

## Safe Food Advisory Committee Minutes 11/12/09

### Welcome/Introductions

Present: Beth Cleary, Courtney Ziemer, Tommye Schneider, Wally Borowski, Bonnie Lynn, Carrie Bratt, Susan Quam, Susan Bulgrin, Bill von Rutenberg, Glen Timmcke

Absent: Melanie Horzuesky, Joe Mazzara, Vicki Arneson

The minutes from the Safe Food Advisory Committee meeting on 7/30/09 were unanimously approved.

### Environmental Health Updates

Tommye Schneider announced her retirement at the end of year, after working in Environmental Health for 37 years. Due to Doug Voegeli's absence, she may return on an LTE status in February until Doug returns.

Channel 27 is running a 4 week series of reports on restaurants in Dane County. The reports can be found on their website: [www.wkowitz.com](http://www.wkowitz.com). Tommye stated that when media requests are received for these types of stories, she informs them that "best" and "worst" lists are not kept; the only list we can provide them with is the list of establishments referred to the attorney's office. In this instance, Channel 27 reviewed the files of establishments they were interested in, including places that have since gone out of business/had a change of licensee. They do appear to be focusing on higher profile/volume establishments. Susan Quam pointed out that as a "dirty dining" series, things have not been too badly sensationalized. Wally Borowski stated that online reporting will help to remove the interest in this type of story.

### Operator Issues and Updates

Susan Bulgrin asked if Environmental Health has a list of contact emails for licensed establishments. A recent string of robberies at licensed establishments made her think that it would be nice to have a way to notify operators of these types of issues. Beth Cleary stated that this might be possible in the future, depending on how the new licensing software/online licensing works. Tommye said that in the meantime, an article on safety could be included in the next issue of *Foodfacts*. Also, operators can sign up for police district alerts in the same location online as the Environmental Health list-serves that were created.

(<https://my.cityofmadison.com>)

Susan Bulgrin asked for clarification of when a certified food manager is required. Beth answered that only if meals are being served; establishments licensed only under the Dept. of

Agriculture (DATCP), like bakeries and ice cream shops, do not need one. If such a place begins serving meal items like soup and hot dogs, then a certified food manager would be needed. Currently, sushi is not considered a meal. The definition of what a "meal" is has changed throughout the years.

### Online Reporting

The discussion about online inspection reporting has been postponed due to a delay in the new licensing software. Environmental Health will be changing, along with the rest of the City of Madison, to a new licensing system. Currently, the go-live date is scheduled for February. The new system will allow people to apply for licenses online, as well as to renew existing licenses. Posting inspections online will follow once the system is up and running. A tentative goal for having inspections posted online is the next licensing year (July 2010).

### Achievement Awards Program Changes

The City of Madison Health Department began awarding certain establishments an achievement award in 1996. Since the Public Health merger, the achievement award program has been suspended in order to revamp the criteria for the program. The goal of the program is to recognize establishments that are consistently doing well in their inspections.

Previously, the award was based on an establishment's inspection history, and therefore the award was given out a while after the inspection had been conducted. Bonnie Lynn passed out a handout listing the 9 previous criteria for the achievement award. One problem in the past was that it could be a year or more since an establishment's inspection was conducted before they received their award. Operators have expressed that they would like the award to come sooner, in order to help reinforce good food safety and handling by their employees.

One option for the program would be for the sanitarians to print an award immediately after a good inspection that is based on certain criteria. This could be called something like a "gold star" award. In addition, the program would also still give out awards based on inspection history, as in the past.

New changes to the program could include requiring inspection to fall into a scoring range. The range may be different, depending on the complexity of the establishment.

In the past, an establishment most frequently missed receiving an achievement award because of having one critical violation. Beth raised the question of if it would be okay to still give the award to an establishment that did have a critical violation (i.e. a cooler at 45 degrees Fahrenheit)? The FDA has put out their new 2009 code, in which they are no longer calling violations "critical" but instead have put these violations into three different categories. Of the three, "core" type violations are the most serious. When determining whether or not a PHMDC

critical violation would keep an establishment from receiving the award, the new FDA definitions could be taken into account. Beth mentioned that at that next meeting, the committee could review which of all possible critical violations are the biggest concerns and would prevent an establishment from receiving the achievement award.

Does the committee agree with the basic idea of giving an achievement award?

- Bill von Rutenberg: Yes. He stated that he likes rewarding establishments/employees for doing well.
- Susan Bulgrin: Yes. She stated she also really likes the 'gold star' award idea.
- Susan Quam: Yes. She stated she would like to give recognition for having certified food managers as well as employee training programs.

Bonnie Lynn raised the idea that some form of 'extra credit' points could be awarded for things like having multiple certified food managers, which could offset a critical violation. This might allow the more complex establishments receive the achievement award. Also, once inspections are online, icons might be used to help identify establishments that go "above and beyond" by doing things like using the Safe Food Crew program or other training programs. Another way to help the public recognize establishments doing well would be to have award winners link their own websites to the achievement award winners list, on the PHMDC website.

Bill asked if there was any way to reward good establishments with money from PHMDC licensing fees? Tommye stated that since the Environmental Health program is funded by the fees, to do something like this would mean an increase in licensing fees for all establishments, and therefore this is not an easy option.

What are some of the ideas thus far that the committee likes?

- Susan B. stated she likes the idea of a letter from the Environmental Health director to go along with the award certificate, to be posted alongside at the establishment, helping to explain what the award is for.
- Carrie Bratt stated she like the idea of extra credit points, because she thinks that 'no critical violations' should continue to be part of the award criteria. One concern she has is that it could be too easy to earn lots of extra credit points, and earn the achievement award when it may not be fully deserved.
- Glen Timmcke stated he also likes the idea of extra credit points. One big concern he has is how to educate the public on understanding inspection scores, as it relates to winning an achievement award.
- Wally B. stated that he has frequently observed a high interest in staff on how they did during an inspection, and therefore he likes the idea of an instant award given the same day.
- Carrie B. stated that perhaps the program would work better as two different types of awards (instant and historical achievement), instead of trying to merge it all into one award.

- Susan Q. stated that she encourages setting the bar high when it comes to awarding extra credit for employee training programs. For example, require training program completion by a high percentage of employees.

General consensus was that the committee would like to see both a 'gold star' type of instant award, plus the historical achievement award.

### Safe Food Crew Program

The Safe Food Crew (SFC) training modules were developed in 2003/2004 with the help of a grant from the FDA, and can be found online at [www.safefoodcrew.org](http://www.safefoodcrew.org). There are 15 total training modules, which are also available in Spanish. One consistent hurdle since then has been how to publicize program participants. Since the PHMDC merger, the sanitarians have not been able to focus as much about discussing the program to establishment operators. Also, participants from past years have stopped using the program, and the reasons for this have been unknown. Program users seem to like the SFC, but many who receive a binder of all the modules never complete them.

Bonnie interviewed multiple operators about the pros and cons of the SFC, and passed around a handout summarizing what she found. One main complaint is that it is a lot of information to give an employee at once, and preparing to teach employees takes a lot of time for the trainer. Also, taking 15 minutes to train an employee was stated to be too long. Perhaps each module needs to be further streamlined into the most important points, by making parts of the module optional. A way to customize the SFC modules for each establishment would be nice, so the establishments can still receive recognition for completion of the program even when they didn't cover a full module. Operators stated that the hands-on activities were a critical part of the training, and that having the program designed to be taught more one-on-one than in a group setting would make it easier to use. One way to do this might be to give an employee the information to learn on their own time, then have the employee meet later with the trainer to answer questions/take the post quiz to ensure they learned the module's content.

Another finding was that establishments are simply not informing PHMDC (via a mailed-in form) that they've completed the program, due to the amount of time completing the paperwork takes up. Perhaps SFC criteria could be changed from mailing in the paperwork, to providing proof at the time of the annual inspection.

In the past, PHMDC has offered "train the trainer" sessions that help operators learn how to use SFC effectively. These sessions could be offered again, if there was interest.

Glen T. stated that SFC can be too much paperwork to deal with, and that it is hard to get more than 3 staff at once in one location at one time. A way to do SFC one-on-one would work best. He said that lack of interest on the employee's part makes communicating the

information difficult, so the module content should try to be interesting. Currently, he is mostly using the binder of SFC modules as a reference book.

Susan B. stated that Culvers does use some of the SFC modules in conjunction with Culvers' online training programs, but they also run into the problem of just submitting the completion paperwork. She has found that people understand the content easily, and staff like the 'tales from the kitchen' section, which gets their interest and helps bring up similar stories and good teaching points. Culvers offers incentives like meals and paid time to their employees for completing the training, as staff is required to complete it. Typically, the certified food managers teach the other employees in groups of around 5 people.

Carrie B. stated that she also would prefer SFC to be geared more towards one-on-one teaching, because trying to teach in large groups is not possible when staffing is low.

Susan Q. stated that having a flexible program when it comes to stopping and starting modules at an employee's own pace seems to work well, as not all people learn the same way or at the same pace.

Wally B. said that Paisan's has used and liked SFC. Their establishment has a larger number of certified food managers than most, as well as many long-term staff. He stated that they would like to see an improvement in the number of SFC modules that apply towards front of house staff. He said they prefer in-person training and hands-on activities to online training

#### 2010 Safe Food Advisory Committee Meetings

All meetings run from 2-4 p.m. Location varies and is determined as the meeting date nears.

Thursday, February 18<sup>th</sup>  
Thursday, June 10<sup>th</sup>  
Tuesday, September 14<sup>th</sup>  
Tuesday, December 7<sup>th</sup>