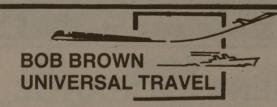
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# Inspectors work to keep restaurants safe

(continued from page 1)

'A lot of times when the person is made aware of the situation, then the situation gets taken care of," Jef-ferson says. "It's like your mother prodding you to clean up your

Jefferson says that if the person does not respond to the verbal warning, he is sent a letter describing the violation and telling him he only has a few days to clean up the mess. If this does not work, the matter then is turned over to the city's legal department for further action such as a

On another side of health department duties, a sanitarian must regularly inspect food and drink busi-Jefferson says. These inspections occur about every six months, depending on the reputation of cleanliness.

Jefferson says the first thing in-

spectors do when they visit an establishment is to check to see if the-

clean and that there are no major cracks in the walls.

Then we look at their food handling practices, which is really the most important part," Jefferson says. "People forget that. They will look at the building and it may be filthy to look at. It may be dark and they may not clean it very often, but they may have excellent food hand-

"This is more favorable than if you have a building that looks great, but they're treating the food like

Some of the other items a health inspector looks at include food protection, hygiene, food equipment and utensils, water, sewage, plumbing, toilet and handwashing facilities, garbage disposal, insect, rodent animal control, lighting and ventilation.

All these items are listed on a grade sheet inspectors use when they pick through a restaurant. building is in sound condition, if it is Points are deducted for various in- many small violations, they can re-

fractions with some infractions costing more points than others.

Jefferson says follow-up inspec tions within about 10 days of the initial inspection sometimes are necessary when a restaurant or bar has

some serious problems. "If it's a very serious problem we may come back in 48 hours," Jeffer-

He says an establishment can be

• The personnel has infectious • There is a lack of adequate re-

• A sewage backup problem exists in the building.

• There is a complete lack of sanitization for the food equipment. "We usually don't have to close a

place down," Jefferson says. He says fewer than 12 establishments in the county have to be closed in a given year. Although some places, Jefferson says, may have several major violations or

health department.

'When they show that they do want to work with us to solve problems, then we would have close them down," Jefferson says.

He says some establishments sistently practice bad habits who present a health problem and and

health inspectors. "Too many restauranteurs are appearance oriented," Jefferson san "As long as they present a smiling face to the public, they're not to concerned with what else happens.

"If they've got \$5 to put backin their restaurant to modify if, they rather spend the money to put tables out front than to rebuild a in the back that they can't clean."
He says the Brazos County He

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Department receives about 150 plaints of food poisoning per year full investigation is launched enough of those complaints focus the same establishment, he says.

# Law requires family homes to register prior to opening

(continued from page 1)

When there are four infants, for example, there may be either two children from 18 months to four years and no school-aged children, or one from each of these two groups, or two schoolaged children only. But there must never be more than six preschoolers in the home.

Besides the six children allowed during the day, up to six siblings of those children can be watched after school hours. But no more than 12 children, including those of the caretaker, may be in the home at any given time. All of the possible combinations of numbers and ages are on the list in the book of minimum standards.

The general safety and well-being of the children is the major requirement, Eubanks says. In a registered family home, she says, there is no specified program of activities that each household must follow.

As Larsen says, the family home is just that -

'I just treat them like my own kids," she says. 'They play together and they know when it's time for their snack, their lunch, their nap. Taking in three kids gives me just enough time to spend with each of them, I think."

The other published standards of the department for registered homes include regulations about health, nutrition, abuse (or suspected abuse from parents), toys and activities and dis-

For the person who wants to take in more than six children, or for the parent who wants their child to have more children in his everyday environment, there is the licensed group day

The group day care home provides care for from seven to 12 children under 14 years of age on a regular basis for less than 24 consecutive

The standards state that the ages of the children must be aligned with the number of care-

For example, with one person caring for the children, the number of the children is based on

the number of infants. If there are three infants, from 0-17 months of age, only three other children may be cared

for simultaneously. With four infants, no other children may be in care

The other established standards for group day care homes are much more extensive than those for registered homes. More detailed requirements are listed for space, furnishings, activities and transportation, as well as the basic standards regarding nutrition, sanitation and The group day care home is licensed by government and is therefore inspected every months, unless a complaint is being investigation. or a follow-up visit is necessary after a standa was previously found to be violated.

For a more structured environment, par can always turn to a licensed day care center. Licensed day care centers provide care more than 12 children under 14 years of age less than 24 hours a day. Some of the cen the Bryan-College Station area are listed as ing a capacity for as many as 278 children, a though this number must be based on the suff per-child ratio and available space.

Day care centers might handle the most did dren, but their standards are the strictest and the most extensive, Eubanks says

For example, activities must be profile according to the children's ages, interests at abilities. A supervised rest period is required, a well as activities for small and large groups are

Day care centers also have a daily schedule which dictates the core of activities the center

Daily menus meeting stringent nutrition standards must be worked out and posted.

Licensed day care centers are inspected ever six months by the department, Eubanks says

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