



# Environmental Health

Community Outreach Newsletter

## Changes Coming to Retail Food Laws CalCode Will Soon Replace CURFFL

If you have owned a retail food establishment in California, you have likely heard of the acronym CURFFL. CURFFL stands for California Retail Food Facilities Law and has been the law governing restaurants and food markets in the golden state for decades.

On May 15th, 2006, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed into law Senate Bill 144, which enacted the California Retail Food Code, also called

CalCode. CalCode will take affect on July 1st, 2007.

This new law which completely replaces the California Uniform Retail Food Facilities Law (CURFFL), represents a culmination of a collaborative effort of the California Retail Food Safety Coalition— a broad based coalition of federal, state and local regulators and the retail food industry. Cal Code is modeled on the 2001 version of the federal

Model Food Code which represents the best available science in the overall goal of preventing foodborne illness.

With the enactment of CalCode, local enforcement agencies are refocusing their food facility inspections with emphasis on the Centers for Disease Control and prevention identified foodborne illness risk factors and public health interventions.

Summer 07

June-September 07

Issued 3X per year

### Our Mission:

“Our mission, as the Division of Environmental Health, is to promote and protect the health and well being of all persons in the City of Berkeley by administering state and local regulations. We believe in the importance of disease prevention through education and enforcement as a means of safeguarding public health.”

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## New Requirements of CalCode

You are probably wondering, how will CalCode be different from CURFFL? How will this effect the way my establishment is regulated, and will the procedure for my inspections be a whole lot different from before?

Well, although some

things will change, most of what is in the CalCode is the same or similar to CURFFL. So the next time your health inspector shows up at your place you shouldn't have a need to worry if you doing an excellent job following the food safety laws outlined in CURFFL. Your inspector will alert you to any

changes you need to make to be certain you comply with the CalCode.

So what is new in the CalCode? The following is a summary of the most significant changes of new requirements found in

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# Cooking and Reheating Safely in the Microwave

Microwave ovens can play an important role in food preparation, but special care must be taken when cooking or reheating meat, poultry, fish, and eggs to make sure they are prepared safely. Microwave ovens can cook unevenly and leave "cold spots," where harmful bacteria can survive. For this reason, it is important to use the following safe microwaving tips to prevent food-borne illness.

## Microwave Oven Cooking

- Arrange food items evenly in a covered dish and add some liquid if needed. Cover the dish with a lid or plastic wrap; loosen or vent the lid or wrap to let steam escape. The moist heat that is created will help destroy harmful bacteria and ensure uniform cooking. Cooking bags also provide safe, even cooking.
- Do not cook large cuts of meat on high power (100%). Large cuts of meat should be cooked on medium power (50%) for longer periods. This allows heat to reach the center without overcooking outer areas.
- Stir or rotate food midway through the microwaving time to eliminate cold spots where harmful bacteria can survive, and for more even cooking.
- When partially cooking food in the microwave oven to finish cooking on the grill or in a conventional oven, it is

important to transfer the microwaved food to the other heat source immediately. Never partially cook food and store it for later use.

- Use a food thermometer or the oven's temperature probe to verify the food has reached a safe temperature. Place the thermometer in the thickest area of the meat or poultry—not near fat or bone—and in the innermost part of the thigh of whole poultry. Cooking times may vary because ovens vary in power and efficiency. Check in several places to be sure red meat is 160 degrees Fahrenheit, whole poultry is 180 degrees Fahrenheit, and egg casseroles are 160 degrees Fahrenheit. Fish should flake with a fork. Always allow standing time, which completes the cooking, before checking the internal temperature with a food thermometer.
- Cooking whole, stuffed poultry in a microwave oven is not recommended. The stuffing might not reach the temperature needed

to destroy harmful bacteria.

## Microwave Defrosting

- Remove food from packaging before defrosting. Do not use foam trays and plastic

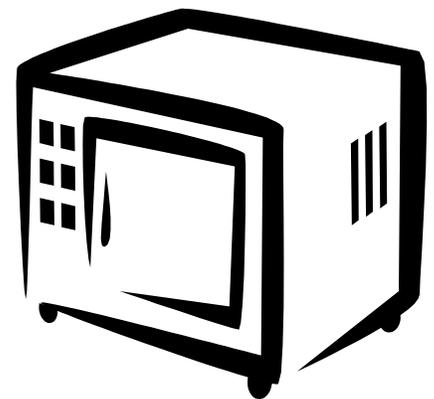
wraps because they are not heat stable at high temperatures. Melting or warping of plastics may cause harmful chemicals to migrate into food.

- Cook meat, poultry, egg casseroles, and fish immediately after defrosting in the microwave oven because some areas of the frozen food may begin to cook during the defrosting time. Do not

hold partially cooked food to use later.

## Reheating in the Microwave Oven

- Heat ready-to-eat foods such as hot dogs, luncheon meats, fully cooked ham, and leftovers until steaming hot.
- After reheating foods in the microwave oven, allow standing time. Then, use a clean food thermometer to check that food has reached 165 degrees Fahrenheit.



# Foodborne Illness Risk Factors

## Public Health Interventions Identified By CalCode

These risk factors are consistent with CalCode section 113725 which requires that local enforcement agencies identify on their inspection reports those violations that are considered major. Major violations are traditionally looked upon as rationale for suspension of a food facility permit due to an imminent health hazard.

The foodborne illness risk factors are:

- ◆ Food from unsafe sources
- ◆ Inadequate cooking
- ◆ Improper holding temperatures
- ◆ Contaminated equipment
- ◆ Poor personal hygiene

The public health interventions are:

- ◆ Demonstration of knowledge
- ◆ Employee health
- ◆ Time/temperature control
- ◆ Hands as a vehicle of contamination
- ◆ Consumer Advisory

## New Requirements of CalCode

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the CalCode. This summary is not all inclusive. It is recommended that each facility operator consult their health inspector for specific questions about the CalCode.

- ◆ Food safety certification will be valid for 5 years instead of 3 years from the date of issuance.
- ◆ Food safety exam certifying organization must be accredited by the American National Standards Institute.
- ◆ Mandatory reportable illnesses have been expanded to include Salmonella, Hepatitis A, Shigella, E coli, Norovirus, and Entamoeba histolytica. Employee must report to the Person in Charge (PIC) of the food facility if they have a

lesion or wound that is open or draining and comply with restrictions and exclusions.

- ◆ PIC must report to the local health department if a food employee has been diagnosed with a reportable illness or if two or more food employees are experiencing symptoms of an acute gastrointestinal illness.
- ◆ PIC must restrict food employees if they are experiencing persistent coughing or sneezing. Restrict means to limit the activities of a food employee so there is no risk of transmitting a disease through food, equipment, utensils, linen, and unwrapped single use articles.
- ◆ Food employees are required to wash their hands with soap and warm water vigorously for at least 10 to 15 seconds.



- ◆ All raw produce is required to be washed prior to being cut, combined with other ingredients, cooked or served or offered for human consumption in ready-to-eat form.
- ◆ Pressurized beverage containers, cased food in waterproof containers, such as bottles or cans, and milk containers in plastic crates may be stored on a floor that is clean and not exposed to moisture.

# Cooking of Raw Meats, Eggs and Plant Foods

## CalCode Cooking Temperature Requirements

Food Item	Cooking Temperature (For 15 seconds)
♦ Fruits and vegetables for hot holding	♦ 135 degrees Fahrenheit
♦ Shell eggs for immediate service, fish, single pieces of meat.	♦ 145 degrees Fahrenheit
♦ Comminuted meat, injected meats, raw eggs for later service	♦ 155 degrees Fahrenheit
♦ Poultry, stuffed items (fish, meat, poultry, pasta), stuffing containing fish, meat, poultry, ratites.	♦ 165 degrees Fahrenheit



Publisher/Editor: Environmental Health Staff

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