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Mandatory Food Safety Inspections--Reminder

Nutrition Services Division Management Bulletin

Purpose: Policy, Beneficial Information

Date: February 2014

Number: SNP-09-2014

To: School Nutrition Program Sponsors

Attention: Food Service Directors

Reference: U.S Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service Policy Memoranda SP 45-2011 and SP 39-2008; Federal Register Vol. 74, No.169, September 2, 2009

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/policy/all>

Subject: Mandatory Food Safety Inspections—Reminder

This Management Bulletin (MB) serves as a reminder for School Nutrition Program (SNP) sponsors about the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety Inspection requirements.

All sponsors participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) must obtain two food safety inspections from their state or local environmental health department (LEHD) annually. Depending on the type of food service operation at each site, the scope of the food safety inspection required may vary. The level of inspection is determined by the agency conducting the inspection.

The California Department of Education (CDE) has received many questions from sponsors regarding whether or not they must obtain food safety inspections for school sites where they do not cook food. These sites are considered **service only sites**, and the requirement for two food safety inspections **also** applies to them.

Examples of service only sites include, but are not limited to:

- Sites that receive meals from a central kitchen, where staff only serve the meals
- Sites that receive prepackaged meals from a vendor, and staff do not prepare or cook meals at the site

Residential Child Care Institutions: Please refer to the information provided at the end of this MB.

Responsibility to Request Food Safety Inspections

It is the responsibility of the School Food Authority (SFA) to request two food safety inspections from their LEHD and document their efforts. For those agencies that fail to obtain the two mandatory food safety inspections, the CDE will request documentation from those sponsors to show that they have made every effort to comply with

the federal requirements. SFAs should document their requests in writing for proper documentation of their efforts to obtain the inspections.

Mandatory Food Safety Inspection Survey

The USDA requires the CDE to report the results of food safety inspections for every NSLP and SBP site. In order to provide the CDE with this information, SFAs must submit an annual mandatory food safety inspection survey using the Child Nutrition Information and Payment System. Sponsors must enter their data in the survey beginning in **August 2014**. Prior to August 2014, all sponsors will receive an e-mail with detailed instructions on how to complete the survey. Sponsors must indicate the number of food safety inspections conducted at each of their sites for School Year 2013–14. The sponsor must indicate an acceptable reason for not meeting the required two food safety inspections.

Acceptable reasons for SFAs being unable to obtain two inspections include:

- Scheduling conflict. Sponsors must make every attempt to request the two food safety inspections from their LEHD. If the LEHD is unable to conduct the inspections, sponsors must provide documentation to the CDE of their effort to obtain the inspections.
- Excessive cost. The food safety inspections are an allowable expense to the cafeteria fund; however, if the cost is excessive and the SFA cannot pay for the inspections, the SFA may select this as a reason for not obtaining their inspection(s).

Note: The CDE will require all SFAs to indicate the fee charged for inspections as part of the 2013–14 mandatory food safety inspection survey.

Residential Child Care Institutions

Group homes do not fall under the jurisdiction of the LEHD; therefore they will not be able to obtain inspections from their LEHD. However, group homes are still required to complete the mandatory food safety inspection survey. When completing the survey, group homes must select “none” to report that zero inspections were conducted. In addition, they must select “other” and indicate “group home” as the reason for not obtaining the two inspections.

All other Residential Child Care Institutions (e.g., juvenile halls) must meet the requirement to obtain two food safety inspections.

Please remember that it is ultimately the responsibility of the SFA to request the two food safety inspections from their LEHD. In situations where the LEHD cannot conduct the food safety inspections, it is very important that SFAs document that they made an effort to obtain the inspections.

Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding this MB, please contact Ashley Osterman, Child Nutrition Consultant (CNC), Northern SNP Unit, by phone at 916-445-1261 or by e-mail at aosterman@cde.ca.gov or Lori Porter, CNC, Southern SNP Unit, by phone at 916-322-1454 or by e-mail at lporter@cde.ca.gov.

Questions: Nutrition Services Division | 800-952-5609

Last Reviewed: Monday, February 8, 2016

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