MDARD Seeks Fee Increases

In addition to an increase in the number of inspections required due to industry growth, the complexity and food safety risk assessment requirements during inspections has increased, based on customer demand for a greater variety of food products. Most food licensing fees have remained the same since 2000. MDARD is at a point where it can no longer meet the demand for compliance assistance for new and growing food businesses and also evaluate food establishments often enough to assure the public’s food safety. Fee increases are crucial for MDARD to continue to meet the needs of the industry and enforce state and federal food safety regulations.

Legislators will soon be discussing industry fees for the first time in 15 years. The proposed fee increase would phase in a $2.5 million increase over the next three years as suggested by industry associations. Specifically, this would mean an increase for small food facilities from $67 to $183 over three years. For large food facilities, the increase would be from $167 to $468. These proposed fees are below the average of other states and well below Michigan local health departments. Even with these increases, the industry will move from paying 26 percent of the cost of MDARD’s regulatory programs to paying just 37 percent. The majority of the cost would still be covered by other program funding sources (General Fund and federal grants).

With the proposed fee package MDARD can meet an inspection frequency schedule based on food safety risk of every six months for high-risk businesses, every 12 months for medium-risk, and every 18 months for low-risk establishments, and at the same time meet all the business services needs for new and expanding food businesses in Michigan.

People buy Michigan food, in part, because they trust our food supply is safe. Michigan has long been considered a national leader in food safety. As the frequency of food evaluations goes up, industry compliance increases and the number of foodborne illness outbreaks goes down. The fee proposal will allow MDARD to strengthen our public health assurance and business development support programs for licensed food businesses in our state, while providing great customer service and assurance to businesses that their licenses have value when it comes to customer confidence and access to markets. If you have questions, please contact your food inspector or MDARD at 800-292-3939.

How Increased Investment Benefits Business

- Compliance Reviews on a responsible schedule
- Fewer Costly Illnesses, Outbreaks and Food Recalls.
- Enhanced Customer Service
- Lower Business Operating Costs
- Risk Reduction
- Decreased Liability
- Recall Insurance Savings
Avoid Late Fees: Submit License On Time
All food establishment licenses expire on April 30 each year. MDARD sends license renewals for current licensed establishments early in the year.

Late fees and fines are progressive and may include:
- $100 late fee ($10/day)
- $400 fine (1st year late)
- $800 fine plus $80 administrative costs (2nd year late)
- Closure order and legal action

If you have not received a renewal application in the mail by March 15, call MDARD’s Central Licensing Unit at 517-284-5771 to ensure the correct address is listed and request another application. Be sure to mail the renewal so it is postmarked before April 30.

If you are notified because your renewal was late, promptly submit any late fee in order to avoid additional fines and penalties. And remember, your food establishment license must be conspicuously posted. For additional information or questions, contact MDARD’s Central Licensing Unit at 517-284-5771.

Reminder: Your license must renewed using the paper application this year. We will have a new on-line system available for everyone next year.

Contact Us:
Phone: 1-800-292-3939
After Hours Emergencies: 517-373-0440
Email: mda-fooddairyinfo@michigan.gov
Fax: 517-373-3333
Web: www.michigan.gov/mdard or www.michigan.gov/foodsafety

Licensing/Business Start-up Info:
www.michigan.gov/mbiagbusiness
Marketing Information:
www.michigan.gov/mdardmarketingguide
Electronic Complaints Submission:
www.michigan.gov/complaints