



## Emergency Preparedness

A food service establishment must stop serving food and call the Snohomish Health District if they experience an emergency that could cause the food to become unsafe and affect the health of customers and employees.

These health hazards include fire, flood, loss of power, loss of hot water, and sewage backup. If you experience

any of these, call the Snohomish Health District at 425.339.5250. The front desk will forward your information to the appropriate inspector to determine the next steps required to keep the public safe.

The inspector can also help decide which food is safe to keep and what needs to be thrown away before reopening. In general, food needs to be thrown away if it:

- Has come in contact with flood water, smoke, fire, sewage or chemicals.
- Is a Potentially Hazardous Food (PHF) that has been in the danger zone for more than four hours.
- Is a frozen food that has thawed and is above 41° F.
- Has been partially cooked and cooking cannot be completed within one hour.

Non-PHF's that are undamaged and have not had contact with flood water, smoke, fire, sewage or chemicals and frozen foods that are under 41° F are more likely to be able to be saved.

## Foodborne Illness Reporting

When a food establishment receives a call or complaint that there has been a possible foodborne illness at their facility, Washington law requires that they "immediately report the incident to the regulatory authority." This means that the food establishment is required to call the Snohomish Health District and let us know about the possible foodborne illness. This is an important



step. The Health District is required to investigate possible outbreaks and wants to work with the establishment to help keep customers safe.

However, to be able to properly input this information into our Foodborne Illness database, our Communicable Disease staff must talk directly to the people who report being ill. Information such as names, addresses, phone numbers, and ages should not be given to us by the establishment. That personal information is protected by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and should only be reported by the person who is ill. We need people who are ill to call in and give us details. Therefore, we request that the food establishment provide the complainant with the direct phone number of our Communicable Disease Section: 425.339.5278.

A food establishment is still required to call the Health District to report a possible foodborne illness, but the only information that we will need from them is:

- The name and location of the food establishment.
- The date and time of the suspect meal.
- The number of people ill.
- What the ill person(s) ate.

The Communicable Disease team will gather personal information from the complainant, like what other restaurant meals they ate in the last 72 hours, how long they have been ill, and if they have been to a doctor. Communicable Disease staff will then send that information to our Environmental Health team. The complaint is recorded in the database and we look at the establishment history to see if there have been any complaints in the past 30 days. If so, or the information gathered seems to point to a specific threat, an environmental health specialist will investigate. They will call or visit the facility to gather more information or, in rare cases, test products. If not, the establishment file will be put under 30-day surveillance to see if there are any other illnesses reported.



## Illness Policy

Healthy food workers are important for preventing foodborne illness. To help avoid potential food contamination from an ill worker, it is critical that the Person in Charge (PIC) and staff know when an illness is

required to be reported to the PIC.

Symptoms that require reporting or action include: vomiting; diarrhea; persistent coughing or sneezing; and discharges from the eyes, nose, or mouth. A written illness policy is not required, but the PIC must be able to describe proper employee health practices.

Please contact your District Inspector if you would like additional information or a copy of our handout, "Restriction and Notification of Ill Food Workers," that can be used and posted in your facility. You can also find this handout in the Food Resources section of our website. <http://www.snohd.org/222/Food-Resources>

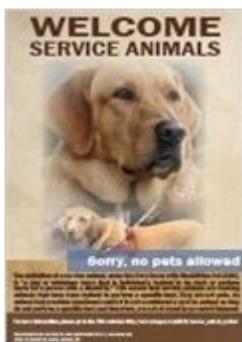
## Norovirus

Norovirus is a highly contagious virus that can spread through the vomit or diarrhea of an infected person. It can also be caused by raw or undercooked shellfish. Norovirus spreads rapidly in a small environment, such as within a home, dormitories, day care centers, and nursing homes. This is why it's often associated with cruise ships and

can show up during the holiday season. Symptoms of Norovirus include diarrhea, projectile vomiting and stomach pain usually lasting for one or two days. Someone who has Norovirus can be contagious for up to two weeks after they have recovered from symptoms.

Norovirus can be spread by infected individuals touching objects or surfaces, or by sharing or handling food. It can also be spread through vomit particles that can stay airborne for days. Someone who is infected should not work with food while they have symptoms and for up to three days after recovery.

Wash your hands well with soap and water, carefully wash fruits and vegetables, and cook shellfish thoroughly before eating. During an outbreak, sanitize non-porous surfaces with a bleach solution of 3/4 cup bleach per 1 gallon of cold water. Then follow that up with your regular steps for sanitizing. There is no medicine to take for Norovirus, but it is important to drink fluids to avoid dehydration. Further information on Norovirus can be found on [the Center for Disease Control website](#).



## Service Animal Update

There are people who bring their family pet into grocery stores or restaurants and claim they are a service animal. As of January 2019, it is a civil misdemeanor to intentionally misrepresent a pet as a service animal. This misdemeanor comes with a \$500 fine. The only animals that should be allowed in your facility are service animals. The definition, under the Americans with Disability Act, is "a dog (or miniature horse) that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for a person with a disability." This means that service animals

are working animals that perform a specific task. They are not pets. An animal that provides emotional comfort is not considered a service animal as they do not perform a specific task.

A service animal is only allowed to be in areas where the public is allowed to go and they must be kept under control by their owners. They are not required to be certified or trained by a specific program. They are also not required to wear identification. This makes it harder to identify a service animal. A popular concept is "Four on the floor." This is the idea that service animals would always have all four paws on the floor unless they are performing a specific task. Under the Americans with Disability Act, you are only allowed to ask two questions to help you identify a service animal:

1. Is the service animal required because of a disability?
2. What work or task has the service animal been trained to perform?

You cannot ask someone about their disability or ask that the service animal demonstrate how they help that person. The best way to prepare is to understand the law, print out the questions you can ask, and have information available for other customers. We have updated our service animal poster and employee handout. Find it on the Food Resources page of our website: [www.snohd.org/222/Food-Resources](http://www.snohd.org/222/Food-Resources)

## Manager Certification Course

The Manager Certification Course (MCC) is now a 12-hour course. It's divided into two days of five-hour instruction. The following week, a two-hour, 75-question test is administered. Testing appointments are set up individually with the instructor.

**2019 Course Schedule:**

- Spring English course: March 6 and 13 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Spring Spanish course: April 10 and 17 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Fall English course: October 2 and 9 from 9 a.m. 2 p.m.
- Fall Spanish course: September 4 and 11 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

For more information on the English courses, please call 425.339.8752. For information on the Spanish courses, please call 425.339.8684.

For course applications, go to: [www.snohd.org/211/Food-Managers](http://www.snohd.org/211/Food-Managers)



**Our website has a new look!**

 [www.snohd.org](http://www.snohd.org)

The website allows you and your coworkers, owners and manager to sign up to receive this newsletter using the "Notify Me" page: [www.snohd.org/list.aspx](http://www.snohd.org/list.aspx).

Notify Me: [www.snohd.org/list.aspx](http://www.snohd.org/list.aspx)

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