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Dear Eating Establishment Owner,

Congratulations on your new venture! The Health Inspection Program would like to provide you with valuable information in preparation for your pre-operational inspection. Our goal is to provide you with the tools you need to operate a prosperous and safe eating establishment and to ensure your pre-operational inspection is conducted in an efficient and informative way. With these goals in mind, please take the time to follow the procedures listed below in readying your establishment for this very important inspection.

- Ensure your establishment is “Ready to Go”. This means all construction work and plumbing is completed and that all cleaning has been done in preparation for your opening.
- Have all refrigeration units turned on the night before the day of your scheduled pre-operational inspection. To protect yourself from the possibility of having to discard food, we encourage you to refrain from purchasing refrigerated potentially hazardous foods (PHF) until your refrigeration has been checked and confirmed to be able to keep food temperatures at 41°F or below. Instead, we ask that you assemble your equipment as you would have it during normal use and to use water as your “food”. By doing this you allow the inspector to obtain a “food temperature” rather than an “air temperature”. For example, if the unit is a salad/sandwich prep unit, please assemble all the rails and pans in the top of the unit and the shelves in the bottom of the unit. Place water in the top four corner pans and in the center two pans and then in pans on either side in the bottom of the unit. Do this the night before so that the water reaches a refrigerated temperature. This process allows you and the inspector to determine if there are areas of your refrigeration that vary in temperature. Place pans of water in various places in all other units as well. Make sure that refrigerators have thermometers and that a calibrated food thermometer is on site.
- Please have a completed menu available for review and a current Certified Food Protection Manager certificate for the person in charge (PIC) of the kitchen. Your inspector will ask your PIC about menu items and general food safety. For example, if the menu calls for PHF’s that need to be cooked and then cooled, your inspector may ask the PIC what the cooling process is and ask specifics about time and temperature for that process and other food storage or holding temperatures. The reason for these questions is to make sure that the PIC can demonstrate knowledge of the Maine Food Code and the safe handling of food.
- Have your ware washing area set up with the chemicals to be used and a test kit for the sanitizer.
- Please have your employee health policy available for review. The Maine Food Code requires that you make your employees aware of certain aspects of foodborne illness. For additional information please visit this address: [http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/el/employee\\_health.htm](http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/el/employee_health.htm)

By asking that you follow these guidelines, our goal is to make the pre-operational process as efficient and informative as possible. Your assistance is greatly appreciated!

12/10/24