N E W S   R E L E A S E

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Food workers can now apply for Food Worker Cards online
DEC providing free testing through June

March 22, 2007—Food workers can now go online to prepare and take the test for an Alaska Food Worker Card, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) announced today.

 "Our goal is to ensure the people handling your food on a daily basis have the knowledge to do it safely," said DEC's Environmental Health Director Kristin Ryan.

Every year, thousands of people become ill with food-borne illness that could have been easily prevented with safe handling practices.

In December 2006, DEC adopted changes to the Alaska Food Code requiring that food workers obtain food worker cards certifying their knowledge of safe food preparation to prevent food-borne illness. Workers have until December 28, 2007, to obtain their Food Worker Card and can take the test for free until June 30, 2007. After July 1, 2007, the test will cost $10. Cards are valid for three years from the date of issue. Test preparation materials will continue to be free.

As well as being able to test online, food workers may take the test by mail, during courses offered by DEC, and through work-sponsored or third-party training.

Food workers are people who handle food for the public. Anyone who works with unpackaged food or food contact surfaces will need a card, including servers, bartenders, bussers, cooks, dishwashers, meat cutters, and deli workers.

"Serving the public safe food is simple when you know about safe food handling practices," said Ryan. "A workforce that is knowledgeable and trained in food safety is essential to preventing food-borne illness."

To study and take the Food Worker Card test online, go to www.dec.state.ak.us/eh/fss/training/training.html

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