

Case File

You are an Environmental Health Practitioner working for the Food Division of Chadwick Valley Environmental Health Department.

Your department has received notification of a large number of food poisoning cases which were apparently linked to a local engineering factory. As part of your department's investigation of this outbreak, you were requested by your manager to undertake an inspection of the factory canteen. The notes of your inspection are attached. The laboratory investigation confirms that the food poisoning was associated with the organism *Clostridium perfringens*.

Business name	Factory Ltd
Address	Factory Ltd , 4, Industrial Street, Chadwick CH54 5RQ
Inspected by	A. Candidate
Date	29/06/07 1330 hours
Proprietor	Mrs A Jones (manager)
Type of business	Factory canteen serving breakfasts, lunches and soft drinks throughout the working day 7am- 7pm 100+ covers
Opening hours	As above
Property description	Part of purpose built industrial unit
Room 1	<u>Servery</u> Stainless steel serving counters over; a) refrigerated display containing pre-packed sandwiches, cans of fizzy drinks etc (probed food, 8 degrees Celsius) Seemed clean and; b) hot hold counter , containing a variety of trays of hot dishes e.g. cottage pie ,lamb ragout, vegetable curry (probed lamb ragout at 60 degrees Celsius) Some trays of cooked food on table, at ambient temperature. Asked Mrs Jones for temperature records -she said she didn't know she needed them. Wrapped cakes, biscuits etc displayed on top. Thermoplastic tiled floor -clean. Papered walls
Room 2	<u>Kitchen/Preparation area</u> Tiled floor-clean good condition Painted walls- clean good condition Preparation surfaces - clean but wearing in places, they use plastic chopping boards. Messy, with cooked meat left on slicing machine and sliced up salad scattered around falling off chopping boards
Room 3	dry goods store/cupboard Clean good condition Stores of bread, flour, sugar, (They bake the occasional cake for service) Tea Coffee Bottles of sauce
Refrigeration/storage	Chest deep freeze (probed at minus 19 degrees Celsius)

	<p>contains frozen meat and fish.</p> <p>Large upright refrigerator containing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • salad items • cheese • cooked meats, some vacuum packed other loosely covered with cling film • butter • containers of chicken curry and chilli cooling after advance preparation for tomorrows' service • milk • eggs • fruit juice • fresh meat in dishes at bottom loosely covered (Mrs Jones confirmed that meat thawing out for tomorrow's service) <p>air temperature measured at 13 degrees Celsius. - Mrs Jones said they had been having difficulties with the refrigerator for a while -she had called engineer last week but he hadn't come out yet.</p>
Staff	<p>4</p> <p>Mrs Jones- manager employed by Factory Ltd</p> <p>2 part- timers doing 7am-2pm</p> <p>Another doing 12noon -7pm</p> <p>Part timers have done CIEH food hygiene certificate</p> <p>Mrs Jones City and Guilds as chef many years ago</p>
Temp Y/ N	Fridge/freezer/dry store, thermometers but no routine testing
Pest Control Y/ N	local contractor - no reported problems
Training Y/ N	No records but some training done
Cleaning Y /N Schedules	Premises reasonably clean but clear that during busy times in kitchen there is no time to clear up debris
Food Preparation	Not seen at time of inspection
Is open food protected at all stages?	Theoretically food is kept covered but at time of inspection meat left on slicer and meat in fridge only loosely covered. Dry goods once opened are kept in sealed containers
Describe how food is prepared	All hot food is cooked on premises. Cold food bought in.
Cleaning	Mr Jones says they clean as they go, and then have a big clean at end of day, but doesn't have a cleaning schedule

Tasks

Task 1

Discuss and evaluate ALL possible courses of action available to you to deal with the large upright refrigerator. You must clearly state and justify your preferred course of action.

(50 marks)

Task 2

Draft a letter to Mrs Jones explaining how she should improve food handling practices within the business so as prevent an outbreak of *Clostridium perfringens* occurring in the future.

(50 marks)

FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS EXAM YOU SHOULD JUSTIFY ANY ASSUMPTIONS YOU HAVE MADE WITHIN THE ANSWERS GIVEN
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Marking advice

Task 1

Discuss and evaluate ALL possible courses of action available to you to deal with the large upright refrigerator. You must clearly state and justify your preferred course of action.

(50 marks)

No absolutely correct answer for preferred course of action, it depends on justification. Should recognise that the primary objective of enforcement action should always be to achieve compliance in the most effective way possible. Answer should give consideration to following possibilities: (see table on next page)

Candidates may also point out that action could be taken in respect of the food (eg seizure) but task explicitly says the refrigerator.

They may also suggest prosecution/caution for a primary offence which could be used in conjunction with other actions - a bit heavy handed in this scenario

8 marks for discussion of best 4 points, with 8 marks for most appropriate course action.

10 marks also to be awarded for recognition of the fact that refrigerator might not be faulty but rather the use of it to cool hot foods!

Possible action	Evaluation
Advice written/verbal both to be credited either together or separately	The practice of giving advice, and communicating by letter about enforcement issues, are well-established approaches to enforcement that are understood by food businesses. Such procedures are therefore encouraged whenever they are likely to secure compliance with the requirements of food law within a time that is reasonable in the circumstances. No reason to suspect wouldn't work here, except Mrs Jones says she's been trying to get engineer to fix fridge for a while –but only have her word for this.
Hygiene improvement notice	Not generally first enforcement option but <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be used where <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Formal action is proportionate to risk – There is a record of non compliance – Officer believes informal action will be unsuccessful <p>Guided by LA enforcement policy. The Hygiene Improvement Notice procedure would not necessarily be appropriate in this case because of 14 day delay. Although could recognize that moving food to cold display possible.</p>
IMPROVEMENT Notice	No ! only now for Sect 10 Food Safety act 1990 !! Although that is just guidance
Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notices	Signed only by Environmental health practitioner who <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have two years' post qualification experience in food safety matters; • are currently involved in food law enforcement and; • are properly trained, competent and duly authorized <p>Question therefore is about whether HEPN right for this set of circumstances HEPN to prevent use of piece of equipment (ie fridge) only appropriate if the health risk condition is fulfilled in respect of a food business and there is an imminent risk of injury to health. Doubtful in this case</p>
do nothing	no, food not being stored properly therefore a risk so this is not an option

Task 2

Draft a letter to Mrs Jones explaining how she should improve food handling practices within the business so as prevent an outbreak of *Clostridium perfringens* in future.

(50 marks)

Letters should be:

- correctly addressed
- dated with a reference number
- with a heading related to food poisoning outbreak
- signed with contact details of the officer
- appropriate salutation and closure i.e. dear Sir/Madam and yours faithfully **or** dear name /yours sincerely

(10 marks)

Main body of letter should make reference to the recent occurrence of food poisoning by means of introduction.

It should then go on to clarify appropriate food handling procedures to avoid food poisoning from *Clostridium perfringens* namely:

- serve meat hot, as soon as it is cooked, ensure any hot hold is above 63 degrees celcius (might make reference fact that hot hold at time of inspection was too low)
- or cool rapidly in a properly designed chiller and refrigerate until serving time
- not store at ambient temperature
- thoroughly reheating if necessary, to reach an appropriate internal temperature
- where large quantities, or large cuts of food are being cooked, this should be subdivided for cooling, refrigeration and reheating purposes.

(30 marks)

Best answers will reflect that all of this to be done in context of FSMS

- should make reference to appropriate training of staff
- should also make reference to some sort of food safety management system such as HACCP

(10 marks)

Candidates should obviously be given credit for any other relevant points/information not identified here