



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **New Food Defense Toolkit helps restaurants reduce risk of intentional food contamination**

Attacks on our food supply do happen, although rare, according to Multnomah County Health Department's Environmental Health program. The Health Department's Food Defense Project is the nation's first comprehensive program to assist restaurant operators in both reducing the threat of a food terrorism event and responding to an attack.

In 1984, The Dalles, Oregon experienced the first and single-largest food bio-terrorist attack in United States history. More than 750 people were diagnosed with salmonella after eating at salad bars that were intentionally contaminated in ten local restaurants. The event heightened the visibility of public health and their responsibilities in food safety and disease monitoring in the food service industry.

Multnomah County's Food Defense Toolkit, funded by the Food and Drug Administration, uses an 8-point risk assessment system to prompt restaurant managers to monitor frequently overlooked security areas and offers suggested remedies that can be tailored to each restaurant's unique situation. An employee training guide, training videos and posters complete the toolkit.

"An alert and well-trained staff makes intentional contamination of food very difficult," says Lila Wickham, Environmental Health manager for Multnomah County Health Department. "Our goal is to give restaurants the tools they need to protect the public's health."

The Food Defense Toolkit is available online <http://www.mchealthinspect.org/restaurant.html#defense> or by calling 503-988-3400.

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