



CHAPTER 20 REVISION

RETAIL FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS
QUALITY OF LIFE COMMITTEE - JUNE 23, 2014

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DIVISION

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BACKGROUND

- Chapter 20 revision last occurred 2007
- Local chefs and grocers voiced concerns regarding the need to revise the local food code based on new science studies.
- 2013 FDA Food Code was released in late October

BACKGROUND

- 4 Stakeholder meetings held in 2014
- Invited 225 individuals and organizations (local restaurant owners and operators, grocers, GHRA, BOMA, Hotel and Lodging Association of Greater Houston)
- 17-20 individuals and organizations attended each meeting
- In general most changes received widespread support by stakeholders

DEFINITIONS

- Light Color –having 40% or greater light reflective value (walls and ceilings)
- Reduced oxygen packaging revised to clarify and expand the definition to address “cook chill” and “sous vide packaging”
- Low risk establishment (reduce inspection frequency to 24 months at low risk establishments)
- Potentially hazardous food definition is revised to include cut leafy greens and cut tomatoes

2013 FDA FOOD CODE: SPECIALIZED PROCESSES: REDUCED OXYGEN PACKAGING WITHOUT A VARIANCE*

Existing

- Provides requirements for vacuum packaging of food only. Does not provide requirements for reduced oxygen packaging processes such as sous vide or cook chill. A variance is required.
- Limits the refrigerated shelf life to no more than 14 days.
- All foods that are packaged by reduced oxygen packaging methods are required to have a HACCP plan.

Proposed

- Provides additional methods to safely comply with reduced oxygen packaging requirements without the need for a variance.
- Refrigerated shelf life of vacuumed packaged food extended from 14 days to 30 days.
- Eliminated the requirement for a HACCP Plan for reduced oxygen packaging of non-potentially hazardous food.

* A variance is a written document used by the regulatory authority that authorizes a modification or waiver of one or more of the requirements of the ordinance, if in the opinion of the regulatory authority, a health hazard or nuisance would not result from the modification or waiver.

2013 FDA FOOD CODE: SPECIALIZED PROCESSES: REDUCED OXYGEN PACKAGING WITHOUT A VARIANCE

Existing

- No provisions in current Houston Food Ordinance or TFER for cooking and cooling of food in a sealed bag. Required to look to FDA Food Code for guidance.
- HACCP plan required for all food packaged by reduced oxygen methods.

Proposed

- New time and temperature options. Cooled in sealed bag to 41°F within 6 hours:
 - 1. Cooled from 41°F to 34°F within 48 hours and held until discarded within **30 days**;
 - 2. Held at 41°F in a sealed bag for 7 days or less.
 - 3. Held frozen with no shelf life restriction until consumed or used.
- HACCP plan not required for reduced oxygen packaging of potentially hazardous food if package is labeled with production time and date; and held at 41°F or less and **food removed from package or package is opened to expose product to atmospheric oxygen within 48 hours.**

ADMINISTRATIVE REVISIONS

Existing

- Ordinance states application be received 7 days before the event. No penalty.
- Current ordinance allows for instructor-guided class with test or test-only option for certification. Trend in regulatory agencies and the industry for on-line training of managers.
- Initial course-15 hours and renewal course- 7 hours

Proposed

- Special Investigative Fees: added for temporary food service applications not received at least 7 days before the event.
- Food Service Manager's Certification Course: make course available online
- Duration of the Course: Remove requirement that the course be 15 hours in length and conducted at an appropriate length of time to cover course material.

INFORMATION AVAILABILITY

- Online inspections: Post full inspection reports to the HDHHS Website. Currently general violations appear in code language and not the actual inspection report.
- Online reporting: Offer electronic reporting of inspection results to business operators and corporate owners.

(these do not require ordinance revision)

THANK YOU