV lights, which are strong enough to cause damage to the eyes. Fortunately, these systems are expensive and found in few kitchens, however, you need to check to see if they are in your kitchens. The information below will provide a brief description of how these systems work and the necessary safety features that must be in place. Be aware that they are not easy to see, because the UV lights may not be visible, even when the filters have been removed. If in doubt, look at the manufacturer's booklet to identify if your system is of this type.

The usual kitchen extraction systems are designed to remove steam and grease droplets from the extracted air flow. It does this by making the air change direction several times around the filters, each time causing the heavy droplets to hit the filters and then condense/fall out of the air stream. The UV light tubes are designed to sit behind the filters, in the stream of air containing the small droplets of grease. The UV light acts on these droplets to cause them to break down and fall out of the air stream (and some will adhere to the light tubes), thereby removing almost all of the grease content and bad odours from the exhausted air flow.

Where UV lights are installed inside extraction canopies, there **must** be some form of safety interlock in place to prevent the lights from being switched on when the access panel has been opened e.g. for cleaning. This interlock must also prevent the extraction system from operating when the filters have been removed. The manufacturer's instructions must be followed with regard to periodic cleaning and maintenance - one manufacturer states that the access panel must only be opened by one of their own authorised personnel, who are therefore the only people that should be cleaning the light tubes. Premises must ensure that staff are made aware of the hazards if they have this type of system, and under no circumstances should they operate the system without all of the filters being in place as there is a risk of exposure to the UV lights as well as being a fire hazard. Please check your extraction systems and where this type is found, the site-specific risk assessment must be amended to include the hazard of UV lights and the necessary control measures, and all staff must be made aware of the findings of the risk assessment.

FAST FOOD CHAIN PROSECUTED FOR THE 11th TIME!!!

A major fast-food chain has been prosecuted for the eleventh time since 1991 for selling potentially lethal under-cooked chicken. In the latest incident, the chain was fined £15,000 after a two-year-old boy spat out a piece of under-cooked chicken, purchased at a drive through branch in Wolverhampton. The firm admitted selling food 'not of the quality demanded by the purchaser' but blamed the problem on human error. The firm's lawyers told the court that as soon as the complaint was received the branch replaced the chicken and cooked a fresh batch to ensure all the meat was cooked properly and the equipment was not faulty. The chain has been prosecuted 11 times and cautioned four times for selling under-cooked chicken since 1991.

A Blackburn branch was fined £5,000 in 2005 for selling under-cooked crispy strips; a Sandwell branch was fined £6,000 for selling an under-cooked chicken burger in 2006; a Dudley branch was fined £7,000 for selling under-cooked popcorn chicken in 2006; and a Plymouth branch was fined £10,000 for selling under-cooked crispy strips in 2007. A chief Environmental Services Officer from Wolverhampton said the prosecution demonstrated that the authority was not afraid to take on large companies if they broke the law. 'Cooking is fundamental to ensuring the safety of food as the process destroys pathogens such as salmonella and campylobacter. 'By selling under-cooked chicken, consumers have been put at risk. This prosecution demonstrates Wolverhampton's commitment to ensuring food safety and we will not tolerate food businesses of any size flouting the law. The firm has since said that food safety was 'paramount' and it had invested heavily in store management and food safety procedures. 'These incidents date back over nearly two decades, encompassing all chicken products sold – that's around 590 million pieces a year. 'The Wolverhampton incident was caused by an individual operator error and all the staff have since been retrained to ensure that everything possible has been done to prevent this happening again.

REMINDER TO ALL..... All staff must receive training to enable them to use work equipment safely, and all training must be recorded and refreshed frequently. **DO NOT** allow staff to use any equipment without training under any circumstances....especially dangerous equipment such as slicers, de-carbonisers and compactors.....keep your staff safe!!!

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