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### **FOODSAFE certificates issued in BC now good for five years; Refresher courses on tap**

**Vancouver, B.C.** – Research shows that 95% of people who took the FOODSAFE Level 1 course five years ago or earlier would fail the exam if they wrote it today. That’s why all new FOODSAFE Level One certificates issued in British Columbia will have a five-year expiry date, starting July 29<sup>th</sup> 2013.

To help FOODSAFE Level 1 Certificate holders keep their food safety knowledge up to date, FOODSAFE will be launching an inexpensive and short FOODSAFE Level 1 Refresher course. It will be offered online by Open School BC starting September 2013.

“A recent BC Centre for Disease Control study found food safety refresher training significantly improved workers’ food safety knowledge. Improved food handling skills results in safer food for people eating out in BC,” says Lorraine McIntyre, BCCDC food safety specialist and author of the FOODSAFE Knowledge Retention Project.

According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, four million people – one in eight Canadians – get sick with a domestically acquired food-borne illness every year. Most feel ill with gastrointestinal symptoms such as vomiting and diarrhea for a few days and then get better. However, this can be life-threatening for especially vulnerable people including children, pregnant women, the elderly, and other immune compromised.

Though existing FOODSAFE certificates will be valid until July 29<sup>th</sup> 2018, for the people who cook and serve food to groups like these, there is no substitute for frequent review of food safety.

The three hour long refresher course will cover all the essentials of the FOODSAFE Level 1 training program. A grade of 80% must be achieved in the exam to be recertified.

The FOODSAFE course was developed in 1986 as a voluntary course, and until now, certificates were issued in BC without expiry dates. Today, more than 45,000 British Columbians become certified in FOODSAFE every year. Every operator of a food service establishment, and at least one staff member on every shift, must have a valid FOODSAFE certificate (or its equivalent). FOODSAFE certification has been a legislated requirement in BC for food service establishments since July 1, 2000.

#### **FOODSAFE**

FOODSAFE is a comprehensive food safety training program for the food service industry jointly developed by the BC FOODSAFE Secretariat, and the BCCDC.

Online at: [www.foodsafe.ca](http://www.foodsafe.ca)

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