

2003
Samuel J. Crumbine
Consumer Protection Award

Submitted by:

County of Santa Clara
Department of Environmental Health
Consumer Protection Division

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County of Santa Clara
Department of Environmental Health

Executive Summary

The Consumer Protection Division (CPD) of the County of Santa Clara, Department of Environmental Health provides educational, consultative, inspection, plan review, and permitting services in a number of program areas including: retail food, public swimming pools, land development (including drinking water supplies and on-site sewerage), noise control, disaster preparedness, housing, and environmental lead contamination. The single, largest program within CPD is food safety, with more than 8,500 facilities under permit.

Commencing in 1997, CPD began the development of a long-term project to examine and improve our food safety program. Although this project is far from complete, significant progress has been made.

Our approach to change had us look outside our Division to our diverse community and to our efforts in public outreach and education. We looked at strengthening our partnerships with allied agencies and organizations, in an effort to have a positive impact on food safety forums at the local, regional, state, and national levels. And, we looked inward at the resources we use to accomplish our tasks.

In the year 2002, our six-year project began to show significant signs of success. We have reevaluated and revised our inspection services to successfully meet the changing needs of the program. Our food safety education and outreach efforts are reaching hundreds of people each year. And, our employees are involved in a number of regional and statewide food safety initiatives that are helping shape the future of food safety throughout California.

We are a large county by many standards, but we do not have unlimited resources—we are a “fee-for-service” agency and cannot rely on general fund money to augment or balance our budget. We also do not have the availability of grant funding—the success we have achieved has been with in-house resources and a tremendous amount of “sweat equity” by our hard-working employees.

With a staff of more than sixty, effecting change in a collaborative and inclusive format is difficult, and, to add to the challenge, the majority of CPD staff are seasoned veterans with years of experience doing their job “their way.” But, these veterans also carry with them a remarkable level of skill and expertise—that, when combined with the energy and enthusiasm of our younger staff, makes our Consumer Protection Division team unbeatable!

The success story outlined in this nomination document belongs to everyone in CPD, past and present—with the biggest round of applause going to the rank-and-file employees who made it happen.

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This nomination document was created using *Microsoft Word*, including the automatic “footnote” feature. There appears to be a “bug” in this program, which has forced some of the footnote descriptions (located at the base of the page) to incorrectly appear on the following page. All information and documents in this appendix have been placed in the same order in which they are included in the narrative portion of our nomination package and are referenced in the footnotes. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause and thank you for your time and consideration.

Demographics

Situated at the southern-most tip of San Francisco Bay and once known as *The Valley of Hearts Delight*, the County of Santa Clara has seen enormous change in the last thirty years. Until the late 1970s our valley was covered with quiet suburban communities and mile after mile of orchards and farmland. Today, we live in a sprawling urban area known the world over as *Silicon Valley*.

There are fifteen incorporated cities within Santa Clara County and a number of smaller, unincorporated communities. The total county population is 1.7 million, with more than one million residing in San Jose, our largest city.

As the home of Stanford University, Cisco Systems, Intel, and Apple, to name but a few, we have a highly educated and well-paid populace. However, we are also home to a large immigrant population working at minimum wage jobs and in our few remaining agricultural areas. Housing costs continue to be a major issue—home prices are unreachable for the average worker with typical 40-year old tract homes selling for close to a million dollars. To find affordable housing, many employees must commute for hours each day to and from outlying areas.

The County of Santa Clara is also one of the most culturally diverse areas in the world. Walk through any public place and you will hear a myriad of languages. Thirty-four percent of our population is foreign-born and more than 45% speak a language other than English at home. Our predominant ethnic groups are Asian (25.6%) and Hispanic (24%)—statistics that are significant when compared to the national average of 3.6% and 12.5%, respectively.

Resources

Staffing and Workload

The County of Santa Clara Department of Environmental Health (DEH), Consumer Protection Division (CPD) is mandated by the laws of the State of California to monitor and protect a variety of basic human needs and quality of life—including safe food, water, and sewage disposal. The CPD Food Safety Program monitors retail food facilities countywide, including restaurants, markets, bakeries, bars, food

vehicles, farmers’ markets, street fairs, and festivals. We also investigate complaints of foodborne illness, conduct food safety training classes, and carry out food product recalls.

All “field” employees in CPD are either Registered Environmental Health Specialists (REHS) or State-certified trainees preparing for their REHS exam. Current staff include a director, four manager/supervisors, 15 senior and senior-lead specialists (all but two have some level of responsibility within the food safety program), 38 field specialists (including two trainees), and 5 clerical support staff.

CPD field specialists are “generalists,” so in addition to food safety responsibilities, they routinely manage work in the Recreational Health Program inspecting the county’s more than 3,250 public pools, spas, hot tubs, and water slides. Additionally, eight field specialists have Land Use Program

Average Annual Workload in CPD’s Food Safety Program	
8,500	retail food facilities under permit *
1,700	permits issued for temporary food booths
500	facilities undergoing plan review and construction
450	alleged foodborne illness outbreaks investigated
200	enforcement actions taken
40	food safety certification classes
200	community food safety presentations
1,200	assistance requests and complaints investigated
* <i>This number includes:</i>	
	<i>5150 onsite eating and drinking establishments</i>
	<i>2300 off sale food establishments (e.g., markets)</i>
	<i>1050 food vehicles</i>

responsibilities to ensure adequate and safe potable water supplies and onsite sanitary sewage disposal.

CPD Senior specialists are assigned countywide responsibility in one or more environmental health specialty areas. Such assignments include, oversight of food safety, recreational health, land development, food fairs and festivals, farmer’s markets, epidemiological investigations, food security, noise, drinking water, disaster preparedness, detention facilities, food and pool plan check, food vehicles and carts, indoor air quality, vending machines, community outreach, and training. Senior-Lead specialists are assigned smaller work districts and assist supervisors with staff training and enforcement issues.

Budget

DEH manages its programs on a “fee-for-service” basis; the only “general fund” money received from the County is for public obligation activities (e.g., public schools, jails). All regulated facilities are required to obtain and pay for an annual environmental health permit.¹ Examples of food establishment annual permit fees range from a low of \$131 for “limited food sales” to a high of \$939 for a restaurant with

¹ See appendix for a listing of current DEH fees effective 7/1/02.

more than 26 employees or a grocery store with more than 20,000 square feet. Food facility plan check fees range from \$289 for a minor remodel to \$1,156 for a new restaurant, bakery, or grocery store. In fiscal year 2003-2004, the total budget for CPD will exceed \$7.6 million.

The Department was a pioneer—a *first in California*—in 1994 by initiating an agreement with the County Executive that any end-of-year environmental health balance would “roll-over” to the next year, rather than reverting back to the general fund. This endeavor, however, had its risks. If CPD went over budget there was no bailout from the County... layoffs would occur. The advantage was that we would cease operating under a “use it or lose it” budget... long-term planning could now be implemented for major upgrades, like the purchase of new field equipment such as thermocouples and non-contact infrared thermometers, as well as computer equipment.

New Office

Since 1996, an inordinate amount of time and resources was spent in working with various County agencies, architects, and builders, to find and renovate a new office site for the Department. Our goal was to centralize Department operations into a single facility... but most importantly, our existing main office—occupied by the Department since the 1950s—was slated for demolition.

Much of 2002 was focused on this endeavor, and in September, our move finally became a reality. All Department programs (with the exception of Vector Control) are now housed in a single office suite improving our ability to provide efficient and standardized service to the public. Innovative features at this facility include a parking lot food vehicle inspection kiosk, a computer resource and training center, and a state-of-the-art classroom equipped with multi-media capabilities and satellite downlink.

Baseline

Mission

The mission of the Consumer Protection Division is to preserve and enhance public health and safety through education, inspection, and enforcement activities. Since food safety is our largest program,

the “primary” goal of CPD is to ensure that retail food establishments are constructed, maintained, and operated to provide a safe and unadulterated food supply.

Performance Measures

Prior to 1997, the only goal communicated to staff was the need to inspect every facility once each quarter. In 1997, the following performance measures were established for the food program:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Frequency of inspection for retail food facilities will be an average of two times per year and 90% of the inventory will be inspected at least one time per year.</i>• <i>100% of alleged foodborne illness outbreaks will be reviewed and categorized upon receipt; serious cases will be responded to immediately.</i>• <i>Legal enforcement action will be taken against 100% of retail food establishments where critical hazard factors have been identified and which fail to perform the necessary corrective measures.</i> |
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Diversity

Because of changes in our population, there has been a dramatic shift in the foods prepared and sold to consumers. Previously unheard of ethnic foods are now commonplace on menus and grocery store shelves. Beginning in the late-1980s, CPD entered into a unique partnership with the University of California-Davis to study select Asian foods to determine whether these foods should be classified as potentially hazardous. The *Ethnic Food Task Force* was a pioneering effort in the United States looking at foods from both a cultural and microbiological perspective. What we learned was more than microbiology—we learned about cultures, traditions, and beliefs; we learned that the key to effective communication between cultures was accepting and understanding each other’s perspective; and we learned that we must use our skills to “lead” food operators into compliance through education.

Food handling practices and time-honored traditions—*many in conflict with California laws*—are observed during food facility inspections on a daily basis. Many operators have been educated outside the United States—some with little or no formal education—increasing the challenge of making food safety laws, and the public health significance of these laws, fully appreciated.

The Consumer Protection Division is truly an example of America’s “melting pot.” We are fortunate to have more than 30% of our staff born and raised outside the United States, sharing their non-English language skills and cultural knowledge with colleagues. In addition, many others are first-

generation Americans brought up with the tradition and culture of their parents’ homeland. This internal diversity is a tremendous asset when training staff and when communicating with the public we serve.

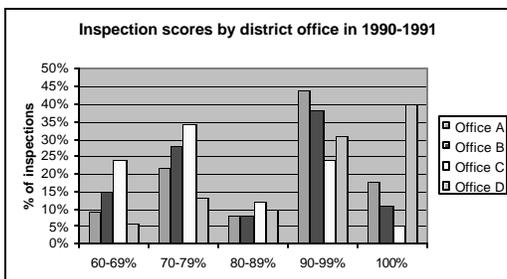
To be effective in our job, REHSs *must* learn to deal effectively with cultures and customs *foreign* to our “American” customs, and we must become aware of, and be sensitive to, other cultures. Our philosophy: *they learn from us while we learn from them*. We ask our staff: “Think about your behavior, not just theirs. You’re the one entering their establishment. You’re the one initiating the inspection. They are going to respond to your behavior.” This philosophy does not mean that we overlook critical violations—it simply means that we try to understand *why* the violations occur *before* making assumptions and threatening enforcement.

To illustrate our point, we offer a quote from the National Sanitation Foundation in two versions: the only thing that is different is the **bold/italic** emphasis.

With Our Old Attitude	With Today’s Philosophy
<p>“... the level of environmental sanitation enjoyed by any group of people living together in an organized manner is a direct reflection of the knowledge and habits of <i>those people</i>. It is a part of <i>their</i> culture.... To change the level of sanitation of <i>that</i> social group to an effectively higher plane, <i>the people</i> must be educated as to why a higher level of sanitation is desirable and must be motivated to want to change <i>their</i> mode of living. <i>They</i> must be willing to abandon certain aspects of <i>their</i> culture and accept new patterns of existence.”</p>	<p>“... the level of environmental sanitation enjoyed by any group of people living together in an organized manner is a direct reflection of the knowledge and habits of those people. It is a part of their culture.... To change the level of sanitation of that social group to an effectively higher plane, the people must be educated as to why a higher level of sanitation is desirable and must be motivated to want to change their mode of living. They must be willing to abandon certain aspects of their culture and accept new patterns of existence.”</p>

Understanding the issues of diversity has made a major impact on the way we ensure that food safety laws are understood, complied with, and enforced. The burden of learning acceptable behavior regarding food safety is not “theirs” alone; “we” must share in that burden.

Standardization



The “standardization” of our field staff working in the food safety program has long been on the drawing board with each attempt achieving varying levels of success followed by numerous reasons to place the project on hold.

In 1991, a statistical study was conducted that examined food facility inspection scores in each of our three district offices. The results were startling! In one office,

40% of the inspections recorded a perfect 100% score, while in another, less than 5% of the inspections achieved 100%. It was obvious we were in desperate need of a strategy to ensure that we uniformly applied the law. However, standardization is not just about the violations that are observed, it is also about our method of communicating and the way we interact with food facility operators.

Published by CPD in 1995, the *Standardized Inspection Guide and Reference (SIGR)* was created by an employee committee as an inspection tool and reference work.² It's intent is to assist specialists in conducting thorough food facility inspections and is designed so that any subject can be easily found within the document. Intended as a “memory jogger,” the SIGR lists all areas that need to be inspected during a variety of inspection types to ensure that a consistent, high quality inspection is conducted regardless of who performs it.

In 1997, CPD's standardization project was once again launched with the publication of the *Food Program Standardization Project Classroom Instructors Manual*, a three-inch thick compendium addressing such issues as quality of inspections, writing inspection reports, tools and equipment, as well as field exercises, team inspections, and classroom training modules.³ As part of this project, we also created a *Food Policy Memos* manual and a *Handouts Provided by Instructor* manual that included tests, quizzes, surprise activities, and photo exercises that were to be provided by the instructor.

Outreach and Education

In 1996, we initiated a study in conjunction with San Jose State University (SJSU) to help assess our food safety education program and to revise our inspection process.⁴ To measure attitude and knowledge regarding food safety, three hundred surveys (10% of restaurants under permit) were mailed to two separate restaurant populations—separated by distinguishing “favorable and unfavorable” health code violations from 1994 inspection records. Our objective was to determine if restaurants with favorable inspections displayed a higher concern for, and knowledge of, food safety than those restaurants with unfavorable records. Results of the survey concluded that operators who possessed the necessary

² See appendix for example pages of the *SIGR*.

knowledge, and had an appropriate concern for food safety, were in fact, applying good food safety principles on a more frequent basis as evidenced by favorable inspections.

For years, CPD had offered “food handler” training classes at no charge for facilities requesting such services or in situations where CPD determined that training was required due to failure to comply. These mini-courses—generally less than two hours in length—were designed so that each specialist could develop a lesson-plan specific to the facility’s current needs.⁵ The results of the SJSU study indicated that the majority of facilities opted to receive their training by national providers, not from our Department. Clearly, work was needed in our educational outreach.

Partnerships

CPD had always been active in food safety issues at all levels of government, had successfully built coalitions with other agencies and industry, and had achieved many success stories over the years. Our former Director was the primary author of the California Uniform Retail Food Facilities Law (CURFFL), groundbreaking food safety legislation now enforced throughout California. We have been active in the Conference for Food Protection (CFP) and our work was instrumental in developing guidelines for nationally recognized certified food manager training. Our professional staff, at all levels, have always participated in and been encouraged to take an active role in organizations outside the confines of CPD.

Issues and Challenges

After more than a decade of consistent management, our CPD Director retired in December 1998; in July 1999, our DEH Director retired; then in January 2002, our “new” CPD Director retired, bringing to CPD the recurring need to establish new relationships and understand new management philosophies.

In January 2000, a new vision for DEH arrived with a new Department Director. In August 2000, we set about developing the Department’s very first *Strategic Plan* and spent the next year identifying and

³ See appendix for *Food Program Standardization Project Classroom Instructor’s Manual* table of contents.

⁴ Published in *Journal of Foodservice Systems*, volume 9, number 2, 1996; see appendix.

⁵ See appendix for *food handler training record and certificate*.

refining the Department’s focus.⁶ Published in January 2002, one of the greatest strengths of the plan is that it reflects the views and perspectives of employees throughout the organization. Utilizing internal resources—*via numerous interviews, working groups, action teams, and staff meetings*—and assisted by a team of consultants, staff at all levels dedicated significant time, energy, and creativity to develop a plan that clearly articulates our shared mission, vision, and goals as an organization.

After reflecting on the issues facing the Department, ***five key strategic directions*** were identified: 1) *business processes*; 2) *community relations and partnerships*; 3) *prevention and early intervention*; 4) *staff training, recruitment, and retention*; 5) *and technology*.

Because many elements overlap, CPD further refined the Department’s strategic directions into the following ***issues-challenges***: 1) *standardization*, 2) *outreach and education*, and 3) *partnerships*. The long term goal—and challenge—is to ensure that all activities within CPD reflect the mission, values, and strategic directions identified in the plan.

STANDARDIZATION

ISSUE-CHALLENGE:

CPD has more than 50 REHSs, all trained and licensed by the State of California to use their professional knowledge, skills, and abilities in enforcing mandated state food safety laws.

OBJECTIVE: To ensure that all staff are fairly and uniformly applying the law by February 2003.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS: All five Department *strategic directions* apply to standardization.

OUTCOME AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS: *(described in detail below)*

- Implementation of the “new” food safety program *standardization project*.
- Design of the *Customized CURFFL User Guide*.
- Revamping of *food program services*.
- Creation of a *compliance strategy* with Senior-Lead positions.
- Enrollment in FDA Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory *Program Standards*.
- Development of *Digital Standardization Project*.

Standardization Project

In 1994, our Food Program Senior Specialist participated in the Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) ongoing retail food standardization program. CPD staff and the Food Program Senior Specialist then worked together to develop an in-house standardization program for supervisory staff and field specialists.

⁶ See appendix for copy of *Strategic Plan 2002*

Our belief that the standardization of CPD’s food safety program would create a ripple effect held true when our program became the basis for a statewide retail food standardization program—a program that has since attracted nationwide attention and the full endorsement of the California Conference of Directors of Environmental Health (CCDEH). Once statewide discussions began, a decision was made within CPD to hold off on moving forward with our own program—to avoid the need to re-standardize should the State of California mandate a variation of what we had developed. Although the statewide project caused a significant delay in our timeline, the overall impact our groundbreaking work had throughout California was tremendous. The efforts of our program contributed to the development of statewide procedures, classroom instruction, and field exams. Our participation and experience in standardization proved pivotal during a heated debate involving at least thirty jurisdictions—each having their own priority, inspection approach, and reporting methods.

CPD’s Food Program Senior Specialist, and others, provided assistance with the planning, coordination, and facilitation of workshops that standardized more than 800 California REHSs and trainees in 2000 and 2001. Following this training, attendees were then “standardized” during field inspections by a statewide standard.⁷ By the year 2000, 100% of CPD REHSs and trainees had completed the initial two-day standardization workshop. By mid-2002, all CPD supervisors and senior-lead specialists had completed field standardization and attained the level of statewide standard. And, our ultimate goal was achieved on February 28, 2003 when 100% of CPD field inspection staff completed the field standardization process!

Customized CURFFL User’s Guide

Published by CPD in 1998, The *Customized CURFFL User’s Guide (CCUG)* is designed to assist field specialists in accurately completing the Official Inspection Report (OIR); specifically, to aid in determining the differences between “major” and “minor” deficiencies during food establishment inspections.⁸ The determination as to whether a violation is major or minor is not simple, since precise

⁷ See appendix.

⁸ See appendix for a copy of the *Customized CURFFL User’s Guide*.

guidelines cannot be established; many examples of both types are given in the document. The CCUG has been an invaluable tool for specialists and trainees in our standardization process.

Food Program Services—Food Program Coordinating Committee

In 1997, a five-member CPD Food Program Coordinating Committee (FPCC) was established to provide a discussion forum between representatives of our various district offices. Their first order of business was to catalog all existing food policies dating from 1986 and cross-reference them with “key words” to enable staff to quickly find the policy relevant to their immediate concern.

Their next project developed a strategy for service delivery improvements in food facility inspections.⁹ Since 1997, ten of the FPCC’s 17 suggestions have been implemented:

1. Communication improvements.	6. Cross-cultural communication training.
2. Mandatory food manager certification.	7. Team inspections.
3. Quality v. quantity.	8. Joint field specialist and senior plan checker inspections.
4. Standardization.	9. Enforcement procedures.
5. District “sweeps.”	10. Cross-training.

The remaining FPCC suggestions—issues such as accountability, computer technology, and charging a fee for follow-up inspections—were included in the Department’s strategic planning process.

Food Program Services—Policy and Procedural Updates

A major step in revamping our food program services was the creation of much needed policy and guidance. Major food program policies implemented since 1997 include:

1997	Revised policy on <i>Target Inspection Frequencies</i> to reflect a risk based frequency.
1997	New policy on <i>Food Botulism Guidelines</i> to guide investigations involving possible food botulism cases.
	New policy clarifying the <i>Handling of Raw and Ready-to-Eat Foods</i> .
1999	New policies on <i>Criteria for Requiring Food Safety Certification</i> and <i>Food Safety Certification Procedures</i> .
2000	Revised policy on <i>Open-Air BBQ Guidelines</i> .
2000	New food facility <i>Closure Criteria</i> to promote consistency when mandating food facility closures.
2000	New <i>Foodborne Illness Investigation Procedures</i> spelling out all steps involved in an investigation.
2000	New <i>Event Coordinator’s Permit and Event Report Summary Form</i> to allow for, the first time, documentation of the overall condition of an event to assist in resolving issues prior to the next year’s event.
2001	CPD’s <i>Enforcement Manual</i> updated and distributed. ¹⁰
2001	Documentation of activities during <i>Performance Based Food Facility Inspections</i> .
2002	Revising and updating all policy documents for applicability with current laws and regulations.

⁹ See appendix for FPCC report.

¹⁰ See appendix for *Enforcement Manual*.

Food Program Services—Foodborne Illness Investigation Procedures

Due to a nationwide heightened awareness of food safety issues, the public increasingly notifies CPD when they suspect their illness may be food related. With an average of 450 foodborne illness investigations (*fbi*) conducted by CPD each year, and a number of large-scale outbreaks, a *Foodborne Illness Investigation Procedures* manual was developed in 2000 as a guide to investigating outbreaks.¹¹ This document contains policy, procedures, sample letters, and forms—essentially a “one-stop-shop” to handle and conduct an investigation.

Examples of Large Foodborne Illness Outbreaks Recently Investigated in Santa Clara County	
1998 — 63 reported cases of <i>Shigella</i>	reported from a full-service Italian restaurant. SOURCE: possibly one infected food handler who portioned out green salads with unwashed bare hands. This food handler was the ONLY one who would not get tested for the organism, and in fact “disappeared” after the outbreak began.
1998 — at least 25 cases of Hepatitis A	(exact number unknown) from a multi facility outbreak involving a university dining commons, one residence dining hall, an upscale full service restaurant, and an electronics cafeteria. SOURCE: a weak association to possible contaminated produce, but never proven in spite of extensive investigation.
2000 — 27 reported cases of Norwalk-like virus	from a full serve/self-service restaurant SOURCE: possibly one infected food handler who prepared green salads with unwashed bare hands.
2002 — 103 reported cases of Norovirus	from a large employee cafeteria. SOURCE: association of two ill food handlers who prepared sandwiches and person-to-person spread.
2003 — 50 people ill; possible Norovirus	from an employee breakfast buffet. SOURCE: unknown

We view each *fbi* investigation as an opportunity to educate both operators and the public. Following all investigations, a response letter is mailed to each complainant, along with the results of our investigation and a copy of an educational food safety pamphlet (available in four languages).¹²

Food Program Services—“New” Inspection Services

In 1997, a major change to our inspection services was achieved by adding a number of new “inspection services” to our cadre of food facility field service options.¹³ These services now enable specialists to select the inspection type that best suit the needs of the facility. These services include:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| • Hazard Assessment | • Limited Inspection |
| • Critical Hazard Factor Inspection | • Annual Structural Review |
| • Hazard Analysis/Critical Control Point (HACCP) Evaluation | • Food Handler Class |

With the exception of the Limited Inspection and the Annual Structural Review, the balance of these services, as well as an Epidemiological Investigation, can now be substituted for a required “routine”

¹¹ See appendix for sample contents of *Foodborne Illness Investigation Procedures*.
¹² See appendix for copy of letters and pamphlets mailed after each investigation.
¹³ See appendix for a full description of *Food Program Inspection Services*.

inspection once each year, as long as at least one routine inspection is conducted for each facility annually. This flexibility in meeting the targeted frequency provides specialists with more options when mapping a strategy for gaining compliance, and more individual control in how they manage their workload and time.

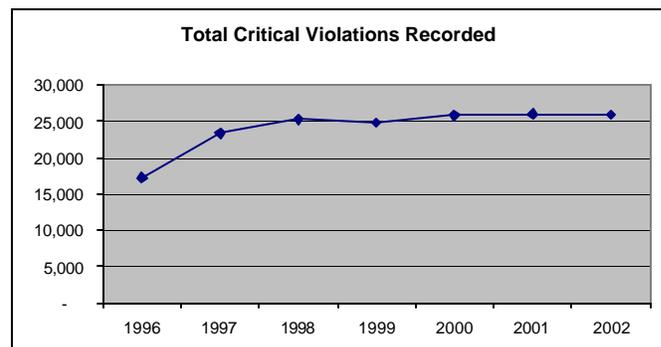
Food Program Services—Revised Official Inspection Report

In the past six years, the *Official Inspection Report (OIR)* used for food safety inspections has been updated a number of times to meet the changing needs of our program. We have not started over with each version; rather it has been an evolutionary process, building upon the previous version to incorporate the growing complexity of the information that must be gathered. The modifications we have made contain the following elements:¹⁴

- Separation of inspection status to include a space for noting both *Operational Status* and *Structural Status* (with space for an excellent, good, average, fair, poor rating for each). Such differentiation gives a more accurate picture of the overall condition of a facility than the single *Status* category that was previously listed.

- A *Corrective Action Sheet* was developed as a second page to the OIR listing many of the more common food facility health code requirements.¹⁵ Specialists now have the option of using this sheet in place of hand-written narrative to describe select corrective actions.

- *Critical violations* are now highlighted in pink and space has been provided to indicate the date on which these violations must be corrected. Since initiating our standardization protocol, staff have recorded an increasing number of critical violations.



- Space was added for recording *food temperatures* noted during an inspection.
- Space was designated to record the status of required *food safety certification*.

¹⁴ See appendix for copy of the *Official Inspection Report* currently in use, and the last draft of the OIR under review.

¹⁵ See appendix for copy of the *Corrective Action Sheet*.

- Our most recent revision (still in draft) includes a clarification for noting *multiple field activities* during a single inspection (e.g., a routine inspection while investigating a complaint) and replaces both the *operational and structural status* with a single “result code.” In addition, the new OIR adds space for *urban runoff* violations in a cooperative project with the West Valley Clean Water Program as we develop an improved National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) reporting method for food establishments. Combined with their routine field visits, CPD staff will now note non-point source pollution discharge violations at permitted food facilities.

Food Program Services—Performance Based Inspections

In March 2001, a significant change was made to improve our ability to measure the effectiveness and quality of our food inspection program by initiating *Performance Based Inspections*.¹⁶ Field specialists are now required to conduct at least two “field activities” (e.g., proper techniques for thermometer calibration, cooling, handwashing) during each inspection. Activities and exercises are interactive and are selected depending on the types of operations that are performed in each facility. The specialist determines whether the operator’s answers earn a “satisfactory” or “needs improvement” mark for each exercise. When an operator needs improvement, the specialist conducts personalized on-the-spot training so the operator will learn and understand the necessary information. Data is then recorded in a separate column on the OIR allowing us to demonstrate measurable outcomes.

Results of our Performance Based Inspection scores have been promising. From our benchmark trial in May-June 2001, an overall drop of 11% in “needs improvement” scores has been recorded. Performance based inspections give us a better picture of the effectiveness of our training—both in the classroom and in the field—and will assist in further improving our food safety program services.

PERFORMANCE BASED INSPECTION RESULTS											
May - June 2001			July - December 2001			January - Jun 2002			July - December 2002		
		%			%			%			%
Total Questions asked	2,241		Total Questions asked	9,456		Total Questions asked	11,218		Total Questions asked	9,954	
Total Satisfactory	1,451	65%	Total Satisfactory	6,889	73%	Total Satisfactory	8,562	76%	Total Satisfactory	7,535	76%
Total Needs Improve	790	35%	Total Needs Improve	2,567	27%	Total Needs Improve	2,656	24%	Total Needs Improve	2,419	24%

¹⁶ See appendix for *Guidelines for Documentation of Field Activities and Exercises During Performance Based Food Facility Inspections.*”

Compliance Strategy

In October 2001, three Senior-Lead positions were added to CPD in an effort to facilitate compliance in the food safety program. These seniors serve as a consultant to field staff when dealing with difficult situations, non-responsive clients, issuing citations, and preparing for administrative or court hearings. Senior-Leads also assist with training, perform limited supervisor duties, and maintain a 1/3 size field district.

Enforcement Actions	
1997	96
1998	164
1999	145
2000	460
2001	610
2002	173

Enforcement action increased substantially once standardization was initiated and with the enforcement support of the new senior positions. In 2002, enforcement showed a substantial decrease (from 610 actions to 173) as many of the “problem” facilities had been successfully dealt with in 2000 and 2001. With this reduction in

enforcement needs, senior-leads were able to focus on the field standardization training of staff in 2002.

FDA Program Standards Partner

In early 2001, CPD partnered with the FDA by enrolling in the Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards. To date, we have achieved full compliance with Standard No. 8 and, based on our own detailed evaluation, feel we are in full or partial compliance in 65% of all other areas.¹⁷ Furthermore, areas needing additional work have been prioritized for completion with short, medium, and long-term time frames through fiscal year 2004 (ending June 30, 2004).

Specific to the FDA Standards for improving our food safety program, the CPD Food Program Enhancement Committee (FPEC) was formed to bring together the collective strength of both management and staff. CPD is now poised to embark on the resource-heavy commitment to conduct a baseline assessment for full service restaurants, and participate in a regional baseline assessment for schools; training will be in April 2003 with a target completion for both assessments in December 2003.

¹⁷ See appendix for a copy of CPD’s *Status of Compliance with National Food Programs Standards*.

Digital Standardization

The newest phase of standardization—the *CPD Digital Standardization Project*—was kicked off in September 2002 when a computer was placed on the desk of all CPD staff. The project includes a Department Intranet including online policies, forms, and resource reservations... to name but a few features. In addition, staff are currently being trained to do their own data entry for daily time reporting as well as inspection results, thereby freeing support staff time to assist with other program specific projects.

The next phase of digital standardization will place a PDA in the hands of all 50 food program field specialists and seniors. The software for this phase was finalized in March 2003 with CPD input in a region-wide pilot project funded via a FDA grant. The goal of PDA technology will enable field staff to:

- establish a link with the main Department network to download up to date information to the PDAs, including notices of recalls, policy and procedure documents, and laws and regulations.
- provide facility information allowing staff to record inspection information and print inspection reports containing violations, observations, corrective actions, and statutory language for facility operators.
- increase the efficiency of Department staff to enter data into the main database since inspection results will go from the handheld directly to the host server.
- allow inspection results to be posted to the Department's web site immediately as the data is refreshed on the web host server providing improved communication to the community and other agencies.

OUTREACH and EDUCATION

ISSUE-CHALLENGE:

The science of food safety and food microbiology is constantly evolving and increasingly more complex. In addition, the issues of personal safety as well as food safety are paramount.

OBJECTIVE: To develop training and educational materials that will provide necessary knowledge and skills to all stakeholders—food facility operators, consumers, students, and Division staff.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS: All five Department *strategic directions* apply to outreach and education.

OUTCOME AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS: (described in detail below)

- Development of a *food safety outreach* campaign.
- Launching an extensive *web site*.
- Implementation of an *employee education* plan.
- Coordination of a *food safety training and certification* program.
- Development of an *emergency response and preparedness* plan.
- Create opportunities for the *education of politicians and decision-makers*.

Food Safety Outreach

In 1995, our outreach campaign was “officially” launched with the publication of our 45-page in-house *Food Safety: It's Everyone's Business* text, which we offer free of charge to anyone interested.¹⁸ In

¹⁸ See appendix for copy of *Food Safety It's Everyone's Business*.

1997, we created a “packet” of information to be provided to all new food facility operators. This packet includes a copy of the *Food Safety* booklet, the state law, required signage, and a variety of handouts that help explain food safety principles.

We take every opportunity to share food safety information—since January 2001, nearly 200 presentations have been made by CPD staff to community and civic groups. To further our goal of education, we’ve created a variety of self-adhesive signage that we provide to all facilities as a reminder about required cooking and holding temperatures, proper handwashing (translated in four languages), and effective utensil washing practices (in English and Spanish). Additionally, a series of topic-specific handouts has been developed to educate architects and contractors, event coordinators and operators of temporary food booths, as well as food facility operators.¹⁹

Food Safety Outreach to the Community

In 1998, CPD became actively involved in the annual campaign for National Food Safety Month. At our request, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors proclaim September as “*Food Safety Month in Santa Clara County*” and we follow up with a press release to 62 local news media contacts.

Also in 1998, we successfully initiated an ongoing partnership with the grocery store industry that involves the hosting of “*Food Safety Get the Facts!*” information displays at local stores. We’ve conducted these events with themes for back-to-school “*lunchbox safety*,” Thanksgiving “*let’s talk turkey*,” and “*food glorious food*” holiday buffet food safety—we provide the handouts and staff, the grocery store provides space and a table for our display.²⁰ Moreover, we have expanded our public outreach to include at least four community health fairs each year. These are fun events for our staff and provide a great way to get the food safety message out to the general public.

Food Safety Outreach—Little League

Originally, Little League “snack shacks” sold items such as hot coffee, canned soft drinks, and packaged chips and candy. Their menu then grew to include hotdogs, hamburgers, chili, and barbecued

¹⁹ See appendix for copies of temperature and other advice stickers, and select handouts.

chicken and sausages. This changing menu, and a 1997 foodborne illness investigation, required CPD to take a look at how it viewed this type of facility... which does not meet the structural requirements of a food establishment, nor does it meet the lesser requirements for a temporary event.

The challenge was to find a solution to bring snack shacks into compliance *before* becoming a politically sensitive issue or media circus. CPD negotiated with the Little League and achieved their agreement to develop a specialized food safety training program for parent volunteers—along with periodic inspections of snack shacks.²¹ The results of this innovative, problem-solving approach “*scored a home run*” that continues to work to the benefit of both CPD and the Little League.

Food Safety Outreach—Bay Area Food Safety Alliance

CPD’s leadership was instrumental in the development of the *Bay Area Food Safety Alliance (BAFSA)*—a cooperative effort on the part of industry, academia, and regulatory personnel to promote the application of Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles.²² CPD efforts helped garner the support and participation from eight San Francisco Bay Area jurisdictions, which together, brought this project to reality.

BAFSA was a pilot for a collaborative, risk-based method for inspecting retail food facilities. Participating facilities were inspected four times within a 15-month period using a risk-based inspection form; CPD had three field specialists and 18 facilities participating in the pilot. Operator knowledge of correct food preparation practices was measured during the first and fourth inspections through the use of a questionnaire; statistically significant improvement in both operator knowledge and safe food practices was found. Results of this project suggest the consideration of adapting a risk-based inspection program into a future phase of program service improvements.

Based on CPD’s work with SJSU graduate students²³, BAFSA’s focus has evolved into an effort that will educate California’s K-6 “educators” about existing food safety educational materials. Under CPD

²⁰ See appendix for examples of handouts provided during grocery store displays.

²¹ See appendix for Little League information.

²² See appendix for information on the *Bay Area Food Safety Alliance*.

²³ See appendix for copy of SJSU study *Assessment of Food Safety Education in Elementary Schools in Santa Clara County, California*.

leadership, BAFSA has now partnered with the Bay Area Food Technical Advisory Committee (BAFTAC)—an official committee of the California Conference of Directors of Environmental Health (CCDEH)—to work with educators from the California Department of Education, the University of California-Davis, and local school districts to assess and inventory the vast quantity of food safety educational materials currently available in the public domain, and to compile the materials in a single, indexed, search-engine-equipped, easy-to-use CD-ROM with hyperlinks and bookmarks.

The project's overriding goal is to instill food safety basics in children as they grow and learn in our education system—beginning at the earliest grades. Since many of these children will be future food handlers and managers, it is logical and desirable that they derive this fundamental knowledge from their school curriculum. Pending funding, the target completion for this project is late 2003.

Web Site

In 1998, an extensive Department web site—www.EHinfo.org—was launched as an outreach resource for the community and our staff. Largely a CPD effort, the web site addresses questions and inquiries about our services; provides on-line reporting of complaints and service requests; the latest standards, laws, regulations, and local ordinances enforced by CPD; as well as links to other information sources. The site contains every CPD food program handout and flyer, allowing facility operators, contractors, other agencies, and CPD employees access to a vast amount of food safety information. In 2001, a redesigned web site was launched incorporating the Department's Hazardous Materials Compliance Division and Vector Control District.

Beginning on July 1, 2001 inspection results for the County of Santa Clara's 8,500 food facilities were made available on our web site... recording more than 70,000 inquiries by the end of 2001! In 2002, more than 131,000 inquiries were made to access inspection results.²⁴

In 2002, the County announced that all County-sponsored web sites must be brought under a single umbrella, thereby forcing a third major re-work of the DEH web site. Recently launched, a number of

²⁴ See appendix for web posting letter sent to all facilities.

challenges have surfaced in the process of integrating and standardizing such a vast quantity of information. To date, not all challenges have been met... but all are under consideration.

Employee Education

Prior to 1995, training for newly hired professional staff—*both REHSs and trainees*—was largely a “hit or miss” prospect. New employees were sent out into the field with colleagues for a few days “to learn the ropes.” For trainees, our approach was a little more formal; but if you were an REHS, we assumed you knew the job! In 1995, we formalized a training plan for trainees, and then in 1997 for newly hired REHS staff.²⁵ Our philosophy: *We make no assumptions. We provide all newly hired professional staff with the same base knowledge that will allow them to perform to their full capacity.*

The Division’s training program has never been more important than in the last two years. In the year 2000, CPD hired one new REHS and six trainees; in 2001, we again hired one REHS and five trainees. Not since 1981 had such a large number of professional staff joined CPD! In accordance with the mandates of California law, CPD focused considerable in-house resources towards meeting the “trainees” required training needs—for some, as much as 600 hours of on-the-job training!

Since 1997, we’ve modified the training plan after each round of new employees to ensure we meet the changing needs of our program as well as to incorporate new ideas. We’ve also embarked on a series of cross-training class sessions that will assist employees in mastering additional elements of CPD’s many program demands. In 2001, to meet FDA Program Standards, we implemented a mandatory seven-hours per year of food safety “continuing education.” Our latest innovation to assist in achieving this goal was the creation of an immediately popular “*Industry Info*” workshop series—a non-required monthly one-hour onsite training session where an industry representative shares his or her knowledge and skill.

Our employee education plan also helps bring food safety information to more than 15,000 County employees. As an employer, the County of Santa Clara offers a large number of training classes free of charge to employees—classes in management, communication, computer skills, and wellness. We created a

²⁵ See appendix for current training plan.

two-hour *Would Your Kitchen Pass the Test?*²⁶ food safety class geared for the home kitchen. More than 75 attendees have benefited from this class offered through the *CountyWise* program.

We participate in health fairs sponsored by the County, including an annual event for City of San Jose and County employees that attracts more than 4,000 attendees. The County publishes a newsletter for all employees—*Comline*—and each year for food safety month, and at other appropriate times, we submit articles for inclusion. In 1995, DEH launched a monthly in-house newsletter—*ShopTalk*—distributed to the more than 140 DEH employees that frequently contains information regarding food safety relevant to all employees and their families. It would be difficult to work for DEH or the County of Santa Clara and escape our food safety message!

Food Safety Training and Certification

California mandated a statewide food safety certification (FSC) program effective January 2000, requiring the more than 6,000 retail food facilities in Santa Clara County that handle *unpackaged* food to employ at least one person certified in food safety via a Conference for Food Protection approved exam.

Santa Clara County accepted the challenge and became the *first* local jurisdiction in California fully committed to providing a multi-lingual training and certification program—*coordinated, taught, and administered completely with in-house resources*, even though there is *no* mandate in the law that requires local jurisdictions to provide this service. We knew that with our multi-lingual REHS staff, we could help meet our divergent community needs by providing training in English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, and Spanish, and with exam translators in Farsi.²⁷

Our FSC program was an ambitious agenda *without* benefit of additional staff or resources. Fifteen staff from a pool of thirty volunteers accepted this new challenge and responsibility *in addition to their assigned workload* and successfully participated in a three-day onsite “train-the-trainer” workshop.

We selected a new textbook—an easy to read 50-page “*Food Safety First Principles*” printed with color photos and fun cartoons. There were, however, two drawbacks—first, the text was written by an

²⁶ See appendix for *Would Your Kitchen Pass the Test?*

organization in Great Britain and had been translated into numerous languages and used by hundreds of thousands of students worldwide, but it had never been translated into “American.” CPD staff were invaluable in assisting the textbook provider to effectively adapt their text for the American student.²⁸ The second drawback—there was no accompanying curriculum for the American version; our 15 instructors banded together to develop a six-hour curriculum complete with lesson plans and an array of visual aids.²⁹

CPD’s cooperative relationship extends to the exam provider: our program administrator serves as an item-writer and instructors have worked with the provider to identify areas to help non-English speaking students nationwide improve their chances of passing the exam... with remarkable results! Our percentage of students passing the exam has risen from 66% in 1999 to 85% in 2002.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total # of Classes</i>	<i># of Students</i>	<i># of Students Passing</i>	<i>% of Students Passing</i>	<i>% of Students Failing</i>
<i>1999</i>	31	576	378	66%	34%
<i>2000</i>	46	951	690	72%	28%
<i>2001</i>	38	838	678	81%	19%
<i>2002</i>	40	657	558	85%	15%

The public’s perception, and the way food service providers view us, is changing. We are reaching out to the food industry in a new way—*giving 30 students in each class the undivided attention of two food safety specialists for a full day.* The classes also give us an opportunity to have the undivided attention of 30 food service operators for a full day. This luxury of time—*not available in a routine inspection*—gives us the unique opportunity to effectively change an operator’s behavior and attitude toward food safety.

For our efforts in food safety certification training, we received statewide recognition for excellence in education as a year 2000 recipient of California’s prestigious Stewart Richardson, Sr. Award at the 49th Annual Educational Symposium (AES) of the California Environmental Health Association (CEHA).³⁰

Our FSC program is a microcosm of the challenges facing CPD—student diversity, industry outreach and education, textbook and exam provider partnership, standardization of trainers, and behind-the-scenes resources provision. The size, scope, and complexity of our program is unparalleled in California—*especially for having been undertaken and implemented without benefit of additional staff or*

²⁷ See appendix for current schedule of FSC classes.

²⁸ See appendix for “Americanized” textbook comments.

²⁹ See appendix for outline of original curriculum.

³⁰ See appendix for Stewart Richardson Award information.

resources, and without grant funding. We continue to make every effort to ensure students truly understand food safety—be it re-training, tutoring, editorial and translation support, or exam readers and translators.

Our role as the regulatory expert in food safety, coupled with our in-house language skills, offers a combination that enables students to truly learn, understand, and most importantly implement the complex concepts of food safety.

Emergency Response and Preparedness

Our emergency plans in California have always taken into consideration catastrophic events such as earthquake, fire, or flood. In June 2000, less than 50 miles from our office, three California colleagues were murdered while conducting a food safety inspection. In September 2001, the security of our nation’s food supply became a national issue of paramount concern. As a result, the issues of personal safety and food security became a priority of our staff training and disaster management plans.

In September 2000, spearheaded by CPD, the Personal Safety Training Subcommittee of the Bay Area Food Technical Advisory Committee (BAFTAC) designed, developed, and staged a full-day personal safety curriculum specifically for Environmental Health Specialists, including conflict resolution, verbal defense training, basic personal and field safety, identification of violent behavior, and developing a personal safety plan. In December 2001, the Department provided this training to all employees... including support staff and managers.³¹ Now sponsored by the California Environmental Health Association (CEHA), this workshop is offered statewide with more than 1,000 participants to date!

The Department of Environmental Health has always been one of California’s leaders in disaster management. Since the late 1980s, CPD’s Disaster Preparedness Senior has been responsible for designing and coordinating disaster related training at the CEHA Annual Educational Symposium, and chairs the CCDEH Disaster Preparedness Technical Advisory Committee... and was the primary author of CCDEH’s field manual (published in 1994) and model planning guide (published in 2000).³²

³¹ See appendix for *Personal Safety Training* flyer and workshop syllabus.

³² See appendix for CCDEH and Department disaster preparedness documents.

In response to California's energy crisis and rolling blackouts in the summer of 2000, CPD updated and distributed a handout titled *When Electricity Fails in Food Establishments* to all facilities. And then again, following September 11, 2001, CPD responded by developing and distributing *Guidelines to Enhance Food Security in Retail Food Establishments*.³³

In 2001, to take a more proactive approach to disaster management and to ensure that staff are prepared to respond efficiently and effectively, the Department pioneered an ambitious program called the *Department Emergency Response Group—or DERG*.³⁴ In an innovative approach to pre-event planning, the DERG is a planned and phased-in approach to emergency response and includes the establishment of a DEH emergency operations center and highly trained multi-discipline staff response teams. Development and training of the DERG remains ongoing; more than twenty staff currently participate in this voluntary program. To date, successful tabletop exercises have focused on earthquake, flood, and a bioterrorism incident involving self-service food from retail facilities.

Most recently, CPD's expertise has been tapped by CEHA for curriculum development of a bioterrorism workshop (including food security) being designed for Environmental Health Specialists.

Education of Politicians and Decision-Makers

Beginning in fiscal year 2003, CPD presented its first “*performance based budget*”—PBB—designed to provide meaningful evaluations for decision-makers and the community of performance linked to resource allocation. It emphasizes what is accomplished, rather than what is spent, and... as performance measures are refined, can demonstrate the public value of a service... and strengthen public confidence.

With the purpose of “customer health and safety and environmental protection,” CPD's budget is now based on three basic tenets: 1) *prevent disease/illness*, 2) *provide customer service*, 3) *enforce standards* with an assigned standard, performance measure, methodology, and outcome for each program.³⁵

In addition, since 2001, CPD has worked with the Board of Supervisor's Housing, Land Use, Environment, and Transportation (HLUET) Committee regarding staffing levels. In spite of hiring freezes,

³³ See appendix for copies of handouts.

³⁴ See appendix for DERG information.

HLUET approved three Senior-Lead positions added to CPD in 2002, however, these positions would require ongoing justification using measurable indicators for the food safety program’s overall service delivery. The five indicators include: 1) *number of food facility site inspections*, 2) *number of food violations*, 3) *number of enforcement actions taken*, 4) *number of complaints*, and 5) *number of foodborne illness complaints received*.³⁶

These new avenues for tracking and measuring program activities and accomplishments also bring communication opportunities. Thus, a new approach to “education” entered CPDs vocabulary with the inclusion of politicians and decision-makers here in the County of Santa Clara. Performance based budget documents and quarterly reports to HLUET, along with other requests by the Board of Supervisors and agency managers, are now considered “opportunities” to educate... not just a requirement to “report back.”

PARTNERSHIPS

ISSUE-CHALLENGE:

Rapid transformation was happening in food safety across the state... in the laws we enforce and in the “politics” of working with other food safety stakeholders.

OBJECTIVE: To participate in food safety forums that will bring CPD input into the “change process.”

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS: All five Department *strategic directions* apply to partnerships.

OUTCOME AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS: *(described in detail below)*

- Strengthening *professional relationships* with other agencies, organizations, industry, and academia.
- Creating opportunities to address food safety issues in *student education*.

The Consumer Protection Division believes in “leadership by example” and does so by playing a participatory role in a large number of regional, statewide, and national committees and coalitions.

Professional Relationships—Bay Area Food Technical Advisory Committee

The primary function of the Bay Area Food Technical Advisory Committee (BAFTAC) is to serve as a collaborative resource to discuss and resolve food safety issues in an advisory capacity for the California Conference of Directors of Environmental Health (CCDEH) (*there are four food technical advisory committees in California—Northern California, Bay Area, Central Valley, and Southern California*). It is the committee’s responsibility to conduct any necessary research and submit written

³⁵ See appendix for FY 2003 budget report.

reports for statewide distribution on issues in food safety. To accomplish this, the committee works with Federal, State, and local government agencies, non-government organizations, industry, academia, and the public. From 1997 to 2002, the BAFTAC—*whose membership includes 16 local jurisdictions, the State of California, industry, ANSI accredited testing agencies, and academia*—was chaired by CPD’s Food Program Senior Specialist who was instrumental in developing and authoring a number of statewide policy guidelines now in effect.

California Guidelines/Documents Developed by BAFTAC under CPD Leadership
Guidelines for Retail Fish Sales from Commercial Fishing Vessels (May 1999).
Guidelines for the Installation and Use of Open-air Barbecue Facilities (revised May 1999)
Environmental Health Requirements for Certified Farmers’ Markets (September 1997, revised June 1999).
Buffet Service Guidelines (revised June 1999).
Guidelines for the Installation and Use of Tandoor Ovens (July 1999).
Bed and Breakfast / Agricultural Homestay Food Establishment Guidelines (revised June 2000).
Procedures for Development of Food Safety Notices (June 2000).
Report on Fish and Lobster Sales from Semi-Trailers at Retail Markets (July 2000).
Mechanical Exhaust Ventilation Exemption Letters (July 2000).
Compendium of Information—contains new, revised and updated guidelines (July 2000).
Temporary Events Guideline—for provide enforcement coordination between jurisdictions (ongoing since 2001).
Completed a procedure for annual updating of Compendium of Information (2002)
Report on development and implementation of training safeguards specific to the REHS profession to improve personal safety during inspections, enforcement, and office activities (February 2003).
Revising and updating all above documents for applicability with current laws and regulations (ongoing).
Documents can be viewed on the CCDEH web site at www.ccdeh.com

In 2002, the Chair of BAFTAC rotated to another member, but CPD’s Food Program Senior Specialist remains an active participant and continues to chair two subcommittees: Personal Safety Training (*see Emergency Response and Preparedness*) and Food Safety for Kids (*see Food Safety Outreach—Bay Area Food Safety Alliance*).

Professional Relationships—CURFFL Review Committee and “Cal Code”

Since 1985 the “food code” in California has been the California Uniform Retail Food Facilities Law (CURFFL). There is an effort now underway to re-write CURFFL so that it will more closely follow the federal Food Code. This new draft, affectionately referred to as “Cal Code,” has been in the discussion and drafting stages since the late-1990s by a statewide CURFFL Review Committee (CRC) and CCDEH. CPD has been an active participant in these deliberations as a member of CRC, CCDEH, and as a direct result of BAFTAC issues.

³⁶ See appendix for March 2003 *HLUET* report.

In 2001 and 2002, BAFTAC completed extensive reviews of the Cal Code drafts. However, in spite of the large amount of time invested, the future of Cal Code is a bit uncertain. Politics found it impossible to forge an alliance between CRC, CCDEH, and representatives from Southern California. Therefore, the CRC and CCDEH have commissioned the Southern California group to devise for discussion a “Modified Cal Code” to include their specific issues of concern.

Professional Relationships—Conference for Food Protection

CPD has a long history of support and participation with the Conference for Food Protection (CFP). At the 2002 CFP meeting in Nashville, we had a staff member serving as a member on each of the three Councils, and five more staff were participating in deliberations from the audience. In addition, our Department Director now serves as a member of the *Executive Committee*; our Senior Training and Resource Specialist serves on two committees: 1) *Food Manager Training, Testing, and Certification*, and 2) *Program Standards*; and our Senior Food Program Specialist serves on the *Food Allergy Committee*.

Student Education—Local University and College Partnerships

Our partnership with academia remains strong. Since the year 2000, we have been working with Stanford University as a key participant in a study on *Helicobacter pylori* investigating the link between gastroenteritis, stomach ulcers, and stomach cancer. In addition, we continue a long-standing link with San Jose State University (SJSU) as an advisor to graduate students on food safety related thesis projects, as a guest speaker, and as an invited participant to the Environmental Health and Safety Engineering Program Advisory Board meetings. And, our Senior Food Program Specialist serves on the Mission College Hospitality Management Advisory Board.

Student Education—School Lesson Plans

In 1998, in conjunction with our Food Safety Month campaign, a *handwashing lesson plan* was developed for kindergarten through second grade students.³⁷ This lesson plan, along with an introductory letter, was disseminated (with enough copies for all K-6 schools) to the superintendents at the more than 20

³⁷ See appendix for *Handwashing Lesson Plan*.

private and public school districts throughout the County of Santa Clara. After the mailing, we received numerous calls from teachers thanking us and asking for additional information, and two schools requested we personally teach the lesson to their students. Our specialist, dressed as “Mr. Grunge” in a filthy apron and armed with “germ juice,” brings this valuable lesson each year to 100 children at local elementary schools.

Our initial plan in 1998 was to develop a full K-12 food safety curriculum, but time and resources postponed our project. In 1999, we were given an opportunity to work on a project with SJSU that we’d hoped would develop a turnkey curriculum for schoolteachers. What evolved was a study that assessed teacher needs and limitations when adding new lesson plans to their already crowded curriculum. The information from this study is now in use as the basis for a region-wide project of the BAFTAC and BAFSA to coordinate existing K-6 food safety educational material in their Food Safety for Kids initiative (*see Food Safety Outreach—Bay Area Food Safety Alliance*). The study will ensure that informed decisions are made when matching our need for sharing food safety information with teachers’ needs.

Other Partnerships

The *Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP)* is a CPD partnership with the Public Health Department and is charged with maintaining an awareness of potential sources of lead in the environment. Funding, by contract with the State Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Branch, is from MediCal and a fee assessed on industries that use or have used lead. This cooperative effort serves to provide outreach and education to retail food facilities and the public on food related lead exposure risks, including lead leaching tableware, ethnic home remedies, Indian homeopathic medicines, Mexican candies and wrappers³⁸, and imported canned goods. The CLPPP also provides training and guidance to CPD staff on identification and field testing of tableware with a hazardous lead content. Recently, the CLPPP coordinated with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on enforcement of regulations on hazardous tableware from Mexico resulting in the identification of major local distributors of violative utensils.

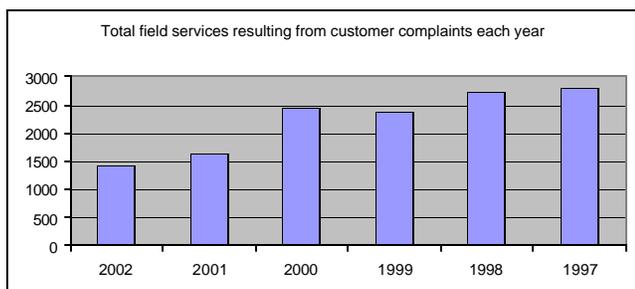
³⁸ See appendix for Mexican candy information.

In 2001, to foster relationships with *local city governments*, CPD initiated a pilot project with the City of Mountain View to offer a specialized food handler class for food facilities on Mountain View’s main street. A haven of older side-by-side buildings and ethnic facilities, Castro Street had long been a “food safety” challenge for CPD. In late 2002, the pilot project came to fruition with the first food handler class. Those facilities participating—and those who continue to receive “satisfactory” results on CPD inspections—will receive a plaque issued by the City of Mountain View. Follow-up evaluations will be conducted in 2003 to determine the feasibility of expanding the pilot project to other cities.

In 1993, traditional environmental health programs and services were separated from the Department of Public Health and moved to the Environmental Resources Agency. This move was with the understanding that any “shared programs” (e.g., epidemiology, lead poisoning prevention) would continue to be carried out as they had previously. However, when DEH procured new offices away from the Public Health facilities, it became evident that a strategy was needed that would ensure the ongoing strong, cooperative relationships that have been the mainstay of the shared programs. Therefore, the *Public Health—Environmental Health Strategy Team (PEST)* was created to keep the lines of communication open and the programs efficient and solid. PEST is made up of key individuals who meet quarterly to review overlapping issues, strategize, and develop mechanisms and means for maintaining appropriate services to the citizens of the County of Santa Clara.

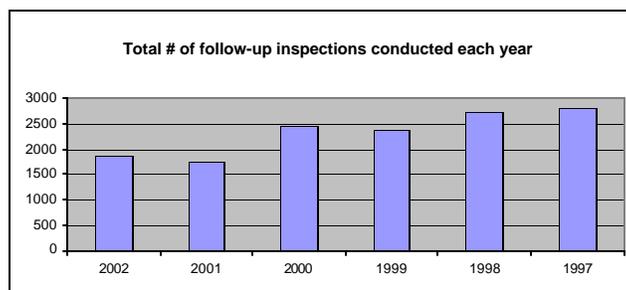
Measurable Achievements

Measuring the success of any environmental health program is difficult—how can one effectively measure the absence of illness or a hazard? Our strategic plan, performance based budgeting, and service delivery measures now provide us with benchmarks and comparative data. Many success stories have already been outlined in this document. The following summarizes a few additional noteworthy achievements in our food safety program over the last six years.



- Once we initiated standardization, staff conducted an increased number of follow-up inspections, which decreased significantly in subsequent years as inspections became more consistent and the need for follow-up decreased.

- Each year, we receive a fairly equal number of complaints from the public, but since 1997 we have been able to resolve these complaints with a significant reduction in required field services.



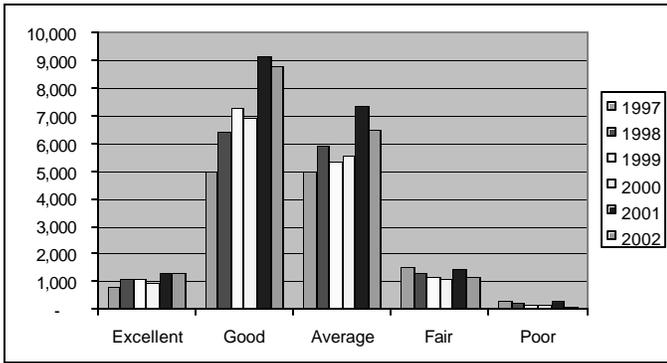
- Our foodborne illness (*fbi*) reporting procedures now ensure that 100% of *fbi* complaints are immediately reviewed and referred for appropriate action. In addition, in 1999, we began to focus on our response time to consumer complaints—for both epidemiological and non-epidemiological complaints—and have made remarkable improvements.

- Inspection scores carry little significance since they represent only a “snapshot” of a facility. Therefore, effective in the year 2000, DEH no longer uses numeric scoring for permitted facilities, nor is a numeric score part of our assessment or evaluation process.

Comparison data is, therefore, available only for the “operational status” of excellent, good, average, fair, or poor

Year	Complaint Type	
	Average Response Period in days	
	Epidemiological	Non Epidemiological
1999	16.15	18.96
2000	20.11	22.52
2001	12.30	22.46
2002	10.0	10.2

as noted by the specialist on each OIR. In 2001-2002, we had a substantial increase in the overall number of inspections rated “good” or “average” when compared to our benchmark year of 1997, indicating an overall improvement of food facilities countywide.



of inspections rated “good” or “average” when compared to our benchmark year of 1997, indicating an overall improvement of food facilities countywide.

- From August 1999 to December 2002, we held 155 food safety certification classes

and trained more than 3,000 students. Although more than 30% of students attend a class in a language other than English, our instructors estimate that as many as 50% of the students in English-speaking classes have a language other than English as their primary language. This means that approximately 65% of our students speak something other than English as their first language—a huge diversity challenge to our instructors. The best measure of success for our food safety outreach comes directly from our students:

“It’s very good that you finally made us do this.”
“It helped that the instructors talked about their own experiences while doing inspections, it makes me want to be more cautious of how I deal with food.”
“Excellent training. Could not be any better.”
“I thought this class was going to be a waste of time, but I was wrong. It taught me a lot.”
“Very informative and I really appreciate it because I can apply it to my business and tell others. I think anyone that works in the food industry should take this class just to learn about food safety.”

The Future

The past six years have been a true success story for CPD—our standardization plan, outreach efforts, and professional partnerships have achieved significant and measurable steps forward.

Balancing the needs of our Department, our employees, and the public we serve is an ever-present and ever-changing challenge. Using the Department’s strategic plan as a roadmap... while keeping sight of our mission, values, and core purpose... and fine-tuning our performance based budget process... we will remain poised to effectively face our challenges with creativity and innovation to enhance the lives of residents and visitors in the County of Santa Clara.

Appendix Contents

1. Current DEH Fee Schedule
2. Standardized Inspection Guide and Reference (SIGR)
3. Food Program Standardization Project classroom Instructor's Manual Table of Contents
4. *Attitudes and Knowledge of Food Safety Among Santa Clara County, California Restaurant Operators*, Journal of Foodservice Systems, Vol. 9, Number 2 1996
5. Foodhandler Training Class Record and Certificate
6. Strategic Plan 2002
7. Statewide Standardization document
8. Customized CURFFL Users Guide (CCUG)
9. Food Policy Coordinating Committee report
10. Select pages from CPD's Enforcement Manual
11. Select pages from CPD's Foodborne Illness Investigation (*fbi*) Procedures
12. Samples of letters and pamphlets sent out following an *fbi* investigation
13. Food Program Inspection Services
14. Current and draft Official Inspection Reports (OIR)
15. Corrective Action Sheet
16. Guidelines for Documentation of Field Action and Exercises During Performance Based Food Facility Inspections
17. CPD's status of compliance with National Food Program Standards
18. Food Safety It's Everyone's business
19. Samples of advise stickers and select handouts
20. Samples of handouts provided during grocery store displays
21. Little League information
22. Bay Area food Safety Alliance (BAFSA)
23. SJSU study *Assessment of Food Safety in Elementary Schools in Santa Clara County, California*
24. Web posting letter
25. Current Training Plan
26. Would Your Kitchen Pass the Test?
27. Current schedule of Food Safety Certification (FSC) classes
28. "Americanized textbook" comments
29. Outline of original FSC curriculum
30. Steward Richardson Award information
31. Personal Safety Training flyer and workshop syllabus
32. CCDEH and Department disaster preparedness documents
33. Copies of handouts
34. Department Emergency Response Group (DERG) information
35. FY 2003 budget report
36. March 2003 HLUET report
37. Handwashing lesson plan
38. Mexican candy information

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