

Food for Thought

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A SINK FOR EACH PURPOSE

You may have recently seen a violation on your inspection report for not having a dedicated hand wash sink. All restaurants are required to have a sink available for hand washing whenever food preparation is happening. That means the 3 bay dish sink should NOT also be your hand sink! *and no, the sink in the bathroom doesn't count* The reason behind this requirement is that while preparing food you need to be able to wash your hands immediately whenever they are contaminated, without stopping to move the dirty dishes or waiting for your coworker to get out of the bathroom. If you don't yet have a dedicated hand wash sink feel free to reach out to us for help. We've worked with many operators to find the best space to add this critical food safety tool.

Managing Mayhem in the Kitchen

A busy restaurant kitchen will never be perfectly neat. There will be spills, crumbs, and stacks of pans during a rush—that's normal! But when mess gets out of control it stops being "just part of the job" and starts impacting food safety and inventory controls.

First let's talk about food safety. That's what this newsletter is all about! Cluttered counters make it easier for cross-contamination to occur. Food scraps are great vectors for spreading germs. Unlabeled containers can hide old food that should have been thrown out. When there is too much out in your workspace it's easy to miss what's right in front of you, like a temperature control food left on the counter. Each time a mess is left behind in the kitchen you take another step away from the clean and organized space you need to follow food safety rules. That can lead to foodborne illness, lost customer trust, and violations on your inspections.

Now think about your inventory. A messy storage area is like throwing money in the trash. If boxes aren't

organized, labeled, and dated, staff may open a new case before using up existing stock. Food expires. Produce gets buried and goes bad. Dry goods get spilled and can't be used. Managers over-order because they can't see what they already have. That ties up cash and increases waste.

The solution isn't fancy. It's simple habits every day, week, and month. Take regular stock of what's in the kitchen and get rid of anything you don't use. Make sure everything has a home. Clean as you go, not just at closing.

A clean and organized kitchen isn't a fantasy, it's an expectation. It protects your customers, saves money, and prevents violations. Managing mess in the kitchen is a crucial part of protecting your business!





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Livingston County
Department of Health

*Commitment to leading the community
for a healthier and safer tomorrow*

Who's the Boss?

When equipment fails in a restaurant, it's easy to blame the machine. The cooler just stopped working, the dish machine isn't cleaning right, the fryer suddenly died. But in most cases, these problems build slowly. That's why monitoring equipment is a core responsibility of every operator.

Food safety depends on equipment monitoring. As a cooler condenser weakens, temperatures creep up and excessive condensate starts to build. A responsible operator will notice these changes during daily temperature monitoring and service the equipment right away. Early repairs are often less expensive, and catching problems before you lose temperature control also protects your product inventory.

Your health inspector should **never** be the one to discover a piece of equipment has failed. Our staff is at your restaurant for an hour or so, once or twice a year. Unless the equipment happens to break that very day, you should already know about it!

How can you monitor your equipment? Make sure hot and cold holding units have accurate thermometers. Use test strips to check your dish machine and sanitizer. Most important of all: listen and look for changes in operation. You're the expert!



In-Person Food Workers Course

Monday March 30, 2026

1:00 pm – 4:00 pm OR

5:00 pm - 8:00 pm

PRE-REGISTRATION IS A MUST!!

Space is limited and classes fill up quickly. Please register online using the link below on or before Friday March 27

If you don't have internet access call our office to register at (585)243-7280

All courses are held at the Livingston County Highway Department at the Hampton Corners Complex on Gypsy Lane.

Online Food Workers Course

The Livingston County Department of Health offers **online** Food Worker Training Certification!
These courses may be completed at anytime. For more information, visit our website:

<https://www.livingstoncountyny.gov/1019/Food-Worker-Training>

Please note that there is \$10 fee for the online course which is paid directly to the third party course providers.

At least one employee from each food establishment must have a current certificate from an approved Food Workers Course. Please call the LCDOH for more details regarding approved courses.

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