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FOOD RECALLS

Hardly a week goes by that we don’t hear about a food recall. Some of the most recent include *Salmonella Newport* in tomatoes, *Salmonella Poona* in cucumbers, *Listeria monocytogenes* in Blue Bell® ice cream products and undeclared peanuts (allergen) in caramel apples. A food recall occurs when there is reason to believe that a food may cause injury, illness or even death. A food manufacturer, producer or distributor initiates a recall in cooperation with the federal agency of jurisdiction. The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) provides the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) the authority to issue a mandatory recall when a company fails to voluntarily recall unsafe food after asked to do so. Some reasons for recalling food include:

- Discovery of an organism in a product which may make people sick
- Discovery of a potential allergen in a product
- Mislabeling or misbranding of food. For example, a food may contain an allergen, such as nuts or eggs, but those ingredients do not appear on the label.
- Discovery of physical contaminants

FOOD RECALL CLASSIFICATIONS

- Class I recall – involves dangerous or defective products that predictably could cause serious health problems or death. Examples include: food found to contain bacteria that causes foodborne illness and food with undeclared allergens.
- Class II recall – involves products that might cause a temporary health problem or pose only a slight threat of a serious nature. Examples include: candy with FD&C #5 yellow dye not listed on the label or metal shavings in a canned food.
- Class III recall – involves products that are unlikely to cause any adverse health reaction, but that violate FDA labeling or manufacturing laws. Examples include: a minor container defect or lack of English labeling in a retail food.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: How can I stay informed on food recalls?
A: [www.foodsafety.gov/recalls/index.html](http://www.foodsafety.gov/recalls/index.html) is the best source for complete and accurate food recall information. You should be notified by your supplier if one of their products is involved in a recall.

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Follow their instructions for removal of the product from your establishment. If you purchase grocery items locally, those stores will receive alerts from their suppliers if products are involved in a recall. It’s a complex system where good communication needs to flow between producers, processors, manufacturers, distributors to the end user.

Q: What do restaurants and retail establishments need to do if there is a food recall?
A: You should not use or serve any recalled item. Check your inventory and remove all items matching the recall notice. Label the items, PRODUCT RECALLED – DO NOT SELL or SERVE. Place the items in a secure location. Follow the suppliers’ instructions for return or disposal of the product.

In addition, wash and sanitize all areas where the recalled product was used and stored in the facility including cutting boards, knives, utensils, display cases, refrigerators and any surfaces the product was in contact. If you processed and packaged any of the recalled product(s) prior to the recall notice, wash and sanitize all surfaces, utensils and equipment to prevent cross-contamination. Wash hands with warm water and soap following the cleaning and sanitation process.

Q: Recently cucumbers were recalled. Should I stop selling and serving cucumbers and anything that contains them?
A: Only products indicated in the recall notification are unsafe. For example, if cucumbers were recalled from producer A, cucumbers from producer B and C are safe to sell or serve because they are not part of the recall. During a recall it’s critical to pay close attention to the details including lot or batch numbers and procedures to follow for removal of the product from your establishment.


FOR MORE INFORMATION

http://z.umn.edu/zvn
U of M Extension food safety link to online learning that explores emerging trends including food recalls.

http://www.foodsafety.gov/recalls/index.html
Nation-wide system, sign up to receive food recall alerts and view recent recalls.

http://www.mda.state.mn.us/food/safety/recalls.aspx
Minnesota Department of Agriculture provides Minnesota specific recall info and more.

http://www.health.state.mn.us/foodsafety/alert/index.html
Minnesota Department of Health provides Minnesota specific recall info and more.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND ONLINE LEARNING

Certification
• St. Cloud – October 15
• Marshall – October 21

Renewal
• St. Cloud – October 13
• Marshall – October 20

Both certification and renewal courses are available in online options.

To learn more about the courses and to register, click on:
http://www.extension.umn.edu/food/food-safety/courses/

For more class information:
www.extension.umn.edu/foodsafty
or call 507-337-2819
or email schwa047@umn.edu