

Food Handler Cards Requirements

SB 602 & SB 303



Department of Resource Management Environmental Health Services Division

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Who is a food handler?



- Defined in Cal. Health and Safety Code (CalCode), section 113790.

- A person who:
 - Is involved in the preparation, storage, or service of food; and
 - Does not have a valid food protection Manager food safety certificate.
 - 8 hour course training



A food handler includes:

most restaurant employees, such as:

- wait staff,
- chefs,
- head cooks,
- cooks,
- bussers,
- bartenders,
- host/hostesses that handle food,
- beverage pourers (including alcoholic beverage pourers),
- supervisory personnel, such as the general manager or managers (unless they are certified under the existing food managers certification program).

The law applies to both salaried and hourly food handlers; and to full and part time staff.



Exemptions



Does not apply to food handlers at:

- Certified farmers' markets
- Commissaries
- Grocery stores, including convenience stores (except separately owned food facilities inside the store)
- Licensed health care facilities
- Mobile support units
- School cafeterias
- Restricted food service facilities (Bed & Breakfast; Agricultural Home Stays)
- Pharmacies
- Facilities providing in-house food safety training, if that training is approved for use in another state that has adopted FDA Model Food Code Requirements (Florida only)
- Facilities subject to a collective bargaining agreement with their employees
- Food facilities subject to local food handler program requirement prior to January 1, 2009 (Riverside, San Bernardino and San Diego counties)
- Temporary food facilities
- Volunteer

When must employees obtain a Food Handler Card?



- Food handlers hired prior to July 1, 2011, must obtain a food handler card on or before July 1, 2011.
- Food handlers hired after July 1, 2011, have 30 days to obtain a food handlers card.
- **In summary, the law requires all currently employed food handlers to have a food handler card, or if a newly hired employee, to obtain within 30 days of hire.**

How are Food Handler Cards obtained?



- Taking a course. The course must be no more than 2½ hours, and
- Passing a test on food safety issues with a score of at least 70%. The test must have at least 40 questions on the following topics:
 - General food-borne illness information;
 - Time and temperature control required for food safety;
 - Personal hygiene;
 - Methods of preventing food contamination;
 - Procedures for cleaning and sanitizing equipment and utensils;
 - Problems and potential solutions associated with temperature control, preventing cross, contamination, housekeeping and maintenance.
- On-line courses are available (\$15)



Who are approved course/test providers?

Under existing state law (SB 602), only organizations accredited to issue Food Protection Manager Certification can offer valid Food Handler Cards.

Currently, there are only three such organizations.

Approved course/test providers under existing law (SB 602)

- National Registry of Food Safety Professionals - online training at www.nrfsp.com, course is at www.hrtsonline.net



- National Restaurant Association - online training at www.FoodHandlerUSA.com

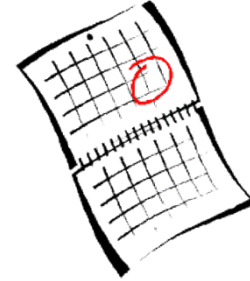


- Prometric - online training at www.Prometric.com/foodsafety



How long and where is food handler card valid?

- Food Handler Card is valid for three years from date of issue.



- Valid everywhere in California- except San Diego, San Bernardino and Riverside.



Who is responsible for getting a Food Handler Card?

- The **employee** is responsible for taking the food handler course and test. The food handler card belongs to the employee and may be used at any food facility, as long as it is valid.
- Food facility operators are not required to pay for or offer the food handlers card course to their employees.

What must food facility operators do?



- Operators must maintain records showing that each food handler they employ has a valid food handler's card (for example, copies of each employee's food handler card)
- If requested, these records must be made available at the time of inspection.

Potential changes on the horizon



○ SB 303

- Currently passed by state legislature and sent to Governor for signature (8/22/2011).
- Between adoption and January 1, 2012, besides current test providers, will allow course/test to be provided by organizations meeting ANSI ASTM 2659 standard.
 - This is a recognized accreditation method for course/test providers and their programs.
 - Should increase the number of providers that can give course/test and issue food handler cards.



Potential changes on the horizon.



- **SB 303** (continued)
 - Beginning January 1, 2012, requires course/test to be provided **ONLY** by organizations meeting ANSI ASTM 2659 standard.
 - No change to any of the other requirements

Environmental Health action regarding Food Handler card requirement.



**From July 2, 2011 through
December 31, 2011:**

We are educating operators about the requirement only – No Enforcement.

- Chamber of Commerce presentations
- Education during routine inspections
- Document that information was provided to the operator on the inspection report

Environmental Health action regarding Food Handler card requirement.



Beginning January 1, 2012:

- EH staff may request to review records showing that employees have valid food handler cards during their inspections.
- Minor violation may be issued to food facility operator if documentation of valid food handler card for all food handlers cannot be provided. A time frame for correction will be given. Reinspection fees may apply for continued non-compliance.
- Subject to change pending outcome of proposed legislation (SB 303).





Four options currently available:

- Obtain food handler cards from the National Registry of Food Safety Professionals (www.nrfsp.com, course is at www.hrtsonline.net)
- Obtain food handler cards from ServSafe (www.FoodHandlerUSA.com)
- Obtain food handler cards from Prometric (www.Prometric.com/foodsafety)
- Get employees food safety manager certified



Questions & Additional Info

- www.ccdeh.com – California Conference of Directors of Environmental Health
- www.crfsc.org – California Retail Food Safety Coalition
- www.calrest.org – California Restaurant Association
- www.solanocounty.com – Solano County Department of Resource Management, Environmental Health Services Division website, or call us at 707-784-6765.

