## **Q&A DOCUMENT**

## Q. Why are new food premises regulation necessary?

A. The current regulations have been in effect for 35 years and do not reflect enhanced food safety requirements in effect nationally. Canada has one of the safest food supplies in the world and our provincial legislation needs to be brought in line with regional and national standards.

#### Q. Why are the new regulations being introduced now?

A. The Department of Health, Chief Public Health Office(CPHO) has been working on a renewal of the Public Health Act for several years. The new Act was just proclaimed last year. In order to protect the health of Islanders and the over 1 million visitors to our province each year, it has been a high priority for the CPHO to bring our food premises regulations to today's standards.

#### Q. What are the major changes for operators?

A. Many operations will not see any change. Regional and national chains have already adapted to the standards in other provinces. The new regulations tend to focus more on food handling practices and processes than those currently in effect. Similar to requirements in place for processing agricultural and fish products, operators will now be required to document cleaning and sanitizing schedules for the premises, equipment and utensils.

### Q. Why develop written sanitation procedures for my food service operation?

A. Proper cleaning and sanitizing of the premises and equipment is instrumental in limiting the spread of communicable disease through food. A plan template is available for your consideration (<a href="www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/FoodPremSani2.pdf">www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/FoodPremSani2.pdf</a>) and should be developed to address the specific needs of your operation.

#### Q. What training requirements are necessary to work in the food service industry?

A. Currently you can be employed, own or operate a food premises in PEI with no mandatory food safety training. The new regulations will require the owner/operator or an onsite employee to have a recognized food safety training course on site while food is being prepared.

This requirement is delayed coming into force until <u>April 2016</u> to allow businesses to train appropriately. More information on food safety training requirements will be posted to the website early in 2015.

# Q. What do the regulations mean for local church groups and service club fund raising activities?

A. Food premises owned, operated or leased by religious organizations, service clubs and non-profit organizations where **low risk food** is prepared or served by volunteers for functions or gatherings of the religious organization, service club or not-for profit organization are exempted.

#### Q. What is low risk food?

A. Low risk food is defined as food that will not support the growth of disease causing organisms or their toxins. Examples would include: bread, rolls, loaves, sweets, preserves.

#### Q. Are license fees increasing?

A. New licensing fees were already introduced in the spring of 2014. They are an average of licensing fees within the Maritime region ranging from \$37.50 for a temporary event license to \$150 for a full service restaurant.

#### Q. Who will enforce the regulations?

A. Environmental Health Officers enforcing the regulations are all Certified Public Health Inspectors, meeting the basic and ongoing education requirements plus the core competencies as set out by the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors.

### Q. How are the regulations enforced?

- A. The CPHO uses a graduated approach to enforcement through education, consultation, inspection and warnings. The new regulations provide more tools to effectively deal with non-compliant behavior including:
  - placing conditions on a license
  - suspension of a license for up to a 30 day period
  - closure by Order of the Chief Public Health Officer
  - issuing a fine (minimum fine is \$1000.)

#### Q. Will food premises inspection reports be available to the public?

A. Currently Environmental Health posts warnings each month on their website. Changes to the Environmental Health Information System data base are presently under way. On line inspection reports will be available for public access in 2015 once all changes have been completed and fully tested. This will complete the final recommendation of the Auditor General's 2011 Food Safety Audit.

# Q. Who can I contact to discuss how the new food premises regulations may affect my business/organization or activity/event?

A. Please contact Environmental Health at the Chief Public Health Office at 902-368-4970 or email to <a href="mailto:envhealth@ihis.org">envhealth@ihis.org</a> to discuss how the food premise regulations may apply to your business/organization or activity/event as well as options for meeting food safety requirements.