

Suspension on Kate's Catering Pte Ltd lifted after meeting required standards

The Singapore Food Agency (SFA) has lifted the suspension on Kate's Catering Pte Ltd at 171 Kampong Ampat, #04-04, KA Foodlink today. SFA is satisfied that the measures required to rectify the lapses detected have been implemented, and operations can be resumed. This comes after the conclusion of joint investigations by the Ministry of Health (MOH) and SFA into a *Salmonella* Enteritidis food poisoning outbreak that happened between 19 and 28 March 2019, traced to the consumption of food prepared at Kate's Catering Pte Ltd. To protect consumers from public health risks, the operating licence of Kate's Catering Pte Ltd had been suspended by SFA for a total of 52 days from 26 March 2019 to 16 May 2019.

2 The outbreak of *Salmonella* Enteritidis food poisoning involved 259 cases from 13 PCF Sparkletots Preschools and P.L.A.N Student Care Centre who consumed food from Kate's Catering between 19 March and 25 March 2019. 33 of the cases were hospitalised and have since been discharged. *Salmonella* Enteritidis was detected from the stool samples collected from 46 affected cases.

Causes of Outbreak

3 During joint inspections conducted by MOH and SFA on 22 March and 26 March 2019, several hygiene lapses were identified. These included:

- Improper thawing of frozen meat;
- Repeatedly transitioning between handling of ready-to-eat food and raw meat items;
- Inconsistency in staff's understanding and differentiation of the use of various sets of knives for ready-to-eat and raw food;
- Inconsistency in cooking times to ensure thorough cooking; and
- Lack of proper measures to check if food was properly cooked.

Measures Taken by Kate's Catering Pte Ltd

4 During the suspension period, the licensee had complied with measures stipulated by SFA, such as disposing all ready-to-eat food, thawed food and perishable food items.

5 The licensee has also cleaned and sanitised its premises, including its equipment and utensils. The licensee also submitted its plans on enhanced food safety regimes, including plans and processes to ensure that its staff practise good food hygiene and proper food preparation at all times. All its food handlers have since re-attended and passed the Basic Food Hygiene course. The Food Hygiene Officer¹ for Kate's Catering Pte Ltd has also undergone retraining and passed the WSQ Conduct Food and Beverage Hygiene Audit course.

Continuing Surveillance

6 SFA is currently reviewing the findings of the investigations and will take appropriate action against the licensee for the lapses found. Following the lifting of its suspension, SFA will also place Kate's Catering Pte Ltd under close surveillance to ensure that the licensee adheres to what they have submitted in their plans.

Public Advisory

7 Members of the public are advised to seek medical attention early if they experience any gastroenteritis symptoms (i.e., diarrhoea, vomiting, fever or abdominal pain).

8 To prevent the spread of disease and protect oneself from acquiring infections, individuals should practise good personal hygiene at all times. These include:

- Washing hands with soap and water before eating and after going to the toilet;

¹ Under the enhanced Food Hygiene Officer (FHO) scheme announced in December 2018, if the licence of a food establishment is suspended, all its Food Hygiene Officers are required to re-attend the WSQ Conduct Food and Beverage Hygiene Audit course, and the premises must have a trained FHO before it resumes operations.



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- Covering mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, and throwing the tissue away into a bin immediately; and
- Not sharing food/drinks, eating utensils, toothbrushes or towels with others.

9 For health related queries, members of the public can contact MOH at 1800 – 2254122. For feedback on any hygiene lapses, the public may contact SFA at 6805 2871.

Issued by the Singapore Food Agency

17 May 2019