

HARWICH HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Food Program Newsletter



Need to renew your Food Safety Certifications?

Visit our website for links to the latest offerings of ServSafe classes:

[Town of Harwich Massachusetts - ServSafe, Allergen Awareness, Chokesaver](#)

Need more Food Safety handouts for your staff?

Visit our website for downloadable prints:

[Town of Harwich Massachusetts - food safety posters](#)

In this issue:

- Are you a repeat offender? Find out what the 3 most commonly cited Food Code violations are and how to avoid them.
- Spotlight on *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*. Learn about this bacteria and how the State is working to make shellfish safer.
- Electronic license renewals. A reminder on how to renew your food service license and other upcoming changes in licensing.
- Director's Corner. A chance to hear what the Health Director has to say about food safety and other timely topics.

Recent Changes:

Over the past year there have been several staff changes in the Health Department. In January, our long-time Inspector Amy Morris resigned her full time position; Meggan Tierney has now taken over as the full time Sr. Health Inspector. The part-time inspector position was filled by return-employee Mark Polselli. You will become familiar with Mark as he will be the lead food service inspector for the Town. Our Administrative Assistant position has a new face as well, please welcome Jennifer Clarke as one of the indispensable assistants.

The Town of Harwich has been utilizing new computer software called Accela since May of 2015. This new program will allow for *totally* electronic renewals, including submittal and payment. Accela will not be used for this round of renewals; however it is our intent to utilize it beginning in 2016. Please stay tuned for more information as we roll this program in the coming months.

ARE YOU A REPEAT OFFENDER?

Common Kitchen Violations

Over the last two Summers, we have been able to track some of the more frequently seen Food Code violations. As a Health Inspector, there is nothing more frustrating than citing the *same violation* over and over. Take a moment to read through this list and make sure your kitchen is in the clear.

Mold in the Ice Machine

You may have heard the phrase "Ice is Food". Just imagine your crystal clear ice cubes sliding out of your ice machine into a bin coated with mold. Pretty gross, huh? Next time you pass by your ice machine, flip the lid and look inside; more often than not the inside of the bin contains a black mold or pink bacteria along the deflector plate. A daily or weekly wipe will go along way.

Difficult to Clean Cutting Boards

Over time, cutting boards will naturally become worn with frequent use. If your cutting boards have started to take on a brown or black color, that means the board is no longer able to be properly cleaned and sanitized. The discoloration is a sign of food particles, bacteria and other debris getting trapped inside the grooves the knives have made. If the board is not cleaned properly with a scrub brush before it is washed and sanitized, those grooves stay dirty. Maintain your cutting boards to stay clean and sanitized with proper cleaning, repair or replacement.

Bare Hand Contact with Ready to Eat Foods

This violation is most commonly seen among waitstaff and bartenders. Squeezing a lime into a cocktail, garnishing a drink with a cherry; these frequent tasks could be made compliant with tactfully placed tongs or deli tissue.



Mold is commonly found inside ice machines and can be avoided with frequent cleaning.



Cutting boards get worn down and become difficult to clean, harboring bacteria.



Unwrapped food is at risk for bare hand contact; make it easy to comply by thinking ahead.

SPOTLIGHT ON VIBRIO

WHAT IS VIBRIO PARAHAEMOLYTICUS?

Vibrio parahaemolyticus is a bacteria that is naturally occurring in saltwater and causes gastrointestinal illness in people. *V. parahaemolyticus* naturally inhabits coastal waters in the United States and Canada and is present in higher concentrations during summer when the water temperatures rise. *Vibrio* is commonly found in waters where oysters are harvested. Most people become infected by eating raw or undercooked shellfish, particularly oysters.



Washing vegetables in a clean sink will prevent cross contamination.

WHY ARE WE CONCERNED WITH VIBRIO?

The CDC reports that there was a 43% increase in diagnosed cases of *Vibrio* in 2012. It is also estimated that for every case of *Vibrio* reported, there are 142 cases not diagnosed.

With the popularity of raw bars and the prolific access to oysters here on the Cape, people are eating more raw seafood than ever.

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries has a *Vibrio* Control Plan that you can access here: [Vibrio Control Program](#)

WHAT HAPPENS IF PEOPLE INGEST VIBRIO?

When ingested, *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* causes watery diarrhea often with abdominal cramping, nausea, vomiting, fever and chills. Usually these symptoms occur within 24 hours of ingestion. The illness is usually self-limited and lasts 3 days. Severe disease is rare and occurs more commonly in persons with weakened immune systems.



WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREVENT VIBRIO OUTBREAKS?

The Department of Public Health and the Department of Marine Fisheries have developed a *Vibrio* Control Plan requiring strict harvest controls for oysters. At the retail level, restaurants must adhere to the same strict temperature requirements as other potentially hazardous foods. Check the temperature of your seafood upon delivery and during all steps of processing. It is imperative that all seafood be placed in refrigeration upon delivery and be kept submerged in ice during handling and display.

Although uncommon, *Vibrio* can be ingested by eating foods other than raw oysters. This is the result of cross contamination, and it must be avoided in order to keep other ready to eat foods safe. Using a dedicated prep sink and cutting board for raw foods vs ready to eat foods, frequent handwashing, and glove use are necessary to prevent the spread of the bacteria.



LICENSE RENEWAL INFORMATION

The Town of Harwich is now using a new software program called Accela. This new program will offer a "public access" website that will allow for establishment owners to file paperwork electronically as well as pay fees online. We hope this public access site will be up and running this winter. We will be holding informational seminars to get you familiar with the program so you will be able to keep your information up to date and renew your 2017 licenses through Accela. It is vital that you keep your email address current with us in order to receive renewal notifications.

Your 2016 License renewal has been sent to you electronically this year. Please download the application, print and return as soon as possible.

Harwich Health Department

Paula J. Champagne, Health Director
Meggan Tierney, Sr. Health Inspector
Mark Polselli, Health Inspector

Phone: 508-430-7509
Fax: 508-430-7531

732 Main Street
Harwich, MA 02645

[Health | Harwich MA](http://www.health.harwichma.com)

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

As we close out another year and look forward to the new, I want to reflect on a very successful track record for 2015. We had an excellent year for compliance and we appreciate all of the hard work and efforts to achieve great food service sanitation.

We understand how difficult it is to maintain many of the older facilities along with the challenges of the short season going at breakneck speeds. That underscores our appreciation and recognition for all your efforts.

Planning changes for 2016- additions, remodeling, process changes? Please remember to include us early in the planning stages to review concepts and design plans. It's not too early to sit down and discuss next seasons changes.

Good Health to you all,
Paula

