

THE BOTTOM LINE

Summer vacation: reserve without reservations

Florida welcomes visitors from throughout the world who come to explore the state's vibrant cities, idyllic shores and rich history. Protecting the public's health and safety is a primary mission for the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) and its Division of Hotels and Restaurants. Businesses in search of hotel conferencing spaces, couples researching wedding venues and locals planning a well-deserved "stay-cation" can take advantage of DBPR resources to find licensed establishments meeting their needs. And whether you're enjoying a freshly caught lunch at a beachfront restaurant, trying a street taco from a trendy local food truck or taking the family to a favorite Friday-night eatery, DBPR has resources to help consumers make informed dining choices.

DBPR's Division of Hotels and Restaurants licenses, inspects and regulates public-lodging establishments. Hotels, motels and bed and breakfasts are inspected twice yearly. Transient and non-transient apartments are inspected annually. The Division also conducts an inspection each time a complaint is received. Licensed vacation rentals are inspected in response to complaints.

As of July 1, 2014, the Division inspects all public food-service establishments in accordance with a risk-based inspection frequency program. Under the program, each public food-service establishment is assigned a risk level based on inspection and compliance history, type of food and preparation, and type of service. The number of

minimum annual inspections an establishment receives coincides with their assigned risk level. The Division also inspects when a complaint is received.

Inspections for all food-service establishments, from food trucks to traditional restaurants, are performed in accordance with Chapter 509, Florida Statutes, and the Food and Drug Administration's Food Code.

The Division of Hotels and Restaurants posts food and lodging inspection results online, so residents and seasonal visitors can stay informed about the latest and safest dining and lodging options in their area. Simply visit www.myfloridalicense.com, scroll down to the Popular Services menu and select Food and Lodging Inspections. Reports can be searched by establishment name or license number.

Consumers can also search inspection data using the free DBPR mobile app, available on iTunes or Google Play. The app offers inspection reports for food-service and lodging vendors, allowing consumers to research on the go.

Consumers who wish to file a complaint against public food-service or lodging establishments may call the DBPR Customer Contact Center at 850.487.1395 or visit www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr/hr.

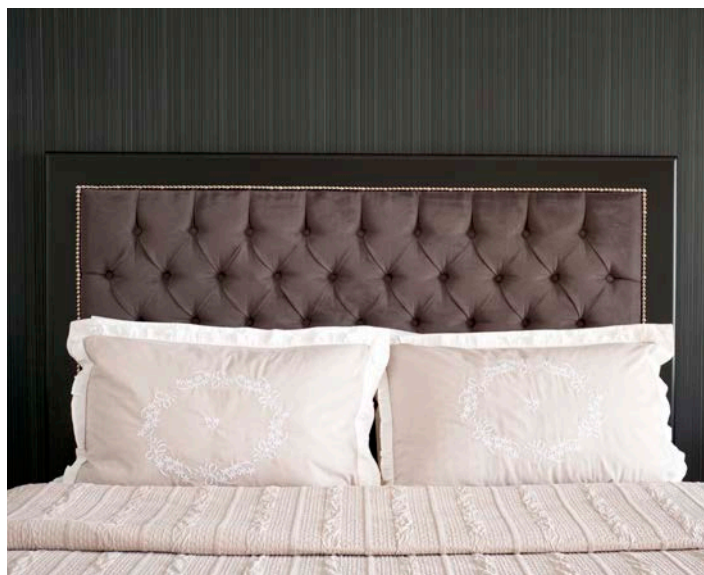
Emerging issues and trends: truth in menu

Consumers are embracing the concept of eating foods marketed as local, organic or farm to table. Recently published studies have highlighted how misrepresenting food, or describing it in a way that misleads or misinforms consumers, can be financial fraud and a public-health risk.

Florida law prohibits food misrepresentation. This includes false or misleading descriptions of food or food products; serving or selling food or food products under the names of other foods or food products; misleading or misinforming consumers about food; and misrepresenting the appearance, color or quality of a food. Instances of these prohibited activities have risen with increased consumer demand for local, organic and farm-to-table food.

Menus or other bills of fare promoting or advertising items for sale must be accurate and truthful. Consumers should pay particular attention to food descriptions on menus, blackboards or specials flyers, including specific ingredients and where they were obtained. Some items may be available only on a seasonal basis or from a particular source. Establishments should inform customers if an item is unavailable and what item, if any, has been substituted.

Consumers who wish to file a complaint against public food-service establishments that misrepresent, misbrand or falsely present food or food products may call the DBPR Customer Contact Center at 850.487.1395 or visit <http://www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr>.



Lodging inspectors check for bed bugs

As part of routine inspections and those resulting from complaints, inspectors from the Division of Hotels and Restaurants look for signs of bed bugs in Florida's hotels, motels and vacation rentals. If bed-bug activity or evidence is observed, the inspector cites the specific room(s) involved. A 14-day warning is issued and the room(s) are prohibited from being rented until a callback inspection has been conducted and the room(s) are found to be free of all evidence of bedbug activity.

Per Chapter 509.221(7), Florida Statutes, the operator of any licensed lodging establishment must take effective measures to protect the establishment against vermin entering and breeding on the premises. Any infested room must be disinfected, fumigated or renovated until the vermin are exterminated.

Consumers who find bed bugs or their evidence should contact the hotel manager immediately. They should also file a complaint, including as many details as possible, with the Division of Hotels and Restaurants. Consumers may file a complaint on DBPR's website or call DBPR at 850.487.1395. The Division performs an inspection in response to every complaint received.

Akin and von Bondungen lead division

Rick Akin, Director



Rick Akin, a graduate of Eckerd College, began his career in food service management. In 1990, Rick moved to the regulatory side of food safety as an inspector in the Tampa District with DBPR.

Over the past 25 plus years, Rick has served in positions of increasing responsibility for

DBPR and has also worked for the Florida Department of Agriculture in the Division of Food Safety. Rick currently serves as the Director of the Division of Hotels and Restaurants.

Steven von Bodungen, Deputy Director



Steven von Bodungen holds a bachelor's degree in Hospitality Administration from Florida State University and has worked for the Division in positions of increasing responsibility for over 21 years. Starting as a Food and Lodging Inspector in 1997, he was promoted to Supervisor in

1999 and to Jacksonville District Manager in 2003. Von Bodungen served as Deputy Bureau Chief from 2010 to 2013 and Bureau Chief from 2013 to 2016. He is currently Division Deputy Director with program oversight of the Bureau of Elevator Safety and the Bureau of Field Services.

Bureau enforces elevator, escalator safety laws

The Division of Hotels and Restaurants licenses and regulates elevators, escalators and other vertical conveyance devices such as dumbwaiters, moving walks, stairway chairlifts and wheelchair lifts. The Division's Bureau of Elevator Safety works to ensure elevators and escalators throughout Florida are safe. The Bureau enforces elevator-safety laws and is also responsible for licensing and regulating industry professionals.

The Bureau is charged with enforcing Chapter 399, Florida Statutes; Chapter 30 of the Florida Building Code; Florida Accessibility Code; the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) Safety Code for Elevators and Escalators; and portions of the National Electrical Code (NEC 70). The Bureau also provides administrative support to the Elevator Safety Technical Advisory Council.

DBPR staff process elevator-professional registrations and licenses, as well as elevator licenses and permits. Staff members also maintain inspection, accident and complaint reports for response and follow up. Verification of service-maintenance contract statuses, as well as renewals of Certificates of Operation, are coordinated with the Division's licensing office.

The Bureau's inspectors handle complaint investigations, private elevator inspector oversight, accident follow up and on-site safety inspections. They also monitor licensees and contracted local-partner programs. Privately employed certified elevator personnel perform required annual inspections, tests and maintenance. Only Certified Elevator Inspectors who have the ASME Qualified Elevator Inspector credential, and who are licensed by DBPR, can conduct elevator inspections.

For more information about Bureau activities, see the Division's annual reports.

