



Angela Treadaway
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News Release

Food safety courses offered by St. Clair County Extension Office

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System's Food Safety Program is pleased to offer another "**ServSafe®**" certification course for restaurant and foodservice organizations in St. Clair County on February 7th-9th from 1 p.m. until 5 p.m. each day at the St. Clair County Extension Office Auditorium in Pell City. The course cost is \$130 and you must register to attend. Registration deadline is February 5th.

ServSafe® is a USDA mandated food service handler's food safety certification program that the County Health Department is encouraging all food service establishments to take. It is worth 2 extra points on your Inspection Score. According to the Centers for Disease Control, an estimated 5,000 deaths are caused by food-borne illnesses in the United States each year, and the majority are caused by the mishandling of food. The media continues to play a major role in encouraging consumer awareness by exposing unsafe food practices and broadcasting health scores, which are displayed at the establishments. One case of food-borne illness in an establishment can significantly damage an establishment's reputation, causing a loss of customers and sales. This certification program is designed to protect the establishments and keep the customers safe!

ServSafe® is a program accredited by the National Restaurant Association and is the industry standard in food safety. The Food Safety Certification training course offered through the Alabama Cooperative Extension System includes topics such as contamination and food-borne illness; storage, preparation, and serving; and food safety regulations and standards. The program is designed specifically for food-handling employees of restaurants, hospitals, nursing homes, schools, daycares, and other food service professionals. The intensive course is spread over three consecutive sessions, ending with the certification exam.

Once certified, managers are issued a ServSafe® certificate which can be displayed at their dining establishments. This certification demonstrates concern for consumer food safety, and also fulfills state requirements. Because of changes to the Alabama food code, it is very important to make sure that your restaurant is in compliance with the current laws. Although some counties in Alabama require that foodservice establishments have at least one person on duty at all times with ServSafe® certification, it will become a state-wide requirement over the next few years. Check with your local health department for

specifics.

Also this year, a Concession Stand Food Safety Program will be offered on March 6th from 6-8 p.m. at the St. Clair County Extension Office. This course is available for those who work in concession stands and want basic training on serving food safely to the public. There is no registration fee, but you must register to attend. Registration deadline is March 1st.

And, if you help with preparing foods for large groups, like at a church or you are interested in catering, a Quantity Food Safety program will be offered on April 3rd from 1-4 p.m. at the Extension Office. There is no charge for this program and the deadline to register is March 30th.

For more information about these classes, or to register please contact Angela Treadaway at (205) 338-9416 or by email at atreadaw@aces.edu or by cell at (205) 410-3696.

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