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New York Association of Convenience Stores

130 Washington Avenue, Suite 300, Albany NY 12210

TELEPHONE: (800) 33-NYACS or (518) 432-1400

FAX: (518) 432-7400

MEMBER UPDATE

Certified food safety training now available online through www.nyacs.org

NYACS is pleased to announce that our members now have access to an online training program that meets the requirements of the state's new food safety training mandate.

The training program, recently approved by the state Department of Agriculture and Markets, was developed by the Food Industry Alliance of New York State (FIANYS) and the Food Marketing Institute in conjunction with Pearson Prentice Hall, a leading education publisher, and Learn Something, a builder of top-quality e-learning and multimedia products.

We are grateful to our friends at FIANYs for granting NYACS members access to this valuable online training program at member rates. The program is now live. To register and start training, simply visit www.nyacs.org and click the Food Safety Training link.

The new law requires many C-stores and supermarkets possessing an Article 20-C food license from Ag & Markets to have one person in a position of management or control, solely assigned to that store, complete at least eight hours of approved food safety training prior to the renewal date of that license. Here's more about the law and the training program.

About the Online Training Program

Q: How soon can my employees begin training?

A: Immediately. You, as the store owner or operator, can start by going to www.nyacs.org and clicking on the link to the training portal. Once you set up an account for your store or chain, you can have your employees log in with a password and start taking courses.

Q: Can my employees do the online training from home?

A: Absolutely. They can access the program from any computer with Internet access.

Q: Can they take part of the training today, part tomorrow, and part another day?

A: Yes. The Pearson Prentice-Hall/Learn Something system is designed to allow trainees to stop and pick up wherever they left off whenever they return.

Q: Wouldn't live, classroom training be more effective than online?

A: Ag & Markets is satisfied that this online curriculum meets all the training requirements of the new law. Online training is not new; it is an established, effective vehicle for learning. For those retail companies that may prefer traditional classroom training, other providers may be seeking approval to offer the course in that manner.

Q: How much will the online training cost?

A: Registration for NYACS and FIANYs members is expected to be about \$100 per person, a very competitive price. Non-members will pay more. Discounts may be offered for bulk orders.

Q: Does NYACS derive revenue from the training program?

A: Yes. FIANYS has graciously offered NYACS a share of the net proceeds from NYACS-member participation in the training program. This will only apply to those registrations where the “NYACS member” box is checked on the registration page, so please be sure to do that.

Q: Is this the only source of state-certified food safety training?

A: No, we expect other classroom and/or online training programs will be approved by Ag & Markets in the near future. State and national trade associations and colleges are eligible to apply for Ag & Markets approval to offer certified training. For instance, Cornell University probably will seek approval. Wholesalers and franchisors are also eligible to apply.

Other Questions About the Training Requirement

Q: Does the training requirement apply to every store with a 20-C license?

A: There are some exceptions:

1.) Mom-and-pop stores are exempt. This is defined as a store that “has as its only full-time employees the owner thereof, or the parent, spouse or child of the owner, or in addition thereto not more than two full-time employees”

2.) Lower-volume stores are exempt. Defined as stores with annual gross sales under \$3 million in the previous calendar year, excluding petroleum products.

3.) However, lower-volume franchisees that are independently owned may not be exempt. The law says there is no exemption if the store is “part of a network of subsidiaries, affiliates or other member stores, under direct or indirect common control, which, as a group, had gross sales the previous calendar year of \$3 million or more” excluding petroleum products. NYACS is seeking clarification from Ag & Markets on how franchisees will be treated. Feel free to call Ag & Markets directly at 800-554-4501, to ask whether your store or chain is subject to the law or exempt.

Q: When does the new law take effect?

A: With the round of 20-C food licenses that are up for renewal November 15, 2006. When you go to renew the license, Ag & Markets will require you to present a certificate proving that an individual in a position of management or control completed the training requirement.

Q: Can I do the certified training myself in-house, rather than paying NYACS?

A: A retail chain of 10 stores or more is eligible to apply to Ag & Markets for approval to self-train its own employees.

Q: How long is the certification good for?

A: Under the law, it is valid two years from the date of training. However, Ag & Markets is considering allowing anyone who gets trained anytime prior to their license renewal date to start the two-year clock on the date of renewal, rather than the date of training. The individual would have to undergo at least 8 hours of additional state-approved training during that 2-year period in order to maintain certification for the next license renewal period.

Q: What if my trained, certified employee goes to work for a competitor?

A: Their certificate is *not* invalidated by a change of employment to another licensee.

Q: Can I have my chain-wide food specialist be the certified trainee for all my stores?

A: No. The law requires that you train and certify one person *solely assigned to each store*.