A SUMMARY OF PROPER FOOD HANDLING PROCEDURES
FOR FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

This is just a short, incomplete summary of proper food handling procedures. The 2013 Missouri Food Code containing all requirements can be accessed on the Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services web site at www.dhss.mo.gov/FoodCode.

AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL. Only those individuals working as food handlers or those who have duties directly related to the operation are allowed in the food booth.

BARE HAND CONTACT. A food employee’s bare hands may not touch ready-to-eat-food. Tongs, spatulas, deli tissues, or gloves must be used. Ready-to-eat food should be discarded if it comes in contact with bare hands.

COOLING FOOD. Food must be cooled from 135 degrees to 70 degrees within two hours and within a total of six hours from 135 degrees to 41 degrees or less. This can be accomplished by placing food in shallow pans, separating food into smaller or thinner portions, stirring food in a container placed in an ice water bath, by using containers that facilitate heat transfer, or by other effective means. Hot thick foods should not be placed into a residential type refrigerator for cooling. Hot food should not be placed in a container that is tightly covered. It is important to provide for maximum heat transfer through the container walls and the open or loosely covered top of the container.

COOKING. An essential part of food safety is assuring that proper final cooking temperatures are met. Proper cooking temperatures for some common foods are:

- Chicken: 165° degrees
- Hamburgers: 155° degrees
- Pork: 145° degrees
- Fish/seafood: 145° degrees

These temperatures are to be maintained for a period of 15 seconds.

CROSS CONTAMINATION. Food must be handled in a manner that any surface that has been in contact with raw animal food or any other source of contamination does not come into contact with ready-to-eat food.

EATING, DRINKING AND SMOKING. Eating and tobacco use are not allowed in food preparation areas or other areas where open food is present. A closed drink cup with a lid and a straw is allowed, if spilling or dripping onto exposed food, clean equipment, utensils, and linens, or single-use articles will not occur.

FOOD. All foods and beverages are to be prepared on-site or at a food establishment currently under inspection. There are exceptions in place for religious, non-profit, and charitable groups, and small food processors allowing them to serve home prepared foods that are not potentially hazardous. Check with the local health authority for specific rules.

FOOD AND NON-FOOD CONTACT SURFACES. Food preparation and equipment surfaces should be smooth, easily cleanable and durable.
FOOD REHEATING FOR HOT HOLDING. Potentially hazardous foods should be reheated so that all parts of the food reaches a temperature of 165 degrees F for at least 15 seconds. (Please see the food code concerning food that is reheated in a microwave and concerning food that has been commercially processed and hermetically sealed.)

FOOD STORAGE. Raw animal foods including eggs must be stored in a manner that ready-to-eat food cannot become contaminated. This usually involves storing raw animal foods below ready-to-eat food in refrigeration unit.

HAND SINK. Adequate hand washing facilities consist of a handsink equipped with hot and cold running water, soap and paper towels, which is used only for washing hands.

HAND WASHING. Remember to wash hands: before starting or returning to work, after eating, smoking, or using the restroom, when changing duties, before putting on gloves and whenever hands become soiled. The use of gloves or hand sanitizers is not a substitute for handwashing. Handwashing is to be done at a sink that is dedicated to handwashing alone.

Proper Hand Washing Techniques. Use soap and water. Rub your hands vigorously as you wash them. Wash: backs of hands, wrists, between fingers, around and under fingernails Rinse your hands well. Dry hands with a paper towel. It is recommended to turn off the water using paper towel instead of your bare hands.

HOT AND COLD HOLDING. Sufficient equipment that is capable of keeping foods hot and/or cold must be provided. Mechanical refrigeration or ice is needed for cold foods. Refrigerators and freezers should be clean and contain thermometers. Hot holding units must be clean and contain a thermometer. Hot foods are kept at 135 degrees or hotter and cold foods are kept at 41 degrees or colder.

ILLNESS RESTRICTIONS. An individual who has any type of wound infection, or who has a communicable illness that could be transmitted through food shall not be allowed to handle food.

SANITIZER AND WIPING CLOTHS. An approved sanitizer should be provided (chlorine or quaternary ammonium compounds, or iodine). Wiping cloths should be stored in the sanitizer when not in use. When using bleach to sanitize, mix one teaspoon of unscented bleach to each gallon of water.

STORAGE. All foods and single-use or service articles-paper plates, cups and lids-should be stored at least six (6) inches above the floor or ground and protected from contamination.

TOXICS. Cleaning solutions, sanitizers or other toxic items must be stored separately from foods, single-use and service items, and food contact surfaces. These same items need to be properly labeled. Over-the-counter insecticides not rated for use in or around a food establishment should not be used.

WAREWASHING. Warewashing must be performed in a three-bin sink. First, items should be washed in hot, soapy water. Second, they should be rinsed in clean, warm water. Third, they should be chemically sanitized in warm water with an approved sanitizer. Finally, the items should be air-dried.