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DFM 0458-01

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April 2018

With a rise in the number of Americans eating out, the risk for foodborne illness is potentially increasing. Foodborne illness occurs when contaminated food is consumed by a customer which may result in various undesirable symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea, or jaundice (*The National Restaurant Association*, 2017, 2.3). Contrary to what many think, this contributes largely to illnesses happening throughout America. According to the Center for Disease Control, “roughly 1 in 6 Americans (or 48 million people) gets sick, 128,000 are hospitalized, and 3,000 die of foodborne diseases” each year (“Estimates of Foodborne…”, 2016). To prevent these instances, restaurants, schools, hospitals, and other locations serving and/or preparing food must be inspected. This report addresses the inspection of one of the few kitchens of Montalvin Manor Elementary, located in Richmond, California.

When it comes to contamination by a foodhandler, proper personal dress and hygiene standards is key in prevention. According to the Self-Inspection Checklist, foodhandlers at Montalvin Elementary withheld expected standards except for use of hair restraints. Corrected through the acquiring of hair restraints, it is completely necessary to prevent hair from falling into food or on prep-areas (*The National Restaurant Association*, 2017, 3.15).

Although there was not much dry storage (this was not the central kitchen but a secondary kitchen on the campus), dry storage available was limited to the next day’s snack, a few clean cardboard boxes of Scooby Doo Graham Crackers, which were properly dated and six inches off the floor. Food was stored separate from the chemical supplies, being located either in the bathroom or cleaning closet. When examining large equipment such as the commercial refrigerator, freezer, and other large items, all were clean to the naked eye. Due to not being the central kitchen, no food slicers were available for review.

Besides offering a fresh salad bar, most meals being served were pre-packaged and stored within the refrigerator the day before use. Perishable items should be kept outside of the temperature danger zone, below 41 degrees (*The National Restaurant Association*, 2017, 5.12). The foodservice handler present knew the outside thermometer did not work, and when examining the inside temperature, saw it was around 29 degrees. This temperature is too near freezing point and may result in frozen ready-to-eat meals or is not accurate resulting in spoilage. To correct this issue, thermometers should be tested and/or purchased. Refrigerated foods leftover were stored in a separate refrigerator (one refrigerator contained only the ready-to-eat meals for the next day) preventing confusion for workers.

In terms of food handling, workers abided by the standards, yet an issue was observed regarding the salad bar. Children, serving themselves, dropped the handle of the utensil into the salad. The next student picked up the handle touching much of the surrounding lettuce. Foodservice workers should serve the salad using single-use gloves or tongs, as ready-to-eat food should never be touched with bare hands (*The National Restaurant Association*, 2017, 3.11).

When examining the utensils, equipment, and work surfaces, appropriate cleanliness standards were met except when it came to thermometer care. Thermometers are to be washed, rinsed, sanitized, and air dried before and after usage (*The National Restaurant Association*, 2017, 4.9). Not all four steps were applied. To correct this action, workers need re-training or a group meeting focused on thermometer usage. Regarding temperatures of the holding areas, ready-made meals were held at 135°F. Although below 140°F as desired on the Self-Inspection Checklist, it is the minimum temperature required in 5.12 of the ServSafe Manager book.

Cleaning and sanitizing, essential to preventing contamination potentially leading to illness or allergic reaction, was lacking in some areas. The amount of chlorine (sanitizer) and temperatures of the water were not taken. To correct this action, workers ought to use a thermometer to make sure the water and detergent in sink 1 is 100°F and make sure to follow the sanitizer concentration guidelines given on the packaging for sink 3 (*The National Restaurant Association*, 2017, 10.10). Lastly, the rag for sanitizing should have been stored in the solution, not hanging on the edge of the sink, vulnerable to transferring unwanted materials (*The National Restaurant Association*, 2017, 10.14).

When examining the garbage storage and disposal, all were clean and empty of any remnants. However, a few empty recyclable boxes needed to be disposed of to prevent contamination (*The National Restaurant Association*, 2017, 9.9). The dumpster was closed and clean. Overall, no signs of pests were present and all windows and doors were in proper repair.

Overall, Montalvin Manor Elementary located in the West Contra Costa Unified School District followed most procedures. Most issues revolved around improper thermometer usage or maintenance. Through retraining, a group meeting, and/or fliers being posted, foodservice workers at Montalvin Elementary should be able to correct their thermometer procedures preventing potential time-temperature abuse (*The National Restaurant Association*, 2017, 1.11). With only a few corrective actions, Montalvin Elementary foodservice workers have the full potential to meet every single standard.

References

The National Restaurant Association. (2017). *ServSafe Manager.* (7th ed.). pp 2.3, 3.15, 5.12,

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