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# REGULATORY COMPLIANCE SERVICES

## News Brief

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"Protecting Your Business is Our Business"

### Food Safety for Bars

Believe it or not, food safety in your bar is important to your customers, your business, and local regulatory jurisdictions and is something that many of us take for granted. Did you know that ice and garnishes are considered food? From restaurants and bars, to dance clubs serving alcohol, customers want to have a good time and most would never realize that drinks served could be a source of contamination. While alcoholic beverage service is conducted in a casual and fun atmosphere, personnel should take food safety and personal hygiene very seriously.

The three types of contamination that could potentially impact drinks, garnishes or ice served with drinks are biological, chemical and physical. Biological contamination can occur when ice, garnishes or drinks are contaminated with viruses, bacteria, parasites and toxins. Chemical contamination can occur when those items are contaminated with cleaning products, toxic metal residue, pesticides, etc. Physical contamination can occur if drinks are contaminated with hair, band-aids, dirt, metal shavings, artificial fingernails, pest droppings, and the like.

How does contamination occur? Employees are a big factor in protecting from or promoting biological contamination. Bar employees must maintain strict personal hygiene in order to keep things safe. Handwashing must be priority number one for employees handling glasses, utensils, mixing tools, and anyone prepping garnishes and mixing drinks. Personnel must wash hands if a potential for cross-contamination exists. Hands must also be washed after handling money, garbage, using the restroom, and if job assignments change. Hands should be washed for 10 to 15 seconds using warm water, soap and vigorous scrubbing. Hands should be thoroughly dried with clean disposable paper towels.

Employee health must be maintained. Personnel should not work if sick with a

respiratory or stomach illness. Any cuts or sores must be bandaged properly with a waterproof bandage and a clean, dry finger cot if appropriate.

Strict employee hygiene is mandatory. Employees must wear clean clothing and hair restraints. Hands must be properly washed before and after handling ice and garnishes and as often as needed during preparation. Eating and smoking are prohibited. Drinking is only permitted if the drink is covered and a straw is used. Nails must be clean and short, free of nail polish, applied gemstones or acrylics.

If employees are not using gloves and are working with bare hands, utensils should be used whenever possible. Tongs, spoons, single service paper or foil should be utilized. Employees using gloves must discard and change them as often as hands are washed.

Drinks, ice and garnishes can become contaminated during preparation from a source other than an employee. Garnishes, in particular, after preparation such as cutting or slicing, can be vehicles of biological contamination. Be certain to protect these items from contamination by refrigerating cut garnishes whenever possible and protect them with plastic wrap, covered tops, foil or a similar barrier. Be certain that all preparation surfaces such as cutting boards are in good condition and not pitted or cracked, allowing pathogens to multiply.

Chemical contamination may occur if glassware, utensils, ice, mixers, garnishes and prep areas are not protected from potential contamination. The most effective method to prevent chemical contamination is to keep all of these items covered. In addition it is critical that all toxic items are correctly labeled and stored away from anything that could be served to a customer.

*Continued on next page.*



# WELCOME TO THE RCS FAMILY OF CLIENTS!

Corona Beach House - Miami  
Old School Bar & Grill - Sarasota  
Nauti Girls - Ft. Walton Beach  
Wingstop - Miami  
Doubletree - Deerfield Beach  
Hilton Garden Inn - Ft. Myers  
Cody's Original Roadhouse - Tarpon Springs  
Waterfront Restaurant & Marina - Anna Maria Island  
Colonial Quarter - St. Augustine  
Firefly - Key West  
Tom Dick and Harry - Ft. Myers  
Wine Loft - Tallahassee  
Winghouse - Ft. Myers  
Burger Fi - Key West  
The Clam Bake Inc. - Ft. Myers  
The Crazy Olive - Cape Coral  
Remy's Wine & Spirits - Land O' Lakes  
Twisted Martini Bar & Grill - Clearwater  
Big Cheese Restaurant - Homestead  
Nipper's Beach Grille - Jacksonville Beach  
County Line Bar - Weirsdale  
Hangar Bar & Grill - Orlando  
Hurricane Bar & Lounge - Delray Beach  
Gleneagle's Country Club - Delray Beach  
Dixie's - DeLand  
Sweet Rack Rib Shack - Tallahassee  
Residence Inn - Pompano Beach  
Gleneagles Country Club - Delray Beach  
Hurricane Bar & Lounge - Delray Beach  
Dixie's - DeLand  
Tibby's New Orleans Kitchen - Altamonte  
Cuvee Wine Bistro - Ocala

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Ice and garnishes should be treated as food and be protected from contamination. Ice containers should be clean, non-absorbent and covered, and ice scoops should be stored to protect against potential contamination. Tongs and ice scoops should be protected from contamination most effectively in a permanent sleeve on the side of equipment or covered as needed. Handles must always be stored in a manner that does not touch ice or garnishes.

Cleaning and sanitizing of glassware, utensils and other equipment is necessary to prevent against illness that can be caused by improper cleaning and sanitization. Be certain that your three-compartment sink is in working order and properly stocked to wash, rinse and sanitize. Low-temperature dishwashers should be filled correctly with sanitizing agents and high-temperature dishwashers should be reaching high temperatures as directed by the dishwasher's manufacturer's guidelines (typically 171°F).

The bar should be maintained clean and sanitized as needed. All garbage must be disposed of frequently to ensure that it is not a potential contaminant and does not attract pests. Non-absorbent containers that have tight-fitting lids should be used to dispose of garbage.

Your customers expect to have a good time in your operation. While the precautions noted here may seem restrictive, if you get into the habit of food safety it will soon come easy to you and your employees.

Susie McKinley is Editor of FR&L Magazine and is a former Director of the Florida Division of Hotels & Restaurants.

## RCS Employee Profile of the Month

### Geoff Luebke Executive Director

Geoff's professional background includes a balance of experience in the hospitality industry and public service.

Geoff's career began with 15 years in food and beverage operations, including opening new units throughout the Southeast for one of the largest casual theme companies in the US.

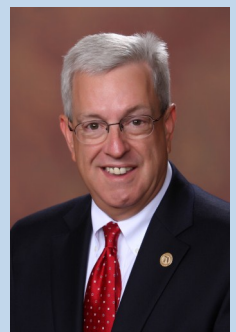
After leaving operations, Geoff served under Governor Jeb Bush as Director of the Florida Division of Hotels & Restaurants, Florida's licensing and inspection agency for food and lodging businesses.

While there, he was responsible for over 300 employees, 8 offices statewide, over 80,000 food and lodging licensees with upward of 150,000 inspections annually, and operating revenue of over \$25 million.

After 7 years as Florida's chief hospitality regulator, Geoff was asked to join the senior staff of the Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association, where he heads FRLA's Education & Training Department. He performs regulatory consulting and representation and spends a good deal of time advising operators how to avoid or resolve regulatory problems.

In addition to leadership roles in a number of national and statewide food safety initiatives, Geoff leads FRLA's state team of over 30 hospitality education and training professionals that conduct food safety training and certification, alcohol licensee compliance training, and related activity to keep Florida's largest industry operating safely for 19 million residents over 90 million annual visitors.

Geoff was raised in Tallahassee, earned an Economics degree from The Florida State University, and has two children attending college.



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