





FOOD SAFETY INSPECTOR IN THE STATE OF IOWA
Local Health Departments Contracting with DIA


Contracting County Health Departments


-  Allamakee County Planning and Development, 110 Allamakee Street, Waukon 52172 -- (319) 568-3014
- Allamakee and Clayton Counties


-  ADLM Environmental Health Office, 501 North 12th Street, Centerville 52544 -- (641) 437-1909
- Appanoose, Davis, Lucas, Monroe and Wayne Counties


-  Black Hawk County Health Department, 1407 Independence Avenue, Waterloo 50703 -- (319) 291-2413
- Benton, Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Delaware, Fayette, Grundy and Tama Counties


-  Buena Vista County Health Department, 215 East 5th Street, Storm Lake 50588 -- (712) 749-2555
- Buena Vista County


-  Calhoun County Health Department, 1228 High Street, Rockwell City 50579 -- (712) 297-7131
- Calhoun County


-  Carroll County Health Department, 17436 Mahogany, Carroll 51401 -- (712) 792-9532
- Carroll, Crawford and Greene Counties


-  Cedar County Health Department, 400 Cedar Street, Tipton 52772 -- (319) 886-2248
- Cedar County


-  Cerro Gordo County Health Department, 22 North Georgia, Mason City 50401 -- (515) 421-9300
- Cerro Gordo, Chickasaw, Floyd,


-  Franklin, Hamilton, Hancock, Hardin, Howard, Kossuth, Mitchell, Webster, Winnebago, Winneshiek, Worth and Wright Counties


-  Cherokee County Health Department, Cherokee County Courthouse, Cherokee 51012 -- (712) 225-6721
- Cherokee County


-  Clinton County Health Department, 329 East 11th Street, Clinton 52742 -- (319) 659-8148
- Clinton County


-  Des Moines County Health Department, 522 North Third Street, Burlington 52601 -- (319) 743-8217
- Des Moines County


-  Ida County Health Department, 401 Moorehead Street, Ida Grove 51445 -- (712) 364-2533
- Ida County


-  Jackson County Health Department, 201 West Platt, Maquoketa 52060 -- (319) 652-5658
- Jackson County


-  Jasper County Health Department, 115 North Second Avenue East, Newton 50208 -- (641) 792-7603
- Jasper County


-  Johnson County Health Department, 1105 Gilbert Court, Iowa City 52240 -- (319) 356-6040
- Johnson County


-  Jones County Health Department, 500 West Main, Anamosa 52205 -- (319) 462-4715
- Jones County


-  Lee County Health Department, 2218 Avenue H, Fort Madison 52627 -- (319) 372-5227
- Henry, Jefferson, Lee and Louisa Counties


-  Linn County Health Department, 501 13th Street NW, Cedar Rapids 52405 -- (319) 398-3551
- Linn County


-  Pocahontas County Health Department, 99 Court Square, Pocahontas 50574 -- (712) 335-3414
- Humboldt and Pocahontas Counties


-  Polk County Physical Planning, 5895 NE 14th Street, Des Moines 50313 -- (515) 286-3376
- Polk County


-  Sac County Health Department, 116 South State Street, Sac City 50583 -- (712) 662-7929
- Sac County

-  Scott County Health Department, 428 Western Avenue, Davenport 52801 -- (319) 326-8618
- Scott County


-  Shelby County Health Department, 1313 Industrial Parkway, Harlan 51537 -- (712) 755-2609
- Adair, Adams, Audubon, Cass, Fremont, Guthrie, Harrison, Mills, Monona, Montgomery, Page, Pottawattamie, Shelby, Taylor and Union Counties

-  Siouxland District Health Department, 205 5th Street, Sioux City 51101 -- (712) 279-6212
- Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, Lyon, O'Brien, Osceola, Palo Alto, Plymouth, Sioux and Woodbury Counties

-  Van Buren County Health Department, Van Buren County Courthouse, Keosauqua 52565 -- (319) 293-2531
- Van Buren County

-  Washington County Environmental Health Department, Washington County Courthouse, Washington 52353 -- (319) 653-7782
- Washington County

Contracting Municipal Health Departments

1. City of Ames Health Department, 515 Clark Avenue, Ames 50010 -- (515) 239-5158
2. City of Council Bluffs Health Department, 209 Pearl Street, Council Bluffs 51501 -- (712) 328-4666
3. City of Dubuque Health Department, City Hall Annex, Dubuque 52001 -- (319) 589-4181
4. City of Muscatine Health Department, 215 Sycamore, Muscatine 52761 -- (319) 262-4141
5.  City of Ottumwa Health Department (including Wapello County), 105 East Third Street, Ottumwa 52501 -- (641) 683-0651

FOOD SAFETY INSPECTIONS IN IOWA

BACKGROUND

The Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals (DIA) is responsible for administering and enforcing the state's Food Code (Chapter 137F) by conducting food safety inspections at food establishments (grocery stores, restaurants and convenience stores) and food processing plants. The purpose of the Iowa Food Code is to "safeguard the public health and provide to consumers, food that is safe, unadulterated and honestly prepared." Through time, Iowa has developed a joint state and local inspection program. DIA has entered into contracts with counties and cities to perform food inspections for 85 percent of the state.

- Nine state inspectors (DIA employees) cover 16 counties.
- Thirty-one (31) local contracts cover 83 counties and five cities.

In 1998, the Iowa General Assembly passed legislation, effective January 1, 1999, to adopt a new Iowa Food Code. Prior Iowa food inspection laws only inspected "floors, walls, and ceilings" once a year. The new Iowa Food code is based on the following:

- Scientifically developed factors focused on public health and the prevention of foodborne illness.
- Requiring inspectors to inspect food preparation areas and food preparation methods, focusing on the prevention of foodborne illness.
- Greatly increasing the number of food inspections based on an establishment's "foodborne illness" risk of the food being prepared.
- Inspectors consulting with food establishment operators regarding food safety issues identified during the inspections.

DIA and local inspectors are also responsible for conducting all investigations of foodborne illnesses involving restaurants, grocery stores, and other retail food operations, such as convenience stores. During calendar year 2000, DIA received 233 complaints, of which 28 cases involved approximately 330 individuals have been confirmed. (Foodborne illnesses are confirmed by laboratory evidence or by clinical and epidemiological data.) During the previous calendar year, a total of 238 complaints were received for investigation. Thirty of the complaints were confirmed.

- In March 2000, 15 people in Des Moines became ill with a Norwalk-like virus after eating turkey and club sandwiches catered from a restaurant. The food was left unrefrigerated for six hours.

- In May 2000, 70 restaurant patrons in Des Moines became ill with a Norwalk-like virus when food was contaminated by an ill food handler. In outbreaks involving a Norwalk-like virus, transmission generally occurs when food is contaminated by an ill food handler.
- In July 2000, 16 diners became ill with E-coli after eating in a Scott County restaurant.
- In August 2000, 32 teachers became ill in Hinton with viral gastroenteritis when food was prepared and served by sick children of the cook.
- In November 2000, 50 people in Cedar Rapids became ill with a Norwalk virus from catered food.

National foodborne illness outbreaks have included the following:

- 63 people were sickened by E-coli, including a three-year-old child who later died, after eating at a Milwaukee-area Sizzler restaurant. Tests concluded that the bacteria came from watermelon that was contaminated while cutting.
- Two people were sickened by E-coli after eating at a Wauwatosa, Wisconsin-area Sizzler restaurant. Cross contamination with salad bar and buffet food was the culprit.
- Six children in grades three through five tested positive for E. coli in March 2000 at the Risen Christ Catholic School in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Two children were hospitalized twice.
Cause was improper food handling and preparation.
- 19 Bethesda, Wisconsin, students became ill in October 2000 after an E-coli outbreak in a school cafeteria.
- An outbreak of E-coli contamination hospitalized nine people in Seattle, Washington, in late August. All those hospitalized had eaten at the Northwest Washington Fair in Lynden.
- 17 people, to date, were sickened by E-coli in Minnesota from fresh ground beef at Cubs. Six of the 17 were hospitalized.

IMPACT OF FOODBORNE ILLNESS

There are more than 250 different types of bacteria, viruses and parasites that have been identified which cause foodborne illnesses. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate that 76 million cases of foodborne illnesses occur in the United States every year. The great majority of these cases are mild and cause symptoms for only a day or two. Some cases are more serious, and CDC estimates that there are 323,000 hospitalizations and 5,000 deaths each year related to foodborne diseases.

Four of the more common foodborne diseases are particularly dangerous for *"high risk populations"* - those individuals who are under the age of five, elderly, pregnant, chronically ill, or suffering from compromised immune systems. According to the Iowa Department of Public

Health (DPH), the four foodborne illnesses that are especially dangerous for high-risk populations include:

Viral gastroenteritis: One of the most common causes of diarrheal illness and the most common cause of foodborne illness outbreaks in Iowa, also known as Norwalk-like virus. Persons who are otherwise healthy generally manifest mild disease; those with underlying medical conditions can have more severe disease and dehydration, and may require hospitalization for supportive care.

E-coli O157:H7: An infection caused by E-coli results in bloody diarrhea and can cause a severe complication of the kidneys - hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS) - especially in children less than five years of age. E-coli is commonly acquired by ingesting raw or undercooked beef, contaminated fruits or vegetables, unpasteurized fruit juices, or by person-to-person contact.

Listeriosis: A bacterial disease commonly manifested as meningitis, septicemia (blood infection), and in pregnant women, fever and abortion. Listeriosis is a common cause of foodborne illnesses involving ready-to-eat meats (deli meats, uncooked hotdogs), soft cheeses, raw or contaminated milk, and contaminated vegetables. Those at high risk include neonates, pregnant women, the elderly, and immunocompromised persons (due to illness or medications). Infection in a pregnant woman can be transmitted to the fetus, with resultant meningitis, septicemia or stillbirth.

Salmonellosis: A principal cause of bacterial diarrhea, Salmonellosis may cause severe dehydration and death, principally among infants, the elderly, and those with underlying illness or immunosuppressive conditions. Infections can also spread to other parts of the body and cause pneumonia, arthritis, meningitis, and other infections. Salmonellosis is generally acquired by ingestion of raw or undercooked animal products, including eggs, poultry, meat, and raw milk.

HEALTHY IOWANS 2010

In May of 2000, the Department of Public Health unveiled the *Healthy Iowans 2010* report, which is a plan to improve the health of Iowans in the new decade. The report was developed by a group of 550 Iowans representing more than 200 separate organizations. The Department of Inspections and Appeals and local food contracts were members of the team who developed goals and action steps for Food and Drug Safety under Chapter 8 of the report.

Three of the goals directly relate to the Department of Inspections and Appeals' responsibilities for keeping the state's food supply safe and nutritious and protecting Iowa consumers whether the food they consume is prepared at home or served in a restaurant:

- Reduce foodborne infections caused by major bacterial pathogens

- While foodborne infections can effect all Iowans, they can be life threatening to populations with suppressed immune systems, such as the elderly, expectant mothers, infants and children.
- Reduce the occurrences of food-borne illness-associated risk factors in retail food establishments
 - Risk factors include the use of improper storage temperatures, inadequate cooking, poor personal hygiene, contaminated equipment and foods from unsafe food sources.
- Increase the proportion of consumers who practice each of the seven critical food-handling behaviors developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
 - In recent years, a trend has developed toward consuming more food prepared outside the home. According to a recent report by the National Restaurant Association, the typical American age 8 and older consumes an average of 4.2 commercially prepared meals per week.

Reported foodborne illness is attributed to production methods or improper food preparation and handling in the food service area as well as in the home. The report states, however, that the incidence of foodborne illnesses can be reduced if additional state and federal resources are dedicated to the initiative. The *Healthy Iowans 2010* recommendations focus on point-of-use or consumption where Iowa consumers have an expectation that foods will be safe and nutritious.

COSTS OF FOOD SAFETY

Food safety costs cover inspections, licensing, education, consultation and foodborne illness complaint investigations. Currently, the food establishment license fees paid annually only cover a portion of these costs. The remainder of the costs is covered by general fund revenue at the state and local level.

DIA FOOD SAFETY PROPOSAL

If properly implemented, the new Iowa food code is a tremendous improvement in “the safeguard of the public health”. Unfortunately, while the Legislature saw the benefit to the public health in adopting the new Iowa Food Code, the body has not provided sufficient funding to implement the new code. The bottom line is Iowa is not in compliance with the Iowa Food Code. Food inspections are not being performed in compliance with state law due to lack of funding.

As a result, Iowans are at greater risk for foodborne illness, especially the elderly, the young, and

those with compromised immune systems.

To address the issue of foodborne illnesses in Iowa, DIA is proposing legislation to ensure that state standards address emerging issues, that state and contract inspectors are in compliance with food standards and that food safety costs are covered by license fees.

In an effort to address changes in consumer standards in a more timely and comprehensive manner, the Department proposes to set Iowa food standards by administrative rule. Through administrative rule, the State will ensure that current and improved standards are in place at all times.

Among the benefits of adopting Iowa food standards by administrative rule is the ability to keep current with the most scientific regulations relating to food safety. As there are always emerging pathogens that affect the public or certain sectors of it, the health and safety of these individuals can only be safeguarded when Iowa food standards are updated on a regular basis. The other benefits of adopting the Iowa food standards by administrative rule include reducing the risks of foodborne illnesses with timely, up-to-date information, and allowing the public and the food industry to comment on the adoption of food safety standards.

In 2000, state and contract food activities were not in compliance with Iowa standards. Beginning in 2001, while state activities will be in compliance, contract activities will not be in compliance due to a lack of sufficient resources. State and contract food safety costs are currently covered by a combination of license fees and general fund revenue.

Counties and cities contracting to perform food inspections have indicated that unless license fees cover the costs of food safety activities, they will decline to renew their contracts with the state to provide "food inspections". As a result, the state would need to perform these activities with limited resources. The consequences would mean fewer food inspections will be performed, the ability to safeguard Iowa's public health will be compromised, and any assurances that the foods Iowans consume are safe, unadulterated and honestly prepared will be empty promises.

To ensure that sufficient resources are available at the state and local level and that food safety costs are covered by license fees, the Department of Inspections and Appeals is proposing to restructure the current license fee structure and permit the department to establish fees through administrative rule to more equitably to defray the cost of administering chapter 137F.

Restructuring the current retail food establishment/food service establishment dual license will eliminate unnecessary paperwork and streamline the application and license renewal process.

CONCLUSION

Good public policy requires that the state move forward and fully fund the food safety system before a tragedy occurs. In just one afternoon in 1999, 300 persons were inflicted with food poisoning after dining at a Cedar Rapids restaurant. Money spent for the prevention of foodborne illness is money well spent.

I urge you to support Iowa's food safety system through support of the Department of Inspections and Appeals legislative proposal.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the DIA's legislative proposal, contact Jennifer Fiihr, DIA Legislative Liaison, at 281-6407, or via e-mail at Jennifer.Fiihr@dia.state.ia.us.