

# Pressure Canner Gauge Testing Guidelines

Many magazines, recipe books and websites instruct the general public to contact their local Extension office to have their pressure canner gauge checked. OSU Extension has the following guidelines in place to ensure that accurate information is provided, especially since bad information or incorrectly performed checks could be potentially fatal.

There are risks that must be understood and managed related to the testing of pressure canner gauges. The choice of whether canner testing is conducted in a county should be made after thoughtful consideration of the needs in the county, the time availability of **trained** Family and Consumer Sciences Extension employees to conduct the testing, and the **willingness of a Family and Consumer Sciences Educator to provide the necessary monitoring**. Presto provides free testing for the cost of shipping for presto canners only. (email: [contact@gopresto.com](mailto:contact@gopresto.com))

**When testing is conducted, educational programming related to food safety or food preservation should also occur.** The actual testing can be viewed as a service for the private good (in many instances) and **cost recovery** guidelines would suggest charging for the service to offset the time/associated costs of providing the service. **Keeping a copy of the testing record is a risk management strategy which needs to be observed.**

If you choose to test canner pressure gauges, these guidelines must be observed.

## GUIDELINES

- 1. Canner testing in counties is optional.** It is not a required activity for a county. Testing of dial gauge pressure canners, and safety checks of canners, does offer an educational opportunity. Grant-funded positions cannot use grant-funded time to conduct pressure canning checks (e.g., FNP and EFNEP grant guidelines do not allow FNP/EFNEP professionals to conduct gauge testing on grant-funded time).
- 2. Master Gauges must be checked each year to ensure accuracy.** If the unit has not been checked, it cannot be used to check clientele's gauges. Replace the gauge or unit at the first sign of inaccuracy. Retain a copy of the test report in your office file.
- 3. Training.** Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Educators and Program Assistants who wish to conduct dial gauge testing **must** complete training before they begin testing gauges. Training will be conducted by Family and Consumer Sciences Educators on an as-needed basis within each EERA. Regional and/or statewide trainings may also be offered. Check with the state Food Preservation Team. They are listed at the end of this document.
- 4. Educating Consumers.** It is important to utilize the one-on-one time with the client during testing for education. Asking questions such as, "What food do you preserve?"

"Have you ever had any problems with food you have preserved?" "Do you have any questions?" and "Would you like any information or fact sheets about preserving food?" are simple ways to provide education in an informal setting. Current fact sheets should be available. There is a resource page posted on the FCS Professionals website that can be used for this purpose. The following links will also be helpful:

- [National Center for Home Food Preservation](#)
- [USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning](#)

5. **Record Keeping.** Ohio State University Extension uses forms that have been adapted from The University of Georgia's National Center for Home Food Preservation. **Forms must be completed fully, signed by the person conducting the testing, copies given to the client, and also kept in an office file.** If there is any question of reading ability, read the results to the client. The forms not only record the gauge testing results, but also prompt the tester to conduct a safety and sanitation check of the entire canner lid/unit. Keeping copies of the inspection forms is one form of protection for you if questions should be asked related to your advice, the date of the testing or the results. Although the form does not request it, writing the name of the person who requested the testing is highly recommended.
6. **Cost recovery.** Charging for this service is recommended. Five dollars appears to be a reasonable fee. Educators have the option to vary the cost or seek sponsors. This fee can be used to cover the cost of a new tester unit, postage for mailing the testing unit, employees time/travel or to have needed forms and fact sheets printed.
7. **Contact information for [Presto](#)** (current 12/15)

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE FOR YOUR PRESTO® PRODUCT Any maintenance required for your Presto® appliance, other than normal household care and cleaning, should be performed by our Factory Service Department or any Presto Authorized Service Station. These Service Stations are equipped to service all Presto appliances and supply genuine Presto parts. Check your yellow pages for Service Stations near you. If there are none, you may send appliances for repair to:

**PRESTO FACTORY SERVICE DEPARTMENT**

Canton Sales and Storage Company

555 Matthews Drive

Canton, MS 39046-0529

For parts or other questions regarding your Presto® appliance, you should write, call or email to:

**CONSUMER SERVICE DEPARTMENT**

National Presto Industries, Inc.

3925 North Hastings Way

Eau Claire, WI 54703-2209

Voice Phone: 1-800-877-0441

Fax Phone: 1-715-839-2242

Email: [contact@GoPresto.com](mailto:contact@GoPresto.com)

Updated November 2013

Food Preservation Team members:

- Melinda Hill, Extension Educator, FCS, Crossroads EERA, [hill.14@osu.edu](mailto:hill.14@osu.edu)
- Kate Shumaker, Extension Educator, FCS, Crossroads EERA, [shumaker.68@osu.edu](mailto:shumaker.68@osu.edu)
- Treva Williams, Extension Educator, FCS, Ohio Valley EERA, [Williams.973@osu.edu](mailto:Williams.973@osu.edu)
- Lisa Barlage, Extension Educator, FCS, Ohio Valley EERA, [barlage.7@osu.edu](mailto:barlage.7@osu.edu)
- Christine Kendle, Extension Educator, FCS, Crossroads, EERA, [kendle.4@osu.edu](mailto:kendle.4@osu.edu)
- Sanja Ilic, State Specialist, Food Safety, [ilic.2@osu.edu](mailto:ilic.2@osu.edu)



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND  
HUMAN ECOLOGY

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES