

## **SIMPLY SAFE**

# **NOVEMBER 2009**

### **FOOD ALLERGIES.....IF YOU DON'T KNOW, SAY SO!!!**

If someone has a severe food allergy, this can cause a life-threatening reaction called anaphylaxis ('anna-fill-axis'). Anaphylaxis affects the whole body, often within minutes of eating the food. Some people need to be more careful than others to avoid the food they are allergic to because just a tiny amount could cause a life-threatening reaction. If a customer has a severe allergy, it is their responsibility to check before ordering whether the food contains the allergen. In a commercial kitchen, you can't be absolutely sure that food won't contain allergens, as there is always a risk of cross contamination from people, equipment or surfaces.



Two areas of cross-contamination which are extremely difficult to avoid are grills and cooking oil used for frying.



If food marinated in an allergen is cooked directly on the same grill as all other grilled dishes, there is a risk that any allergen remaining on the grill may contaminate other foods. Also, if food containing allergens are cooked in oil, then allergen free foods are cooked using the same oil, there is an additional risk of contamination. If a customer has a food allergy and asks if the food they are ordering will be free from that allergen, unless you have strict procedures in place to ensure that there are separate areas for preparation and cooking, separate cooking utensils/equipment as well as allergy awareness training and good hygiene practices such as thorough hand washing, cleaning of equipment and surfaces between use, then there is no way you can be 100% sure that their food has not been contaminated, or cross contamination has not occurred.

Therefore, under no circumstances should the customer be told that the food is allergen free. This very important point should be explained to both kitchen and restaurant staff. If they don't know, they must say so! The only items that may possibly remain allergen free would be items bought in and sold un-opened in their original packaging such as pre-packed cakes. Don't forget there may items on the menu which do not mention the allergen in the name or description of the food, but they may contain "hidden ingredients" that may not always be obvious e.g. oyster sauce in Chinese food, fish sauce in Thai dishes, milk in some crisps and cakes, sesame seeds in houmous, nuts in oil used for frying, nuts used in cakes and trifles, as a decoration on top, or in the base. It is vital that staff receive training to ensure they know their responsibilities and if there is any doubt they must let the customer know that they cannot confirm the food will be allergen free, leaving the customer free to make their own decision.

### **THE A-Z OF FOOD SAFETY**

**N is for Nutrition.....** A national survey of a sample of adults aged 19 to 64 years is one of a programme of national surveys being conducted with the aim of gathering information about the dietary habits and nutritional status of the British population. The results of the survey will be used to develop a nutrition policy and to contribute to the evidence base for Government advice on healthy eating. This may eventually lead to a requirement for nutritional information to be included on menus not just on pre-packed foods.....Watch this space!!!

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## **FIREWORK & BONFIRE SAFETY**

Watching fireworks is popular and fun. But fireworks are explosives and burn at high temperatures, so they need careful handling and storage. Firework displays and bonfires can be run safely, provided they are carefully planned and controlled. Serious injuries can result from people being hit by live or spent fireworks, unless simple precautions are followed. Only those who have sufficient knowledge, training and experience should set up and run a public fireworks display. It is important that you check with your local authority before the event, that there will be no contravention of your Public Entertainment Licence, or if you do not have one, check whether or not such an event will require you to obtain one.

If you are planning a fireworks display, follow these simple safety tips:

- Plan your firework display to make it safe and enjoyable.
- Ensure all fireworks conform to BS7114 1988
- Keep fireworks in a closed metal box and use them one at a time.
- Read and follow the instructions on each firework using a torch if necessary- never a naked flame.
- Light the firework at arm's length with a taper and stand well back.
- Keep naked flames, including cigarettes, away from fireworks.
- Never return to a firework once it has been lit.
- Don't put fireworks in pockets and never throw them.
- Direct any rocket fireworks well away from spectators.
- Never use paraffin or petrol on a bonfire.
- Keep a bucket of water handy.
- Carefully collect used fireworks after the display. Douse with water, bury or place in a metal container.
- Keep spectators, especially children, adequately separated from the display area.
- Make sure that the fire is out and surroundings are made safe before leaving.
- If contractors are brought in to manage the event, ensure you obtain a copy of their public liability insurance.



If you are planning an event and require further information or guidance please contact Perry Scott Nash on 01438 745771.

## **RECENT PROSECUTIONS**

### **Company directors fined for mice infestation**



Two company directors have been fined nearly £3,000 each after EHO's found serious mice infestation in a pizza restaurant. The council were alerted when a customer complained about a pizza box gnawed by rodents. The inspection revealed evidence of mouse droppings throughout the kitchen and food storage areas including on pizza boxes. Glue traps were also found to contain droppings and fur. The premises and equipment were filthy and staff had no hot water in the toilets wash hand basin. The two directors admitted four offences including lack of pest control procedures and failure to introduce a food safety management system.

This serves as an important reminder that all food premises must be kept clean and hygienic at all times. If there are pest problems identified, a contractor should be called in immediately to eradicate the problem, and if equipment or facilities such as hot water are not working they must be repaired immediately.

### **Firm fined over asbestos exposure**

Several workers, their families and members of the public were put at risk when two firms exposed them to unacceptable levels of asbestos. Contractors were hired to remove a roof which was lined with 3,000 square metres of asbestos insulating board that contained Amosite (one of the most deadly forms of asbestos material) which requires removal in highly controlled conditions. The firm hiring the contractors were fined £40,000 plus £19,223 costs for allowing the contractors to undertake the removal in dangerous circumstances and for putting lives at risk. The contractors carrying out the removal were also fined £25,000 plus costs of £33,844 for not providing their employees with effective protection even after management were told tests had confirmed that the material being cleared contained Amosite. Employees spent 12 weeks removing and smashing the boards before sweeping the carcinogenic dust and debris into bags. The HSE said "the exposure suffered by the men working on this project is the worst their specialist inspector had seen in over 15 years of dealing with asbestos cases".

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