

ARE YOU POISONING YOUR GUESTS?

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We want to contribute to the world wide effort to “green” our society, and so we recycle what we can, repurpose items fit for additional use, and purchase in bulk to reduce packaging waste. However, is that seemingly harmless plastic container in your walk-in cooler slowly leaching toxins into your unsuspecting and otherwise delicious food? Single use plastic containers purposed to hold cottage cheese were not designed for storage of corrosive acidic marinara sauce (evidenced by the all-telling signs of orange stained rings left behind). Emptied and sanitized 5 gallon old chemical buckets are never appropriate for storage of *any* food meant for consumption. If a container sports

a warning label, consider that the contents of this item very likely have been absorbed into the plastic container itself. During my days in Peace Corps, we often had to advocate that subsistence farmers *not* reuse the old containers of concentrate pesticide for water jugs, even if they had been thoroughly washed. Too many were coming back from the fields with headaches, nausea and in need of serious medical attention they could neither gain access to nor afford. They used these containers for practical economic purposes, but were unknowingly poisoning themselves. There’s not much difference between the problems of plastic between rural mountain communities and modern pro-



fessional kitchens—the same rules apply!

What to do with these plastic containers so they do not end up in the landfill and do NOT poison our food? Glad you asked. **Recycle them!** Alterna-

Cont. pg 3

“Granted, critical violations are the prime contributors to foodborne illnesses, but to ignore the non-critical issues will only make the critical violations more likely to occur.”

THERE ARE NO MINOR VIOLATIONS

“We just have no time to clean”. “I can’t ask my staff to clean after they’ve cooked all day”. “I can’t afford to hire anyone to clean up at night”. “We do the floors once a week”. “I don’t understand. This is no worse than it’s always been”. These are a few of the recent excuses inspectors have encountered after noting cleaning deficiencies. Granted, critical violations are the prime contributors to foodborne illnesses, but to ignore the non-critical issues will only make the critical violations more likely to occur.

Everyone has heard the stories of a tropical snake or tarantula being brought into an establish-

ment in a box or produce. Far more likely is finding fruit fly eggs in boxes of unwashed produce, roaches in the inner folds of cardboard boxes, and ants in almost any bulk delivery. Mice find their way into an establishment through delivery doors, ventilation ducts, small holes in the foundation, and numerous other ways. Flies enter an establishment much the same way as the public, through the front door. These pests and a host of others represent the type of critical violation that all seek to avoid. Their entry into your facility is often unavoidable. What happens after they enter will largely depend on your control of the non-critical violations.

You can deny pests a food source by cleaning all food debris from preparation areas. Pull out the grill and fryers to remove any oil from the sides of the equipment, the floor and adjacent wall. In dry storage, all food should have secure closures. The exterior of the containers themselves should be cleaned of any food debris and stored at least 6 inches above the floor. Trash should be collected and disposed of in a secure, closed dumpster at the end of the day.

Deny pests a water source by making sure that all plumbing fixtures are in good working order. A leaky faucet or waste water line may be all that is

Cont. pg 2



THERE ARE NO MINOR VIOLATIONS CONT.

needed to sustain a pest's water requirement. Standing water around the base of the water heater or dirty water left in the mop bucket after the floors were cleaned must be eliminated. Empty the sanitizing buckets, dry the drain boards and sinks before closing, and never stack dishware that has not been completely dried.

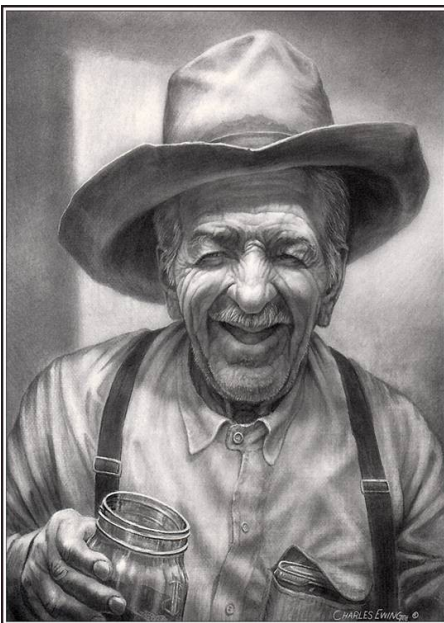
Last of all, you must deny the pests a harborage. Store food, equipment, chemicals and everything possible at least 6 inches above the floor to allow for thorough mopping of the floor and coving. Raised storage also makes routine perimeter spraying more effective. Do not store cardboard, open boxes of single service items, or anything that may provide shelter for pests. Store glassware, pots, pans and utensils inverted on open shelving. All doors opening to the outside must be self-closing and no openings should be apparent between the door and its frame.

Seldom are multiple critical violations noted without an equal or greater number of non-critical violations occurring. Managers who continually stress the importance of proper sanitation to their staff will be rewarded with a clean and safe working environment. Follow the code, eliminate the potential violations regardless of issue, and you will stand a much greater chance of success in this most difficult business.



“You can deny pests a food source by cleaning all food debris from preparation areas.”

-Jerry Maloney-



THE WILD, WILD WEST

WHAT'S MORE EXCITING THAN LIFE OUT ON THE RANGE? THE STORIES ABOUT IT, OF COURSE!

COOKS ILLUSTRATED

Old Westerns are replete with stereotypes: the stoic cowboy, the righteous sheriff, the hooker with a heart of gold. But few are as misleading as the doddering old wagon chef, “Cookie,” who bumbles along the cattle drive. In reality, the cook was an authority figure—and a well-paid one at that. Chefs often earned \$50 a month to the cowboys' \$25. Besides ensuring

that everyone got hot, hearty meals, these top chefs managed all of the camp provisions, acting as barber, doctor, and even judge, settling arguments between the boys.

-David Goldenberg-

Reprinted from Mental_Floss

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ARE YOU POISONING YOUR GUESTS? CONT.

tively, who's to say a bucket once used to store highly concentrated sanitizer/detergent may not be used to store items such as your sanitizing solution to wipe down countertops, or maybe a scraps container for bussing tables, or the soiled rags in need of washing? Those small cottage cheese containers now emptied are the perfect size for storing odds and ends in your "junk" drawers so when you're in need of a rubber band, you know exactly where to look! Unfortunately, you will likely obtain more plastic containers than you will be able to

safely repurpose. For this reason, talk with your vendors and inquire if there is an alternative packaging available. Sometimes items normally packaged in obtuse plastic containers are also available in 1-gallon to 5-gallon foil packs. Make it known that you are interested in reducing your packaging waste, and ask to be kept abreast of new and existing product lines that meet your needs. With every purchase we make a vote, vote with your dollar for eco-conscious alternatives that are safe for your kitchen!

Remember, single use containers may pose a health hazard in your kitchen when repurposed for a use it was not designed. Why take the risk? In the effort to be economically and environmentally conscious, you may cause your guests to turn a shade of green not intended! Take a moment to inventory what you have in your kitchen right now and its intended use.

-Emily Sjostrom-



"With every purchase we make a vote, vote with your dollar for eco-conscious alternatives that are safe for your kitchen!"

SPRING CLEANING TIPS TO GREEN YOUR KITCHEN

Spring is here! While regular cleaning and sanitizing is required every day, not just in certain seasons; spring is typically associated with renewing –out with the old in with the new. Perhaps there are a few old practices you're utilizing that can be updated to be more economical and eco-conscious while remaining equally effective. Sanitation and cleanliness cannot be compromised, yet

there may be a few new tricks you can adopt this spring to further your restaurant along in a greener direction.

Do not dump down storm drains or on the ground of the parking lot (this is also a critical violation in Tazewell County). Storm water from these drains may head directly to bodies of water like lakes, streams, or rivers. Therefore any runoff

from the ground or any old mop water discarded down storm drains will instantly pollute water downstream.

Use dry cleaning methods. Using absorbent material (such as kitty litter) to soak up and then sweep up spills in the parking lot or by the dumpster area is an eco-friendly alternative to hosing the spill to the nearest storm water drain. (Cont. pg 4)



DISTINCTIVE COLONIES OF GERMS LIVE ON SKIN

Someday, the bacteria on their skin might be used to tie criminals to the scene of a crime. Microbial ecologists have shown that every human has a distinct set of bacterial communities on his or her skin and that a swab taken even two weeks after a persona has touched something turns up

enough DNA to correctly identify the person it came from. "We're just coated in bacteria," says Noah Fierer, a professor at the University of Colorado-Boulder and lead author on a paper in today's *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. When researchers took bacterial samples from nine computer

mice that hadn't been touched for 12 hours and from the palms of the mouse users, they found that the bacterial communities were "significantly" more similar to the community on the owners' hands than to others in a database of 270 hand bacterial communities. These communities are also

quite resistant to change: Bacteria recover within hours of hand-washing. It's far too early to know if the technique could be used in criminal investigations, Fierer says: "I don't think at this point any criminals need to be worried about leaving bacteria on objects."

-Elizabeth Weise-

USA Today, March 16, 2010

SPRING CLEANING TIPS TO GREEN YOUR KITCHEN CONT.



Conserve water. Do not make more solution than is necessary for the task at hand.

These are just a few simple logical steps one can take to green up their cleaning methods. In the kitchen, clean and sanitized are key, so look for approved methods that will reduce your environmental impact while still meeting your needs.

-Emily Sjostrom-

Buy in bulk. Often time, products are sold in a Ready-to-Use (RTU) state, with the appropriate water concentration added to effectively dilute the solution. Purchasing in bulk reduces the waste generated by these storage containers, reducing the amount of toxic residue that is sent to our landfills. Some vendors may even take back your used chemical containers and re-use them.

Use eco-conscious cleaners. Natural based products that are effective in cleaning such as baking soda, borax, or vinegar are acceptable to use as a cleaner *provided* that an *approved* sanitizer is used after the rinse stage. For example, vinegar based solutions may replace ammonia based solutions for glass cleaners, or vegetable or

citrus based cleaners may replace petroleum based cleaners for the floors.

Activate an Integrated Pest Management plan. The more you clean, the lower your risk of pests! Regular cleaning and sanitizing, as well as assuring there are no existing gaps in the windows, doors, or walls is your best line of defense. The fewer times you need a visit from the pest control company, the fewer the costs and the fewer the neurotoxins that will be released in the air.

Clean the vent hood filters regularly. Heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) accounts for a considerable portion of energy consumption in restaurants; therefore, the vent

hood is a strong component in implementing energy-efficient green practices in the kitchen.

Purchase recycled content cloth wipes and recycled content mop heads for your heavy cleaning. Use clean reusable, washable cloths for cleaning windows and countertops.

Take your time. Often times we turn to harsher chemicals because it is "faster," without giving thought to the harsh residue the container itself can leave behind in our landfills, or the accumulated waste runoff that heads to our lakes and streams. Old fashioned elbow grease and a regular cleaning schedule keep the task manage-

Q&A WITH MELISSA

Take this quiz and pass it on to your employees too!

1. True or False. You need to have MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheets) for any pesticides you use in your facility.

2. True or False. You must store your pesticides with your cleaning chemicals.

3. Which of these is a sign that you might have cockroaches in your facility? A) strong, oily odor B) signs of gnawing C) scraps of paper and cloth gathered in a corner

4. True or False. You should keep your humidity level in your dry storage area at 50% or lower.

5. True or False. An air curtain will deter a housefly from entering your establishment.

6. Which fly carries a great threat to human health? A) fruit fly B) house fly

So did you get them all right? Did your employees? Nice weather is here and we all want to open up our doors and windows to let the fresh air in. Plus customers enjoy the fresh breeze. But as the nice breeze enters your establishment so can the pests. Pests can carry a wide variety of diseases and once inside they can be hard to get rid of. If you open your windows or doors you have to make sure that you have screens on them. So if your outside door does not have a screen door, no propping them open with a bungee cord! Make sure you take the time to identify any areas in your establishment that may allow pests to enter. Do a complete inspec-

tion of your establishment inside and out. Pay attention to windows to make sure screens don't have any rips or tears. Check pipes, floors, walls and the buildings foundation for any holes that pests may enter. Remember even the tiniest crack or hole can allow pest entry so seal off those problem areas. Check doors and receiving areas to make sure the door sweep or weather-stripping is in good repair and there are not any gaps or cracks in the door-frames or thresholds. Keeping your facility clean and using FIFO will also keep pests away!

-Melissa Goetze-

Answer key
1) T, MSDS give you necessary information such as proper usage, health hazards, storage and proper disposal of pesticides. 2) F, Pesticides must be kept in their original containers in locked cabinets away from food preparation, food storage or cleaning chemicals. 3) F, A, strong oily odor, dropping (feces) that looks like grains of pepper, and capsule shaped egg cases all are signs of cockroaches. 4) T, Low humidity helps prevent roach eggs from hatching. 5) T, Flies prefer calm air and an air curtain is constantly blowing air. 6) B house flies are a greater threat because they feed on garbage and animal waste while fruit flies are primarily attracted to spoiled fruit.