

# THE HEALTH OF THE PUBLIC IS IN YOUR HANDS



## A FOOD HANDLER'S GUIDE TO FOOD SAFETY



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND QUALITY  
FOOD AND HOUSING DIVISION

2021

## FOREWARD

Thank you for taking this opportunity to learn about how to prepare and serve food that is safe and will not cause illness. By working together, the San Diego County Department of Environmental Health and Quality (DEHQ) and Food Service Professionals, like yourself, can minimize the potential of foodborne illness by improving food employee behaviors and food preparation practices.

This booklet is intended to provide you with a basic understanding of the principles of food safety that you can use both in your home and at work. As you will learn, people can get sick if the food they eat has not been prepared using safe food handling practices.

By following the simple rules outlined in this booklet, you can keep yourself and others healthy. Remember, your job, the success of your employer, and the health of the public is in your hands.

---

County of San Diego  
Department of Environmental Health and Quality  
Food and Housing Division

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b><u>INTRODUCTION</u></b>	1
<b><u>MAJOR CAUSES OF FOODBORNE ILLNESS</u></b>	2
<u>What makes people sick from food?</u>	2
<u>What are germs, toxins, and chemicals?</u>	3
<u>What are the toxins in food that make people sick?</u>	3
<u>How do germs get into food?</u>	3
<u>Can you tell if food is contaminated?</u>	4
<b><u>EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND HYGIENE</u></b>	4
<u>Ways Food Handlers can spread illness</u>	4
<u>How to prevent foodborne illness</u>	4
<u>Why should you wash your hands?</u>	5
<u>When should you wash your hands?</u>	6
<u>How should you wash your hands?</u>	6
<u>How should you use gloves?</u>	7
<u>What are you required to do if you are sick?</u>	7
<u>What is the Person-in-Charge required to do if you are sick?</u>	8
<b><u>PROTECTION FROM CONTAMINATION</u></b>	9
<u>Store food so it is protected from contamination</u>	9
<u>Prepare food so it is protected from contamination</u>	9
<u>Protect food from chemical contamination</u>	10
<u>Protect food from physical hazards</u>	10
<b><u>TEMPERATURE CONTROL</u></b>	11
<u>Potentially hazardous food</u>	11
<u>Required holding temperatures</u>	12
<u>Temperature recording logs and their use</u>	13
<u>How to calibrate your thermometer</u>	13
<u>Adequate cooking of food</u>	14
<u>Proper cooling procedures</u>	15
<u>Safe thawing of food</u>	16
<u>Proper reheating of food</u>	16
<b><u>CONSUMER ADVISORIES</u></b>	17
<u>Consumer advisories</u>	17
<u>Major allergens</u>	17
<b><u>APPROVED FOOD SOURCES</u></b>	19
<u>Food served or sold must be from approved sources</u>	19
<u>Shellfish must be from safe sources and handled safely</u>	20
<b><u>EQUIPMENT AND UTENSILS</u></b>	20
<u>Why is it important to wash dishes and utensils?</u>	20
<u>Steps in washing dishes and utensils by hand</u>	20
<u>Steps in washing dishes and utensils by machine</u>	21
<u>Utensil use and storage</u>	22
<u>What else needs to be kept clean?</u>	22
<u>Use wiping cloths properly</u>	23

**PEST CONTROL**

**23**

What can you do to control pests?

**23**

**GARBAGE AND REFUSE**

**25**

How often should trash be taken out?

**25**

**SIGNS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS**

**25**

Required signs must be posted

**25**

Inspection reports

**25**



## INTRODUCTION

We all need food to stay alive and healthy. However, food can also make us sick if it is not prepared and served properly. You, as a food handler, play an important role in making sure people do not get sick from the foods and drinks you prepare and serve.

To prevent people from becoming ill from the food they eat, the County of San Diego requires all food handlers who work in food facilities such as restaurants, bakeries, mobile food facilities (vending) and grocery stores to receive food safety training and pass a test every three years.

### **A. Who Must Receive Training?**

Food handlers are required to receive food safety training. A food handler is an employee of a food facility who is involved in the preparation, storage, service or handling of food products. Anyone who prepares food or who may come in contact with food products, food utensils or equipment is a food handler.

***No person shall be engaged in food handling unless he or she falls in one of these categories:***

1. Has a valid Food Handler Training Card,
2. Is working in an establishment under the supervision of a certified Food Safety Manager and has taken and passed an in-house exam approved by the County of San Diego, or
3. Is an owner or employee who has successfully passed an approved and accredited food safety certification examination, also called a Food Safety Manager Certificate.

San Diego County Code requires that if your job/occupation (e.g., a waiter, waitress, bartender, chef, dishwasher, meat cutter, deli or salad bar worker, etc.) requires you to handle food or dishes, you must receive food safety training.

## ***Why do I, as a food handler, require special training?***

Because if you do not understand and do not follow the rules of food safety, you can make yourself and your customers sick.

This booklet was written for you, the food handler. It contains information to help you keep the public healthy and to help you keep your job. This booklet was designed to help you learn the simple rules of food safety. You should use this information at work and at home.

For more information, visit: [www.sdcountyfoodhandlers.org](http://www.sdcountyfoodhandlers.org).

### **MAJOR CAUSES OF FOODBORNE ILLNESS**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have identified the following food safety risk factors as the major causes of foodborne illnesses:

1. Poor personal hygiene
2. Improper food holding temperatures
3. Improper cooking temperatures
4. Contaminated equipment
5. Foods from unsafe sources

It is very important to control these risks at all times so food can be safe!

#### **A. What makes people sick from food?**

Food can make people sick because of several types of germs, also known as pathogens. These germs include viruses, protozoa, parasites and bacteria. For example, Hepatitis A is an illness caused by a virus. If food handlers do not wash their hands after using the toilet, they can contaminate food with the Hepatitis A virus. To prevent or stop the spread of Hepatitis A and many other disease-causing germs, food handlers must properly wash their hands after using the toilet.

## B. What are germs, toxins and chemicals?

- **Germs (Pathogens)** are very small organisms (viruses, bacteria, prion and protozoans) that when consumed, can make you sick. You need a microscope to see these tiny organisms and they are almost everywhere.
- **Toxins** are poisons produced by bacteria. Toxins are not living organisms and are hard to destroy. It's important to destroy bacteria before they make toxins.
- **Chemicals** are substances that can be dangerous if eaten. They can get into food by accident. Chemicals often found in kitchens are cleansers, bleaches, sanitizing agents and insecticides.

## C. What are the toxins in food that make people sick?

Toxins are poisons made by bacteria. If you keep bacteria out of food, you will keep toxins out too. Since some food already has bacteria in it, you must keep the bacteria from growing and making toxins. To prevent bacteria from growing, always keep food at safe temperatures by keeping cold food cold (41°F or below), and hot food hot (135°F or higher). More information can be found in the "[Temperature Control](#)" section.

## D. How do germs get into food?

- Some foods contain germs naturally. High food temperatures will kill most of these germs. Killing germs is one of the reasons we thoroughly cook meat, fish, chicken and eggs. If foods are heated to high enough temperatures, the germs will be killed and illness is prevented.
- **Cross Contamination.** Food can be contaminated by dirty objects. Food can get germs transferred on from objects such as a dirty knife or cutting board, or from hands that have not been properly washed and may still have germs on them. When clean food is touched by a dirty object or dirty hands, the clean food becomes contaminated.

- Food Handlers are the #1 cause of the spread of germs to food. Food handlers must wash their hands whenever they might be contaminated. Germs can also be spread by people coughing and sneezing onto food, unclean kitchen utensils, cutting boards and countertops, and pests such as cockroaches, flies, rats and mice. Remember, germs can only be seen under a microscope!
- Raw whole fruits and vegetables must be washed. Raw whole fruits and vegetables must be washed before they are prepared or served in order to get rid of the germs and the chemicals on them.

### **E. Can you tell if food is contaminated?**

You cannot always tell that food is contaminated because some contaminated food may not look, smell or taste bad. Sometimes germs will make food smell bad, letting you know the food must be thrown out. However, other germs do not always make the food spoil and they do not have a bad smell.

## **EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND HYGIENE**

### **A. Ways Food Handlers Can Spread Disease**

- Not washing hands
- Skin lesions
- Nasal discharge or respiratory illness (sneezes/coughs)
- Working with food or utensils while ill with diarrhea, fever, vomiting or stomach cramps
- Poor personal hygiene

### **B. How to Prevent Foodborne Illness**

- Wash your hands before you begin working and whenever they might be contaminated. Be sure to wash your hands after coughing, sneezing, touching raw meat or poultry, and especially after using the toilet.

- Do not wear jewelry on hands and arms (other than a plain ring, such as a wedding band) when handling food or utensils.
- Minimize touching food with your bare hands, particularly ready-to-eat food that will not be cooked or has already been cooked. Use clean single-use, non-latex, disposable plastic gloves or clean kitchen utensils to mix, prepare and serve ready-to-eat food.
- If you are sick with diarrhea and/or vomiting, fever or stomach cramps, **DO NOT WORK WITH FOOD OR UTENSILS!** You can pass your germs onto the customer through the food or utensils you handle.
- If you have an open cut, wound or sore on your hands or arms, you should not work with food. When you are allowed to return to work, cover the wound with a water-proof bandage and wear single-use, non-latex, disposable plastic gloves.
- Keep your clothes clean. Change your uniform and apron often.
- Always restrain your hair with a covering such as a hair net or cap. Long beards should also be restrained to keep loose hairs and sweat out of food.
- Use clean wiping rags and properly store them in a sanitizer solution when not in use.

### C. Why should you wash your hands?



Look at your hands, do they look clean? Just because they look clean does not mean they are clean. Hands can have thousands of germs on them that you cannot see. Hands spread germs from one place to another. Hands that are not thoroughly washed are one of the main reasons why people get sick from the food they eat. But you can prevent this by washing your hands often!

## D. When should you wash your hands?

- **After using the toilet.** Human wastes (urine and feces) can spread many disease-causing germs including Hepatitis, Salmonella, Shigella, Norovirus, Campylobacter and Clostridium perfringens.
- **After all breaks and before going back to work.**
- **After sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose.** There are many germs in your nose and throat that can get onto your hands. The bacteria can produce toxins that are difficult to kill.
- **After handling uncooked or raw food.** Raw products, such as raw meats, contain germs. If you touch them, your hands will be contaminated and can spread the germs to whatever you touch next.
- **After eating or smoking.** Germs that are always in the saliva in your mouth can get onto your hands when you eat or smoke.
- **After scratching or touching your body,** particularly infected sores, boils and pimples. Bacteria from infected sores and boils can produce toxins that are hard to kill.
- **After combing or handling your hair.** Even clean hair can carry bacteria.
- **After touching dirty objects,** such as customers' used dishes and dirty equipment.
- **After changing tasks,** such as carrying out the trash, mopping or sweeping the floor.
- **After any possible hand contamination.**

## E. How should you wash your hands?

1. Use warm water and soap from a dispenser (not bar soap).
2. Scrub your hands and forearms for at least 10-15 seconds (about as long as it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice).
3. Don't forget to scrub between your fingers and under your fingernails.
4. Rinse your hands in warm, running water.

5. Dry your hands with a single-use towel (or air dry).
6. Keep all handwashing facilities stocked with soap in a dispenser and paper towels (or hand dryer). Ensure that each sink has warm water of at least 100°F, but not to exceed 108°F if at a mixed water faucet.
7. Hand sanitizers, if used, should only be applied to hands after they are properly washed.



## F. How should you use gloves?

The California Retail Food Code (CALCODE) requires that you minimize bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods. This means you must use a utensil or gloves when handling ready-to-eat foods. If you use gloves:

- Always wash your hands before putting on your gloves.
- Change gloves as often as you would wash your hands so you don't contaminate food, such as after handling raw meat or after sneezing. Remove gloves prior to using toilet. And remember to wash your hands before putting on a new pair of gloves.
- Always wear a new, clean pair of gloves before handling ready-to-eat foods.

## G. What are you required to do if you are sick?

If you are sick, CALCODE requires that you:

- **Notify the Person-In-Charge (PIC)** if you have been diagnosed with the following Gastrointestinal Illnesses: Salmonella, Hepatitis A, Shigella, Enterohemorrhagic or shiga toxin producing E. coli, Norovirus or Entamoeba histolytica. Remember, you should not work with food or utensils if you

are sick with gastrointestinal illnesses, especially if you experience diarrhea and/or abdominal cramps, fever and/or vomiting.

- **Notify the Person-In-Charge** if you have a lesion or wound that is open or draining on your hands, wrists or arms. Remember, all lesions and wounds in these areas must be protected with an impermeable cover (such as a finger cot or stall) and covered with a glove if the lesion is on the hands. Lesions on other parts of the body should be covered by a dry, durable, tight- fitting bandage.

## **H. What is the Person-In-Charge required to do if you are sick?**

A Person-in-Charge must be at the facility during all hours of operation. If you are sick, CALCODE requires that the Person-in-Charge do the following:

- **Report to the Department of Environmental Health and Quality** if you are diagnosed with Salmonella, Hepatitis A, Shigella, Enterohemorrhagic or shiga toxin producing E.coli, Norovirus or Entamoeba by calling (858) 505-6814.
- **Report to the Department of Environmental Health and Quality** if two or more employees are sick with acute gastrointestinal illness by calling (858) 505-6814. Acute gastrointestinal illness is diarrhea, either alone or with vomiting, fever, or abdominal cramps. It can also be two other gastrointestinal symptoms such as fever or abdominal cramps.
- **Exclude you** from the food facility if you are diagnosed with Salmonella, Enterohemorrhagic or shiga toxin producing, Hepatitis A, Shigella, E. coli, Norovirus or Entamoeba histolytica. *Only the County of San Diego Department of Environmental Health and Quality (DEHQ) or the County Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) can authorize an excluded employee to go back to work.*

- **Restrict you** from working with exposed food, clean equipment, clean linens, clean utensils and unwrapped single-service articles if you are suffering from symptoms of acute gastrointestinal illness or if you are experiencing persistent coughing, sneezing or nasal discharges. *Restrictions can be removed by the Person-in-Charge when you no longer have symptoms of illness.*

## PROTECTION FROM CONTAMINATION

Food must be stored, prepared and served so it is protected from contamination.

### A. Store food so it is protected from contamination

- Ice is often called the "forgotten food". Although it is frozen, ice can still be contaminated with germs. Do not use your hands or drinking glasses to scoop ice. Use only commercial food-grade plastic or metal scoops with handles.
- Do not chill glasses or store any items in ice if that ice will be used in drinks.
- Clean can openers before and after each use and replace or rotate blade as often as necessary.
- Store cooked and ready-to-eat foods above raw foods in the refrigerator.
- Keep foods covered.
- Don't stack uncovered foods on top of each other.
- Never add sulfites to fresh fruits and vegetables or to potentially hazardous foods like meat, fish, poultry or dairy products.

### B. Prepare food so it is protected from contamination

- Wash fruits and vegetables in the food preparation sink prior to use. Be sure to wash, rinse and sanitize the sink between uses, especially after preparing raw meats or produce.

- When preparing raw meats, prevent cross contamination by cleaning and sanitizing cutting boards prior to use with other food items.
- Prepare raw foods separately from cooked foods.



### **C. Protect food from chemical contamination**

Detergents, polishes, caustics, cleaning and drying agents, and other similar products are poisonous to humans. Keep them stored away from food.

- Follow label directions for storing and using chemicals.
- Carefully measure chemicals. Never randomly mix chemicals, especially ammonia and bleach.
- Store chemicals in original containers. Keep them in dry, locked cabinets or areas away from food and food contact surfaces.
- Never use food containers to store chemicals. Never use chemical containers to store food.
- Dispose empty chemical containers as directed by the manufacturer.
- Wash and dry your hands after using chemicals; especially if you are returning to food preparation duties.
- Properly label and store all containers or spray bottles with the name of the contents and hazards.

### **D. Protect food from physical hazards**

Dirt, hair, broken glass, nails, staples, metal fragments (i.e., from shredded scrub pads), glass from unshielded lights, rocks, band-aids and other objects can accidentally enter food. It is important to

make sure food is properly stored and prepared to avoid these hazards.

- Do not store toothpicks or inedible garnishes (like paper umbrellas or plastic herbs) on shelves above food storage or preparation areas.
- Place and maintain protective shields on lights over food storage, produce display and preparation areas.
- Remove staples, nails and similar objects from boxes and crates when food is received to prevent these items from accidentally contaminating the food.

## TEMPERATURE CONTROL

### A. Potentially Hazardous Food

Improper time and temperature control are the most common factors that can contribute to foodborne illnesses. This is because bacteria can grow in foods high in protein and water activity such as meats, seafood, eggs, dairy products, cooked vegetables, and cooked grains such as rice. The potential for rapid bacterial growth in these foods define them as potentially hazardous foods (PHFs).

Potentially hazardous food includes:

- Foods of animal origin that is raw or cooked. Examples include eggs, milk, beef, and chicken.
- Food of plant origin that is cooked. Examples include rice, potatoes, and pasta.
- Raw seed sprouts.
- Cut melons. Examples include watermelon, cantaloupe, and honeydew.
- Cut tomatoes or mixtures with cut tomatoes.
- Garlic-in-oil mixtures.

Potentially hazardous food does not include any of the following:

- A food with a low water activity value of 0.85 or less. Examples include spices, dried dairy products, dried meat products, cereal products, nuts and candies.
- A food with a pH level of 4.6 or below when measured at 75°F. Examples include juices, certain fruits (grapes, lemons, strawberries), honey, and acidified foods.
- An air-cooled, hard-boiled egg with shell intact, or an egg with shell intact that is not hard-boiled but has been pasteurized.
- A food in an unopened, hermetically sealed container that is commercially processed such as canned foods.

## **B. Required holding temperatures**

- Record the temperature of reheated potentially hazardous foods to make sure it reaches an internal temperature of 165°F or above.
- Record cooking temperatures of potentially
- Hot holding temperatures for potentially hazardous foods (PHFs) at steam tables or other hot holding equipment must always be 135°F or higher.
- Cold holding temperatures must always be 41°F or less except salad bars and buffets.
- They can hold potentially hazardous foods between 41°F and 45°F for no more than 12 hours in one day, then after 12 hours the food items must be disposed of.
- Raw eggs in the shell and unopened containers of pasteurized milk and pasteurized milk products can also be stored between 41°F and 45°F.
- Cut tomatoes are considered a potentially hazardous food and must be maintained at 41°F or below.
- Every refrigerator must have an accurate thermometer. Place the thermometer in the warmest part of the refrigerator, which is usually near the door on the top shelf.
- The temperature inside the refrigerator must remain at or below 41°F. Remember, refrigeration slows the growth of

most germs, but cooking to proper temperatures is the only way to kill the germs in food.

### C. Temperature recording logs and their use

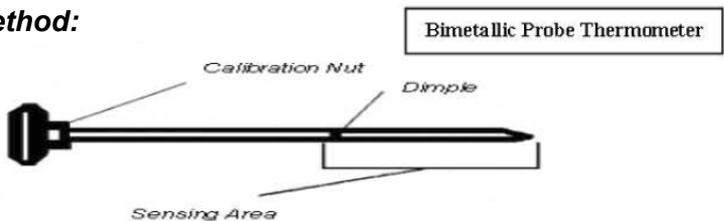
Using temperature recording logs is a way to make sure you are in control of safe food holding and cooking temperatures.

- Record **cold holding** food temperatures every two hours to ensure that cold foods are held at 41°F or less.
- Record **hot holding** food temperatures every two hours to ensure that hot foods are held at or above 135°F.
- Record the temperature of reheated potentially hazardous foods to make sure it reaches an internal temperature of 165°F or above.
- Record **cooking temperatures** of potentially hazardous foods such as meat, poultry, fish and eggs at different times of the day to ensure items are being cooked to the proper temperatures by all cooks.

### D. How to calibrate your thermometer

Calibrate thermometers in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications as often as necessary to ensure their accuracy (i.e., if they are dropped), but not less than once each week. Keep a record log of your thermometer calibrations. If a thermometer does not have specific instructions for calibration, the following methods may be used.

#### ***Ice Point Method:***



1. Fill a large container with ice, preferably crushed if you have it. Add clean tap water until the container is full. Stir ice water mixture.
2. Put the thermometer probe into the ice water so the sensing area, usually about an inch up on a bimetallic thermometer, is completely submerged. Don't let the probe touch the sides or bottom of the container. Wait 30 seconds, or until temperature indicator stops moving.
3. On bimetallics, hold the calibration nut on the underside of the dial head securely with a wrench, or the tool attached to the sheath and rotate the dial head until the thermometer reads 32°F (0°C).

### ***Boiling Point Method:***

1. Fill a deep pan with clean water and bring it to a boil.
2. Put the thermometer probe into the boiling water so that the sensing area is completely submerged.
3. On bimetallic thermometers, hold the calibration nut on the underside of the dial head securely with a wrench or tool attached to the sheath and rotate the dial head until the thermometer reads 212°F (100°C) or the appropriate boiling point for your elevation.

### **E. Adequate cooking of food**

- Cooking potentially hazardous foods to the required temperatures is the only way to kill germs in food.
- You must use a probe thermometer to check internal temperatures. A thermocouple thermometer is best used to measure the internal temperature of hamburger patties. Thermometer probes should also be cleaned and sanitized between uses. Digital thermometers can also be used.

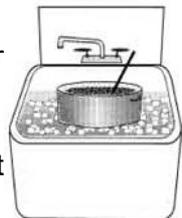
State mandated internal cooking temperatures are:

Food Item	Cooking Temperature
Fruits and vegetables cooked for hot holding	135°F
Shell eggs cooked for immediate service; fish; single pieces of meat	145°F for 15 secs
Comminuted meat; injected meats; raw eggs for later service	155°F for 15 secs
Poultry; comminuted poultry; stuffed items (fish, meat, poultry, pasta); stuffing containing fish; meat; poultry; ratites)	165°F for 15 secs
Roasts (beef, pork, and ham)	130°F for 112 minutes or as specified in the California Retail Food Code

It is important to know that the required temperature **is not** the oven, pan or grill temperature, it is the internal temperature of the food after it is cooked and taken off the cooking surface.

## F. Proper cooling procedures

- After heating, cooking or hot holding, potentially hazardous foods must be rapidly cooled from 135°F to 41°F or below within six (6) hours. During this time the decrease in temperature from 135°F to 70°F shall occur within two (2) hours.
- Large portions of food must be divided into smaller containers to ensure rapid cooling.
- Proper rapid cooling methods include:
  1. Placing the food in shallow pans
  2. Separating the food into smaller or thinner portions
  3. Using rapid cooling equipment
  4. Using containers that facilitate heat transfer
  5. Adding ice as an ingredient
  6. Using ice paddles



7. Inserting containers in an ice bath and stirring frequently
- Food containers used for cooling should be kept loosely covered or uncovered if protected from overhead contamination during the cooling process.

## G. Safe food thawing of food

There are four approved methods for thawing frozen food:

1. In the refrigerator
2. Completely submerged under running water at a water temperature of 70°F or below for no more than two hours
3. In the microwave
4. While cooking

## H. Proper reheating of food

To reheat potentially hazardous foods (PHFs) for hot holding:

- Rapidly reheat food using cooking equipment or the microwave to an internal temperature of 165°F. **Never reheat food in the steam table!** A steam table is a hot-holding equipment and is meant to keep foods hotter than 135°F. Steam tables cannot rapidly reheat and are not to be used as reheating equipment.
- If food is reheated in a microwave, reheat all parts of the food to an internal temperature of 165°F and rotate or stir the food, keep it covered and allow it to stay covered for two minutes after reheating to seal in the heat.
- Commercially processed ready-to-eat PHF, like canned vegetables, must be reheated to an internal temperature of 135°F.
- Cooked and refrigerated food that is prepared for immediate service can be served at any temperature.

## CONSUMER ADVISORY

### A. Consumer Advisory

If a food facility serves raw or undercooked beef, pork, poultry, lamb, fish, seafood, shellfish, eggs, or foods containing raw or undercooked eggs (i.e. Caesar Salad Dressing or Hollandaise Sauce), an advisory in writing has to be given to the customer using brochures, deli case or menu advisories, label statements, table tents, placards, or other effective written means. The advisory must include both a “disclosure” and “reminder”.



- A “disclosure” is a written statement that “discloses,” or informs the customer the menu items served raw or undercooked. For example:
  - **Raw-egg Caesar salad** – *the menu states the item is raw or undercooked*
  - **\*Caesar salad** – *Listing the menu item with asterisk combined with the disclosure below: \*These items are served raw or undercooked or may contain raw or undercooked ingredients*
- A “reminder” advises customers of the health risks associated with consuming raw or undercooked products. One of these statements should be displayed:
  - Consuming raw or undercooking meat, poultry, seafood, shellfish, or eggs may increase your risk of foodborne illness, especially if you have certain medical conditions.
  - Written information regarding the safety of these food items is available upon request.

### B. Major Allergens

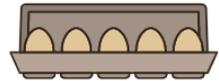
Understanding food allergens is key in making sure your customers have a safe dining experience. If a customer notifies you of a certain

allergen, let staff know that are preparing and handling that food to ensure they take proper steps:

- Always wash hands thoroughly before and after handling allergens.
- Handle allergens as though they will contaminate any surface or food they touch (i.e. use new utensils and equipment, clean and sanitize affected surfaces).

Major food allergens mean all of the following:

- Milk
- Eggs
- Fish, including, but not limited to, bass, flounder, and cod
- Crustacean shellfish, including, but not limited to, crab, lobster, and shrimp
- Tree nuts, including, but not limited to, almonds, pecans, and walnuts
- Wheat
- Peanuts
- Soybeans
- A food ingredient that contains protein derived from a food listed above



Understand the common symptoms of an allergic reaction. These include:

- Sneezing, coughing
- Itching around face or neck
- Wheezing, difficulty breathing
- Dizziness
- Unconsciousness
- Vomiting, Diarrhea, Cramping
- Swelling of Face, Throat, Tongue or Lips
- Itching or Tingling in Mouth
- Hives
- Coma or Death

## Call 911 if a customer is experiencing a severe allergic reaction

### APPROVED FOOD SOURCES

#### A. Food served or sold at a food facility must be from an approved source

- "Approved Source" means acceptable to the Department of Environmental Health and Quality and is permitted, licensed or registered with a food regulatory agency (i.e., USDA, FDA or State of California).
- Each food facility operator must be able to show that the processor or supplier they are using is "approved". Ask to see a copy of your suppliers health permit or their last inspection report.
- Food cannot be prepared or stored in a private home unless permitted as a Cottage Food Operation in the County of San Diego.
- Raw or processed meat and poultry must have a USDA stamp of approval.
- Cheese must be purchased from a licensed distributor. The label must have the manufacturer name, address, processing plant number, ingredients, and expiration date.
- Do not buy food from a door to door vendor because their source may be unsafe.
- Keep a list of where food products are purchased and maintain copies of invoices and receipts for tracking all purchases.
- Be aware of delivery conditions and product quality. Check for tampering, discoloration, pinholes, unusual packages, contamination, vermin and whether potentially hazardous foods are transported at safe temperatures.
- Packaged foods must be labeled.



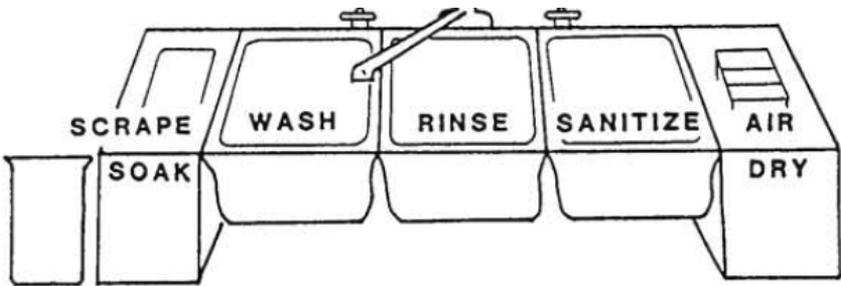
## B. Shellfish (i.e., oysters, mussels, clams) must be from safe sources and handled safely

- Tags for shellfish must be kept with the container they are stored in until the container is empty. The tags also have to be kept on file at the facility for at least 90 days.
- Between the months of April 1 to October 31: Raw Gulf Coast Oysters can't be served or sold without a copy of a certificate that says they have been properly treated.
- Between the months of November 1 to March 31: If raw Gulf Coast Oysters are served or sold, warning signs have to be posted for untreated Gulf Coast Oysters.

## EQUIPMENT AND UTENSILS

### A. Why is it important to properly wash and sanitize dishes and utensils?

Washing gets dishes and utensils clean. Sanitizing dishes and utensils kills germs that cause disease.



### B. Steps to wash dishes and multiuse utensils by hand

To properly wash dishes and utensils by hand, use a three-compartment sink and follow these steps:

1. Scrape and soak dirty equipment, including dishes and utensils, to remove food particles.

2. Wash dishes and utensils in the first sink in hot, soapy water. Change water and detergent often.
3. Rinse in the second sink in clear, hot water to remove the soapy detergent. If detergent is left on the dishes, the sanitizer will not work.
4. Sanitize in the third sink to kill disease-causing germs. Dishes and utensils can be sanitized by any of the following:
  - Contact with 171°F water for 30 seconds
  - Contact with a warm water solution of 100 parts per million (ppm) chlorine for 30 seconds
  - Contact with a warm water solution of 200 ppm quaternary ammonium for 60 seconds
  - Contact with a warm water solution of 25 ppm iodine for 60 seconds

Follow manufacturers specifications. Use chemical test strips often to make sure the sanitizer level is correct.

5. Air dry dishes and utensils. Do not dry with towels.

Read instructions on the labels of sanitizer containers to determine the right water temperature and amount of sanitizer to be added to a full sink of water.

### **C. Steps to washing dishes and utensils by machine**

1. Scrape dishes and soak utensils.
2. Rack dishes so they do not touch and so that water can reach every surface. This helps clean them and keeps them from breaking and chipping.
3. Make sure the detergent, rinse agent and sanitizer dispensers are filled and operating correctly.
4. Run the racks through a full machine cycle.
5. Let the dishes and utensils air dry. Do not dry them with towels.
6. At the end of the day, clean the dishwashing machine. Be sure to clean the spray holes and traps to remove food particles.
7. Regularly check sanitizer level using the right chemical test strips.

## **D. Utensil storage and use**

- Store dishes in a protected area. Place utensils so they can be picked up by the handles. Store cups and glasses upside-down on a clean surface, so when they are picked up, you never touch the rim or inside of the glass.
- Broken, chipped or cracked dishes are unacceptable and are never to be used. Safely dispose of all broken items in designated trash receptacles.
- Keep hands away from rims of glassware and interior of plates.

## **E. What else needs to be kept clean?**

- Thoroughly clean and sanitize all equipment, countertops, cutting boards, meat slicers and work areas used to prepare or serve food.
- Take apart, clean, and sanitize meat grinders at least every four (4) hours and between processing different types of food. Clean daily if the meat grinder is in a refrigerated room.
- Take apart deli slicers to clean and sanitize at least every four (4) hours or between processing raw food (like raw beef or poultry) and ready-to-eat foods (like deli meats and cheese).
- Clean beneath, behind, above and around all equipment and customer tables.
- Thoroughly clean restrooms daily. Clean floors, walls, sinks and faucet handles, doors and door- knobs, mirrors, toilets and urinals.
- Be sure that single-use towels, liquid or powdered soap and toilet paper are kept in their wall-mounted dispensers, at all times, and that hand washing signs are prominently posted.
- Maintain floors, walls and ceilings clean and in good repair.
- Clean trash containers, mops and wiping cloths on a regular basis.
- Post a daily cleaning schedule and follow it.

## F. Use wiping cloths properly

- **Dry wiping cloths:** Clean linens must be free from food debris and visible soil. They are to be used for a single purpose (i.e., wiping tables, seats or tableware) or used once and laundered.
- **Wet wiping cloths:** Clean linens must be free of food debris and visible soil. They can be used repeatedly for a single purpose if kept in sanitizing solutions as specified on [page 25](#).
- Wiping cloths used for raw animal products must be kept separate from cloths used for other purposes.
- Chemical test strips must be available and used to help ensure proper sanitizer solutions are being maintained. Solution requirements are listed on [page 25](#).
- Whenever a sanitizing solution becomes cloudy or heavily permeated with food particles and juices, or no longer meets the required sanitizing concentration levels, it must be replaced.

## PEST CONTROL

### A. What can you do to control cockroaches, flies, mice and rats?

#### 1. Starve them out

- Keep the establishment clean.
- Keep lids sealed tightly on food containers.
- Clean the inside and outside of all trash and garbage containers on a regular basis.
- Be sure trash and garbage containers outside the building are tightly closed. Maintain a clean area surrounding the containers.
- Maintain a garbage pickup schedule that meets your waste demands. You do not want an overflow of trash.

## 2. Keep them out

- Repair any cracks or holes in walls, floors or ceilings.
- Seal holes around drains and pipes.
- Use floor sink screens to keep drains clear and prevent entry by vermin through the sewer and pipes.
- Make sure doors, windows and screens shut tightly.
- Repair broken screens.
- Inspect all boxes and other containers delivered to the store or restaurant. Cockroaches love to hide in paper and cardboard boxes. Refuse any deliveries with signs of vermin.



## 3. Eliminate: Destroy their hiding places

- Repair Any loose wallboard or paneling
- Do not use paper or cardboard to line shelves.
- Clean the kitchen and storage areas regularly, particularly dark, warm places where cockroaches love to hide.



## 4. Keep them from multiplying

- Keep trash cans clean and covered.
- Flies are attracted to uncovered trash cans, where they breed and multiply.
- A fly can carry as many as six million germs on it.
- Flies vomit on food to make it soft and then suck it up.



Chemicals used to kill pests can make people sick. Applying chemicals near dishes and food is dangerous. Chemicals used must say on the label that they are approved for use in a food preparation area of a commercial kitchen and directions on the label must be closely followed.

Chemicals must also be stored in their original container in a cabinet away from food and the food preparation area.

**If your facility has an infestation of pests, please contact a pest control professional to help eliminate the problem.**

## GARBAGE AND REFUSE

### A. How often should trash be taken out?

- Food wastes and all other garbage should be thrown away at least once a day.
- Place garbage in strong plastic bags and place them in an outside container with a tight-fitting lid.
- Refuse containers must be kept clean, not leak and be tightly covered to keep out pests.
- Garbage and refuse should be picked up as often as necessary to prevent the bin from overflowing, but not less than once per week.



## SIGNS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

### A. Required signs must be posted

- Grade cards for food facilities that prepare food must be posted during all hours of operation.
- Hand washing signs must be posted at all hand wash sinks in toilet rooms and food preparation areas.
- Food facilities constructed after January 1, 2004 that prepare food for consumption on-site have to provide toilet rooms for customers. Facilities constructed before that time that don't provide toilet rooms for customers have to post a sign stating that toilet rooms are not available.

### B. Inspection reports

- If requested by an inspector or customer, a copy of the last inspection report must be readily available for review.

**Remember:**

The public depends on you, the food handler, to protect the food they eat. The most important things you can do are:

- Wash your hands before you prepare, serve or store food.
- Don't handle foods or utensils when you are sick.
- Keep cold food at or below 41°F and hot food at or above 135°F.
- Thoroughly cook meats, poultry, fish and eggs.
- Keep food contact surfaces clean and sanitized.
- Buy food from an approved, safe food source.

**Take your job seriously, we all depend on you!**



# CONTACTS

DEHQ website	<a href="http://www.sdcdehq.org">www.sdcdehq.org</a>
Complaints	(858) 505-6903
Duty Specialist	(858) 505-6900
Fax	(858) 999-8920
Foodborne Illness	(858) 505-6814
Permit Information	(858) 505-6666
Plan Check Information	(858) 505-6660



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND QUALITY  
FOOD AND HOUSING DIVISION

P.O. BOX 129261  
SAN DIEGO, CA 92112-9261

DEH: FH-838 (Rev. 01/2021)