

Guide to Assist Food Service Establishments in Preventing Contamination from Bare Hands

This guide is provided by the Oklahoma State Department of Health for educational purposes to assist food service establishments in complying with the standards for preventing contamination from food employees' hands.

Ready-to-eat Food includes:

- Any food item which does not need to be cooked.
- Any food item that has already been cooked (e.g., a cooked ground meat patty).
- Fruits and vegetables, whether raw or cooked.
- Time/Temperature Control for Safety food that has been cooked and cooled.
- Plant food that does not require further washing and processing.
- Plant food from which rinds, husks or peels have been removed.
- Bakery items for which further cooking is not required.
- Dry fermented sausages, salt cured meats and poultry, dried meat and poultry products (e.g., jerky).
- Thermally processed low-acid foods packaged in hermetically sealed containers.

Other considerations

- Food employees may not contact ready-to-eat foods with bare hands when serving:
 - preschool children
 - the elderly
 - those in a facility such as a child care center, hospital or nursing home

- Bare hands contact with foods that are NOT ready to eat is allowable. However, food employees should minimize bare hand and arm contact with exposed food that is not in ready-to-eat form. For example, employees should minimize bare hand contact with raw poultry before the cooking process.

Responsibilities of the Food Service Establishment for Preventing Contamination from Bare Hands

Establishment Name: _____

Address: _____

If a food service establishment allows food employees to contact exposed, ready-to-eat food with their bare hands, the establishment must develop and maintain a written employee health policy that includes, at a minimum, requirements for the following documentation:

1. Food employees acknowledge that they have received training in:
 - Risks of contacting specific ready-to-eat foods
 - Proper handwashing
 - When to wash hands
 - Where to wash hands
 - Proper fingernail maintenance
 - Prohibition of jewelry
 - Good hygienic practices

2. Food employees and conditional employees acknowledge they are informed to report certain health symptoms and diseases.

3. Food employees and conditional employees acknowledge their responsibility to report health symptoms and diseases.

4. The person in charge acknowledges responsibility to:
 - report certain infections to the Oklahoma State Department of Health.
 - prohibit a conditional employee from becoming a food employee if the employee has certain symptoms or diagnosis, or exposures to certain diseases, as provided in OAC 310:257-3-4.
 - exclude or restrict certain food employees as required in 310:257-3-4.

(PLEASE CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOX)

This food service establishment allows employees to contact exposed, ready-to-eat food with their bare hands and has a written employee health policy that complies with the requirements listed above.

Location of policy: _____

Name of Person Completing this Form (please print) _____ Contact Number: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Responsibilities of the Food Service Employee for Preventing Contamination from Bare Hands

Food employees who contact ready-to-eat foods with bare hands are required to acknowledge that they received training in good practices that are intended to reduce the risks of transmitting diseases and infections to the public.

Ready-to-eat Food includes:

- Any food item which does not need to be cooked.
- Any food item that has already been cooked (e.g., a cooked ground meat patty).
- Fruits and vegetables, whether raw or cooked.
- Time/Temperature Control for Safety food that has been cooked and cooled.
- Plant food that does not require further washing and processing.
- Plant food from which rinds, husks or peels have been removed.
- Bakery items for which further cooking is not required.
- Dry fermented sausages, salt cured meats and poultry, dried meat and poultry products (e.g., jerky).
- Thermally processed low-acid foods packaged in hermetically sealed containers.

Risks associated with contacting ready-to-eat-foods with bare hands. Infected food employees are the source of contamination in more than two-thirds of foodborne disease outbreaks reported in the United States. Most outbreaks involve infected employees who touch their face, mouth or private areas and then handle food (fecal-oral transmission). Likewise, exposed cuts, burns, or boils can result in food contamination. Three factors help in a big way in preventing foodborne illness transmitted through the fecal-oral route, these include exclusion/ limitations of ill food workers, proper handwashing, and no bare hand (skin) contact with ready-to-eat foods. To provide further safety, when working with ready-to-eat food use suitable utensils such as spatulas, tongs, deli papers, or single use gloves.

To minimize the risk of contaminating ready-to-eat foods with bare hands, food employees must take the following precautions.

1. Wash hands properly.

- Wet hands with soap and warm water.
- Rub hands vigorously for 20 seconds, getting under fingernails and between fingers.
- Rinse under warm running water.
- Dry hands on your own clean towel.
- Turn off water with paper towel and throw towel away.

2. Wash hands often.

- Before placing gloves on hands.
- After touching human body parts.
- After using the restroom, coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose, eating, using tobacco, or drinking.
- Before and during food preparation when switching between raw food and ready-to-eat foods or as often as necessary to remove contamination and to prevent cross-contamination.
- After engaging in any activity that contaminates the hands (taking out garbage, wiping counters or tables, handling chemicals, picking up dropped items, etc.).

3. Wash hands only in a hand sink.

4. Maintain short clean fingernails.

- No fingernail polish or artificial nails allowed when working with exposed foods.

5. Do not wear jewelry on arms and hands.

- A plain wedding band is allowed.

6. Follow good hygienic practices.

- Wear clean clothes.
- No eating, drinking, or tobacco in food prep areas.
- Don't work in the kitchen if you have a runny nose, sneezing, or coughing.
- Wear hair restraints.

Employee Acknowledgement

My signature below indicates I have received training in the following:

- Risks of contacting specific ready-to-eat foods.
- Proper handwashing.
- When to wash hands.
- Where to wash hands.
- Proper fingernail maintenance.
- Prohibition of jewelry.
- Good hygienic practices.

Employee Name (please print) _____ Contact Number: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

My signature below indicates I have been informed and am aware of my responsibility to report any of the following:

- Symptoms of vomiting, diarrhea, jaundice, or a sore throat with fever.
- A lesion containing pus such as a boil or infected wound that is open or draining.
- A diagnosis of Norovirus, Hepatitis A virus, Shigella species, Enterohemorrhagic or Shiga toxin-producing Escherichia coli, or Salmonella species.
- A reportable past illness (diagnosed within the last three months with Salmonella Typhi).
- Reportable history of exposure to an infection listed above.

Employee Name (please print) _____ Contact Number: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____