New Illinois Food Code

Illinois adopted a two-part food code on December 21, 2018. The first part is the 2017 FDA Food Code, while the second part has Illinois specific additions. Although the Illinois Food Code (Food Code) is very different in its organization and rule numbering, most of the meaning of it is the same. Illinois had been using a 1976 version with selected updates over the past 40 years. Local health agencies have until January 1, 2019 to adopt and implement the new code. To view or download the Food Code, please visit this website link: http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/food-safety/retail-food.

Violation Marking

Inspection violations were previously categorized as Critical and Non-Critical violations. Now, violations found during an inspection will be marked as Priority, Priority Foundation, or Core.

Priority (^{P}) items are a measurable action that directly eliminates or reduces a hazard associated with foodborne illness prevention. For example, food employees shall keep their hands and exposed portions of their arms clean (Rule 2-301.11).

Priority Foundation (^{Pf}) items are specific actions to support or enable a priority item. For example, soap must be provided for effective hand washing (Rule 6-301.11).

Core (^{C}) items usually relate to general sanitation, operational controls, equipment or structure design, or general maintenance and repair. For example, a hand washing sink shall be constructed to be easily cleanable (Rule 5-202.11(B)).

Scoring is Out!

The weighted point value (from 1976) for each code requirement has been eliminated (i.e. 1, 2, 4 or 5 points). Also eliminated is the Rating score which was 100% minus total weighted point values. Compliance status is now determined by the number of risk factor & public health intervention violations and the number of repeated risk factor/public health intervention violations.

Uniform Inspection Report

The inspection report cover sheet is organized into Foodborne Illness Risk Factors & Public Health Interventions (RFIs) and Good Retail Practices (GRPs). Violations will be located in one of these areas.

Additional report pages are different from the past, but follow a statewide uniform format. To view the uniform inspection report pages, please visit this website link: http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/food-safety/retail-food

Person-In-Charge (PIC) Assignment

PIC is the individual present at a food establishment who is responsible for the operation at the time of the inspection. During an inspection, inquiring about the PIC will be one of the first questions we'll ask. If you, the permit holder, are not present, then designate someone as the PIC (Rule 2-101.11), Item #1 and a Priority Foundation (^{Pf}) RFI violation. Does the PIC need to be a Certified Food Protection Manager (CFPM? No, but he/she should be able to "demonstrate knowledge" by answering questions.
Discuss with your inspector.

Time-Temperature Control for Safety Foods (TCS foods)

This term is a new definition and it replaces the definition of potentially hazardous foods. Determining a TCS food is now more complex; to understand, please discuss with your inspector.

One food that has been added is cut leafy greens which are fresh leaves that have been cut, shredded, sliced, chopped or torn from lettuce (iceberg, romaine, leaf, butter, baby leaf lettuce); escarole; endive; spring mix; spinach; cabbage; kale; arugu-la; and chard. This means, like cut tomatoes, that cut leafy greens shall be held at 41°F or below.

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Food Establishment

A new all-encompassing definition known as "food establishment" has been added, i.e. there is no longer a distinction of food service or retail food store. It also now includes vending machines and transport vehicles.

Food Handler Training

The lack of food handler training for all employees is Item #57 and is a Core (^{C}) GRP violation.

New Sign and Procedure

A new Core (^{C}) violation listed as a RFI violation Item #10 of "Preventing Contamination by Hands" is to post hand washing signage for food employees (Rule 6-301.14).

New Procedure

A new Priority Foundation (^{Pf}) violation listed as a RFI violation Item #5 of "Employee Health" is to have procedures for the clean-up of vomitus/fecal events.

Consumer Advisory

Previous required language has been replaced with "disclosure" and "reminder" requirements. If serving a raw or uncooked animal food, discuss the new requirements with your inspector.

Employee Health

New management actions and employee reporting responsibilities regarding employee health (Rule 750.500 1-5). These new Priority (^{P}) violations listed as RFI violations Items #3 and #4. Got specific symptoms or specific diagnosis? Say something! Discuss with your inspector.

Employees are required to report within 24 hours to the PIC information about their health and activities as they relate to diseases transmitted through food.

- If they are experiencing gastrointestinal symptoms or a pus-containing lesion,
- If they are diagnosed (sick) with a foodborne illness (discuss the names),
- If they are exposed to a foodborne illness through contact with other people (household, work setting, or other food exposure).

How will employees know? Have a training meeting with your employees, one at a time or as group, and review some very specific information. Make this training available to all new employees. If you don't have an employee health policy, start one!

Upon employee notification, management (PIC) is required to reduce the risk of foodborne disease transmission.

- If the employee reports undiagnosed illness symptoms (i.e. sick with specific symptoms), decide if the employee should be restricted or excluded from work. (What are the criteria to return to work)?

- If the employee reports a diagnosed illness or is jaundiced, notifies the local health department (618-544-8798) within 24 hours for guidance and restricts or excludes the employee per the Illinois Control of Communicable Diseases Code. There are specific steps to get the employee back to work.