For Immediate Release

New Food Code to take effect; certification classes still offered at MCHD

MORGANTOWN, WV (May 28, 2019) — Effective July 1, 2019, West Virginia will update to the Food & Drug Administration’s 2013 Food Code with a few legislative changes.

“These changes will affect a few aspects of restaurant inspections as well as some of Monongalia County Health Department’s food safety classes,” said Terri Berton, a registered sanitarian and food safety trainer at MCHD.

During its regular bi-monthly meeting last Thursday, the Monongalia County Board of Health approved a motion to have area restaurants complete specific training requirements of the new Food Code within 90 days or six months of July 1, instead of one year.

“We felt the one-year compliance was a little too lax,” said Jon W. Welch, program manager of MCHD Environmental Health.

Facilities that must be in compliance within 90 days include new ones as well as those without a Certified Food Protection Manager (CFPM) or an expired CFPM. This position is a new requirement with the 2013 Food Code. All existing facilities with a CFPM will have six months to be in compliance. Welch said that many food workers have already been trained on the new Food Code.

The FDA’s Food Code regulates the training of area restaurant workers, many of whom take Food Safety Classes at MCHD. Registered sanitarians, such as the ones who work at the MCHD Environmental Health program, also must be trained on the new regulations so they will know what to look for during restaurant inspections.
MCHD Environmental Health’s sanitarians will attend training in Doddridge County on June 28 to learn the new updates, Welch said.

“Our district has a meeting every quarter,” he added. “Everybody in our region will be going to that meeting to learn how the new food code operates.”

Currently, each restaurant must have a Person in Charge (PIC) on duty at all times. MCHD offers PIC classes as well as those for Food Workers and Managers.

The previous set of rules that was officially in place was the FDA’s 2005 Food Code. However, MCHD’s Food Safety Training classes for Food Workers have been following the 2013 Food Code as adopted by the state for more than a year now, Berton said. The PIC and Manager courses were updated in March; online PIC classes will be updated soon.

Food Worker classes will still be held on a regular basis at MCHD. Annually, about 5,500 food workers in Monongalia County take Food Safety Classes in person and/or online through MCHD. The schedule for those classes can be found at monchd.org/food-safety-training.html.

One of the biggest differences between the 2005 and 2013 Food Codes is that now each restaurant must also have the CFPM position. Managers who want to become CFPMs may attend any training but must complete an approved CFPM exam. Recognized exams include Learn2Serve, National Registry of Food Safety Professionals, Prometric, ServSafe and State Food Safety.

When MCHD provides Manager’s training on the 2013 Food Code as adopted by the state, it already uses the National Registry’s CFPM exam at the conclusion of the course. The course is only available in person at MCHD.

In addition, the MCHD’s Board of Health requires any PIC that is not a CFPM to attend the health department’s PIC training to learn their responsibilities and duties of the current Food Code.

Other important Food Code changes cover a variety of topics. For instance the term “critical violation” during restaurant inspections will be replaced by either “priority items” or “priority foundation items.” Priority items must be corrected within three days; priority foundation items must be corrected within 10 days.

Non-critical violations will now be termed “core” items. A core item includes an item that usually relates to general sanitation, operational controls, sanitation standard operating
procedures (SSOPs), facilities or structures, equipment design or general maintenance. Core items must be corrected within 90 days.

Additionally, children’s menus will no longer be permitted to offer ground meat that is undercooked. Adult menus may continue to offer burgers or similar products as rare or even raw.

The Food Code rules expire every five years, and the goal will be to adopt the newest code, produced every four years, at that time.

“These changes have been a long time coming,” Berton said. “Most of the states are already on the 2013 Food Code. Some states automatically update to whatever version comes out. And there are about 10-12 states that are on the 2017 Food Code.”

If West Virginia automatically updated when the FDA releases a new Food Code every four years, it would be easier to keep both registered sanitarians and food workers trained on the changes, Welch said.

“It’s easier to update and train your people,” he said.

Also at Thursday’s Board of Health meeting, members agreed to some class price changes. Currently, the in-house PIC class is $35. That will be raised to $50. The current online PIC class costs $50. It will be raised to $65. An online food manager refresher course is being created now and will cost $75 when it is in effect.

The cost of classes has not been raised since 2008, Welch told the Board of Health, and many surrounding counties already charge more.

“We want to keep the price affordable,” he added. “Some facilities send four or five people, and it’s a burden on the facilities.”

West Virginia 64CSR17 contains the adoption provisions and is available online at apps.sos.wv.gov/adlaw/csr/readfile.aspx?DocId=51071&Format=PDF.

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