

STATE OF COLORADO

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Dedicated to protecting and improving the health and environment of the people of Colorado

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Colorado Department
of Public Health
and Environment

RETAIL FOOD ESTABLISHMENT INTERPRETATION #99-08

DATE: December 1, 1999

SUBJECT: Storage of In-Use Utensils in Sanitizer Solution

It has been requested that retail food establishments be allowed to store in-use utensils (e.g. dispensing scoops, tongs, icing knives and spatulas) in a container of sanitizer at room temperature. This is not an approved method of storing in-use utensils and does not meet the sanitation requirements of the *Colorado Retail Food Establishment Rules and Regulations*.

Section 3-306 of the *Colorado Retail Food Establishment Rules and Regulations* states the following:

3-306 In-Use Utensils, Between Use Storage

To avoid unnecessary manual contact with the food, suitable dispensing utensils and single-service articles shall be used by employees and consumers. Consumer display and self-service of bulk food shall meet the requirements of section 25-4-13, C.R.S. (1998).

Dispensing utensils shall be:

- A. Stored in the food with the dispensing utensil handle extended out of the food; or
- B. Stored clean and dry; or
- C. Stored in potable running water as in a running water dipper well; or
- D. Stored at temperatures of 140o F (60o C) and above, or 41o F (5o C) and below.

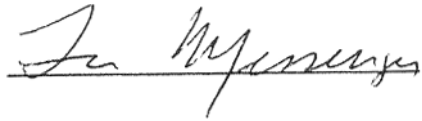
The following rationale is given for not allowing the storage of utensils in a container of sanitizer at room temperature:

A utensil that is not washed, rinsed, sanitized and air dried, according to section 4-403 of the aforementioned rules and regulations, may still contain organic material and bacteria. Instead of contacting the surface of the utensil, the sanitizer attaches to the organic material. The organic material uses all the available sanitizer and the concentration is no longer effective to adequately sanitize the utensil surface. Placing a utensil into a container of

sanitizer stored at room temperature that repeated contact with organic material has made ineffective, now adds a moist environment which may encourage growth of bacteria.

Reuse of a utensil that has been stored in this manner can cause bacterial cross-contamination and addition of the sanitizer to food as an unapproved food additive.

This interpretation is provided in conformance with FDA's comments on the same subject.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Tom Messenger", written over a horizontal line.

Tom Messenger, Director
Consumer Protection Division