

# Food For Thought



## In this Issue:

Hand Hygiene.....	2
Product Safety.....	2
Thawing Frozen Food.....	3
Chemical Foodborne Illness.....	3
Emergency Handbook for Managers.....	4
Grease Trap Maintenance.....	4

## Food Handler Class

A food handler card or certificate issued by accredited providers is required to work in the food industry in Texas and the City of Grand Prairie. Employers must ensure that all their employees have a food handler card or certificate within 30 days of hiring. The cards or certificates must be available for inspection at all times. Allowing employees to work without a food handler card or certificate is a violation of state laws and the City Code of Ordinances.

Food handler cards or certificates obtained through accredited providers are not required to be transferred to a city of Grand Prairie food handler card.

The Public Health Division offers food handler classes the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month for employees who work in the food industry. One class, the 3rd Thursday is offered in Spanish. To attend a class you must bring an identification and pay a fee of \$15.00. Call 972-237-8055 to register or obtain additional information.



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### 2024 Food Handler Schedule

February 1	9:00 a.m.	3:30 p.m.	April 18	9:00 a.m.*	3:30 p.m.
February 15	9:00 a.m.*	3:30 p.m.	May 2	9:00 a.m.	3:30 p.m.
March 7	9:00 a.m.	3:30 p.m.	May 16	9:00 a.m.	3:30 p.m.*
March 21	9:00 a.m.	3:30 p.m.*	June 6	9:00 a.m.	3:30 p.m.
April 4	9:00 p.m.	3:30 p.m.	June 20	9:00 a.m.*	3:30 p.m.

\*Spanish only

Pre-registration is required. Register by calling 972-237-8055.

# Hand Hygiene



Handwashing is a simple thing and it's the best way to prevent infection, illness, and is a key prevention tool for food safety.

The basic rule is to wash hands before preparing food and after handling uncooked meat and poultry, before eating, after coughing, sneezing, using the restroom, or blowing one's nose into a tissue.

When washing hands with soap and water:

Wet your hands with clean running warm water and apply soap.

Rub hand together to make a lather and scrub all surfaces for 20 seconds

Rinse hands well under running water and dry them using a paper towel or air dryer. Use a paper towel to turn off the faucet and open the door.

For more information visit: [www.cdc.gov/handwashing/](http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/)

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Vegetables and fruits must be handled safely to reduce the risk of foodborne illness. Bacteria in soil or water can come in contact with the fruits and vegetables and contaminating them.

When purchasing, make sure the items are not bruised or cut and mold free. While in storage, make sure these items are stored in a way that will prevent cross contamination from other food items especially raw meats. To prolong shelf life, fruits and vegetables should be stored at a temperature of 40°F or below.



All produce that is purchased pre-cut should be stored in the refrigerator for best quality and safety. All produce should be washed under cool water before eating. Scrub firm produce with a produce brush. Wash fruits before you peel and eat them. Refrigerate fresh produce within 2 hours of peeling or cutting.



## Product Safety

For more information visit: <http://food.unl.edu/safety/forgotten-fridge#handling>

# Thawing Frozen Foods

Freezing is a great way to preserve food and keep it safe for an extended period of time. However, it is important to properly thaw frozen foods in order to protect it and prevent contamination. According to the Texas Food Establishment Rules, potentially hazardous food must be thawed in one of several ways:



1. Under refrigeration that maintains the food temperature at 41°F or less;
2. Under cold running water;
3. Or as part of a cooking process that includes heating the food to an adequate internal temperature or thawing in a microwave and then immediately transferring it to a conventional cooking oven.

It is important to note that if you choose to thaw frozen potentially hazardous food under running water, the water must be at a temperature of 70°F or below. The water must also be running hard enough to remove loose particles in an overflow. Additionally, potentially hazardous foods may not be at a temperature above 41°F for more than 4 hours. This time includes thawing under refrigeration and time exposed to running water. By properly thawing potentially hazardous foods, you can protect your employees and your customers.



For additional information visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/keep-food-safe.html>

This type of foodborne illness is caused by contamination of food by chemicals such as pesticides (used in insect and rodent control), certain cleaning compounds, and sometimes by use of improper containers (pots) for cooking or storing food.



Drugs and pesticides are used in agriculture as well as chemicals to control infestation of fruit and vegetables. Some pesticides include insecticides, fungicides, herbicides, and some germicides. These chemicals when ingested in large amounts can cause serious foodborne illness.

All poisonous chemicals and cleaning compounds should be carefully labeled and stored in an area separate from foods. Galvanized containers should never be used for storage of acid foods such as lemonade and tomatoes.

To prevent the possibility of chemical foodborne illness from pesticides, all fresh fruits and vegetables should be washed thoroughly. Even chemicals, which are quite harmless when present in small amounts, have caused severe illness or death when eaten in large quantities. Pay attention while preparing food to prevent accidental contaminants.

## Chemical Foodborne Illness

**WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!!!!**



# Emergency Handbook for Managers

## Breathe Cleaner Air this New Year by Carpooling



Learn more ways to reduce air pollution by visiting, [airnorthtexas.org](http://airnorthtexas.org)



Get involved at [www.gptx.org/cleanprairie](http://www.gptx.org/cleanprairie)

Do you know what steps to take during an emergency? The Emergency Handbook for Managers is a handbook that addresses emergencies that food service facilities may encounter. Scenarios include power outage, flood or sewer back-up, fires, water services disruption, tornadoes and high winds, and solid waste disruption. This handbook contains tips on what to do, who to call, recovery actions, and how to reopen the facility.

The Emergency Handbook for Managers was developed by the City of Grand Prairie's Public Health and Environmental Quality Department as a quick reference guide to help you in case of emergencies.

Please read it on the following link:

[https://www.gptx.org/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/departments/public-health-amp-environmental-quality/documents/public\\_health/emergency-handbook-for-managers.pdf](https://www.gptx.org/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/departments/public-health-amp-environmental-quality/documents/public_health/emergency-handbook-for-managers.pdf)



## Grease Trap Maintenance

All food service establishments in the City of Grand Prairie must pump their grease trap according to their established frequency. The pumping frequency of the grease trap is shown on the health permit issued to each facility. When contracting services, ensure that the liquid waste hauler is permitted by the city and after the grease trap is pumped a copy of the trip ticket should be obtained by the owner/manager of the facility. All establishments must keep a copy of each pumping event for at least 2 years and must be available for inspection at all times.

For more information please call: 972-237-8055.

This Newsletter is a publication of the:

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Submit your comments and suggestions to:

Editor: Werner Rodriguez

Phone: 972-237-8056

Email: [wrodriguez@gptx.org](mailto:wrodriguez@gptx.org)

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