

**Event Type:** Hotel Banquet

**Incident:** Food Ingestion/Anaphylactic Shock

**Narrative**

On Saturday, February 9, 2008, a corporation held its annual shareholders' meeting at a hotel in Miami, FL. The hotel had an impeccable reputation for service and accommodating people's needs. That was one of the primary reasons this event was being held at this location. The chef at this hotel was world renowned. The company had contracted for an evening banquet. They were expecting 500 guests and had 10 people attending with special dietary needs. One of the guests was highly allergic to egg and dairy products. Special meals were going to be prepared for the 10 guests. The chef said he would personally oversee the egg and dairy-free meal.

Dinner service began at 7:30 pm on Saturday, February 9, 2008. The ten people with dietary needs were to be served last. The chef was going to finish off the egg and dairy-free meal as stated. About ten minutes after service had started the finishing touches were being put on the requested meals and delivered to the tables. The chef personally delivered the egg and dairy-free meal. The chef ensured the guest that the meal was allergy free and had met her egg and dairy-free requirements. The guest thanked the chef profusely and never doubted for a second that there would be a problem with it. The guest took three bites of the meal and started to have an allergic reaction. Within minutes the guest was experiencing anaphylactic shock. Her throat was closing and she was having difficulty breathing. She had left her Epi-pen in her coat at the coat check. The chef had utilized a utensil that had trace elements of egg from another dish. This persons' extreme intolerance to egg nearly resulted in her death. Fortunately, someone new about her allergies and Epi-pen and was able to obtain it and administer a shot. The woman survived, but was taken to an area hospital for further treatment and observation.

**Problem statements**

- Did the chef commit to something he did not fully understand? What should the chef have done differently?
- Are most chefs and cooks fully aware of the sensitivities allergic people have to food? What can be done to change this?
- How do you prevent this from happening?
- What kind of policies and procedures should have been in place to accommodate guests with food allergy concerns?
- Should you train staff to respond to allergic reactions? How do you train them?
- Can you deny a person service based on food allergies? Why or why not?
- What should the allergic person have done differently?
- Did the chef open himself and the location up to liability as a result of his actions? Why or why not?