

TARRANT COUNTY

NEWS & INFORMATION



June 2015



www.tarrantcounty.com

Safe Food Handling Can Ensure a Perfect Party

Every weekend Tarrant County parks and backyards fill up with picnics and barbecues. The menus are abundant and the drinks ice-cold. But if the food is not handled properly, the get-together could end before the fun begins.

To ensure a perfect party, Tarrant County Public Health (TCPH) is sharing some advice.

“Improper handling of even basic foods can spell trouble,” said Ann Salyer-Caldwell, associate director at TCPH. “Whether buying, prepping, cooking, or storing, it’s best to follow the rules or someone may become ill.”

Salyer-Caldwell, a registered dietician herself, said it begins the moment the shopping cart is being filled, “Put juicy meats and poultry in plastic bags so drippings don’t contaminate other foods. And transport perishable foods inside an air-conditioned car, instead of a hot trunk.”

Once prepping commences, the real cleaning begins. TCPH advises residents wash their hands before and after handling raw foods to avoid transferring germs.

“Keep utensils and cutting areas clean, and use separate cutting boards for vegetables and meats. It’s also best to keep raw juicy meats away from other foods,” said Salyer-Caldwell.

Cooking temperatures play a big part in safety, too. Salyer-Caldwell said beef, veal, lamb steaks, roasts and pork chops should be cooked to 145 degrees, ground meats and pork to 160 degrees, ground poultry to 165 degrees, poultry breasts to 170 degrees, and finally, whole poultry and thighs to 180 degrees.

And what about those tasty side dishes Texans love?

“Always use cold ingredients when preparing cold served foods. Store them at 40 degrees or lower. And keep hot foods above 140 degrees,” said Salyer-Caldwell.

Improper food handling can ruin the fun for everyone, but by following the right techniques and temperatures, the party should be nothing less than a wonderful memory.



Second Half-Payment of Property Taxes Due June 30

Property taxpayers who chose to pay half their 2014 property taxes in November need to make their second payment by June 30. This penalty-and-interest-free option is available to taxpayers who made the first half payment on their property tax account by November 30 and made a half payment at that time.

Payments may be made in person at the main office in Fort Worth or any of the seven subcourthouse locations, or by using one of the following options:

- Online: <http://access.tarrantcounty.com/en/tax/property-tax/pay-my-county-taxes.html>
- Phone: 817-884-1110
- Mail: Checks/Cashier Checks/Money Orders are accepted by mail and must be postmarked on or before June 30, 2015.

Property tax payments may be made with Visa, MasterCard, and Discover online, over the phone and in person. American Express cards are only accepted in person at our eight locations. All debit and credit card payments are assessed a convenience fee by the credit card processor.

Accounts not paid by June 30 incur a 12 percent penalty and a one percent interest charge. Interest continues to accrue one percent per-month thereafter.

Storm Water Construction Permit Requirements

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) has broadened storm water construction permit requirements for construction projects in the unincorporated areas of counties. The storm water general construction permit covers storm water discharges from construction activities that disturb at least one acre of land.

The Texas Pollutant Discharge Elimination System program implements the federal National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System program in Texas.

Applicants of the Storm Water Construction General Permit, who discharge to a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System, are required to submit a signed copy of their Notice of Intent (NOI) and/or Construction Site Notice to Tarrant County. Those seeking a permit must also provide a copy of any Notice of Change or

Notice of Termination to the County.

If you have a construction project, which disturbs at least 1 acre, and the storm water discharge flows into unincorporated Tarrant County, please mail a copy of your Construction Site Notice and/or NOI to Tarrant County Transportation Department, Attention: Robert Berndt, 100 East Weatherford – Room 401, Fort Worth, Texas, 76196.

If you have general questions about the TCEQ Storm Water Construction Program, you can visit the TCEQ website at www.tceq.state.tx.us. If you have any questions regarding the new rules and regulations as they pertain to unincorporated Tarrant County, please contact Robert Berndt, REM at 817-884-2634 or by email at rberndt@tarrantcounty.com.