

ServSafe© Food Safety Manager Exam Study Guide

Chapter 4: The Safe Foodhandler

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Chapter 4: The Safe Foodhandler

Situations That Can Lead to Food Contamination by the Foodhandler

- When a foodhandler has a foodborne sickness.
- If a foodhandler has a wound that contains pathogens.
- If a foodhandler has contact with a person who is sick.
- When anything is touched that can contaminate their hands and the hands are not washed.
- If a foodhandler has such symptoms, such as vomiting, diarrhea, or jaundice – which is caused by Hepatitis A and is a yellowing of the skin and/or eyes.
- With some illnesses, a person may infect others before showing any symptoms. For example, a person can spread Hepatitis A for weeks before showing any symptoms. The Norovirus can be spread for days after symptoms have ended.
- Carriers: People can also carry pathogens and infect others without getting sick themselves. These people are called carriers.
- The bacteria *Staphylococcus aureus* is carried in the nose of at least 30% of the population of healthy adults. And at least 20% of healthy adults carry it on their skin. If it is transferred from the nose or skin to food, people can get sick.

Actions That Can Contaminate Food

- Scratching the scalp.
- Running fingers through the hair.
- Wiping or touching the nose.
- Rubbing the ear.
- Touching a pimple or a wound.
- Wearing a dirty uniform.
- Coughing or sneezing into the hand.
- Spitting and/or droplets in the operation.

Your Role as a Manager/Owner

- Create personal hygiene policies and procedures for your operation.
- Train staff on the policies and procedures – retrain when necessary or at minimum a yearly basis.
- Model the right behavior at all times – set the right example.
- Supervise and monitor food safety practices at all times.
- Review and revise personal hygiene policies and procedures at least on a yearly basis and when regulations, laws and science change.

Handwashing

- Handwashing is the single most IMPORTANT part of personal hygiene and one of the BEST ways to prevent the transmission of pathogens.

The Handwashing Process

- How to Wash Hands – the whole process should take about 20 seconds:
 - Wet hands and arms. Use running water as hot as comfortable – it should be at least 100° F (38° C).
 - Apply soap. Apply enough soap to build a good lather.
 - Scrub hands and arms vigorously. Scrub your hands and arms for at least 10 to 15 seconds. Clean underneath the fingernails and between your fingers.
 - Rinse your hands and arms thoroughly. Use running water.
 - Dry your hands and arms. Use ONLY a single use paper towel or hand dryer. DO NOT use a multi-use towel or dry hands on cloths, aprons, etc.
- Avoid re-contaminating your hands after you have washed them – use a clean paper towel to turn off the faucet, and to open the door when leaving the restroom.

When to Wash Your Hands

- Foodhandlers must wash their hands BEFORE they start work
- Foodhandlers MUST also wash their hands AFTER any of the following activities:
 - Using the bathroom. A foodhandler with an illness, such as Norovirus gastroenteritis, can transfer disease causing germs to the food if he does not wash his hands after using the restroom.
 - Handling raw meat, seafood and poultry (wash hands before and after).
 - Touching any part of the hair, scalp, face and/or body.
 - Sneezing, coughing, or using a tissue.
 - Eating, smoking, drinking, or chewing gum or tobacco.
 - Handling any type of chemical.
 - Taking out the garbage.
 - Clearing tables or busing dirty dishes.
 - Touching clothing or aprons.
 - Handling money.
 - Touching anything else that may contaminate hands – such as equipment, work surfaces, or towels.

Hand Antiseptics

- Hand antiseptics are either liquids, foams or gels that are used to lower the number of pathogens on the hands. They come in brand names such as Purell® or AvaGuard®.
- If hand antiseptics are used in a food service operation, they must comply with Food and Drug Administration (FDA) standards.
- Please check that the hand antiseptic you use is approved by the FDA as a hand antiseptic, and that it is designed for use in a food environment.
- ONLY use hand antiseptics AFTER washing your hands correctly and NEVER use hand antiseptics instead of Handwashing in food service operations.
- Always wait for the hand antiseptic to dry before you put on gloves, touch food or equipment.

- Check your state and local requirements for hand antiseptic use regulations.

Hand Care

- Fingernail length. Keep fingernails short and clean.
- False fingernails. Do NOT wear false fingernails. False fingernails can break into food and are harder to keep clean.
- Nail polish. Do NOT wear nail polish. Nail polish can flake off into food and can disguise dirt under fingernails.
- Hand wounds/cuts:
 - ALWAYS wear a bandage/band aid over wounds on fingers, hands and/or arms.
 - Make sure the bandage keeps the wound from leaking.
 - A single use glove or finger cover/cot MUST always be used over bandages on the hands or fingers.
 - Use caution that the bandage does not fall off into the food.
 - A single use glove (that is not torn or in any way compromised) worn over the bandage can keep pathogens in the wound from spreading and contaminating food that can cause illnesses.
 - Check your state and local regulatory requirements regarding hand/wound care regulations.

Single Use Gloves

- Single use gloves can help keep food safe by creating a barrier between hands and food.
- Never use gloves in place of handwashing.
- Hands must always be washed before putting on gloves and when changing to a new pair of gloves.
- Buying Gloves: Follow these guidelines when buying gloves for your food service operation:
 - Disposable Gloves – Buy only single use disposable gloves for handling food. Never wash and re-use gloves.
 - Multiple Sizes – Provide different size gloves. Gloves that are too big will fall off and gloves that are too small will easily tear.
 - Latex alternatives – Some staff and customers may be allergic to latex. Have gloves made from other materials available.

When to Change Gloves

- Foodhandlers must change gloves at all of the following instances:
 - As soon as the gloves become soiled or torn.
 - Before beginning a different task.
 - At least every four hours during continual use, and more often if necessary.
 - After handling raw meat, seafood, or poultry and before handling all ready to eat food.
 - Check your state and local regulatory requirements regarding glove usage to make sure that you are in compliance.

Bare Hand Contact with Ready to Eat Foods

- Foodhandlers may be allowed to handle ready to eat foods with bare hands, but it will increase risk of food becoming contaminated.
- If your locality allows bare hand contact with ready to eat food, be sure to have policies and procedures in place that educate and monitor employees in handwashing and personal hygiene practices.

Personal Cleanliness

- Pathogens can be found on hair and skin – and they increase in proportion when not kept clean. These pathogens can be transferred to food and food equipment.
- Make sure foodhandlers shower or bathe before work.

Work Attire

- Foodhandlers in dirty clothes give a bad impression of the food service operation. But most importantly, the dirty clothes can carry pathogens that can cause foodborne illnesses.
- An employee dress code should be part of your policies and procedures and includes the following:
 - Hair restraints. Always wear a clean hat or other hair restraint. Foodhandlers with facial hair should also wear a beard restraint.
 - Clean clothing. Wear clean, fresh clothing daily. If possible, change into work cloths at work. Dirty cloths - including aprons, chef coats and hats - that are stored in the food service operation must be kept away from food and prep areas.
 - Aprons. Remove aprons when leaving food prep areas. As an example, aprons should be removed and stored properly before taking out garbage or using the restroom.
 - Jewelry. Remove all jewelry from hands and arms before prepping food or when working in and around the food prep areas.
 - Do not wear any of the following: Rings (except for a plain band). Bracelets, including medical bracelets (wear medical information around the neck on a necklace). Watches.
 - Check state and local regulations as to any other restrictions on wearing jewelry such as nose rings, etc.

Policies for Eating, Drinking, Smoking and Chewing Gum or Tobacco

- Small droplets of saliva can contain thousands of pathogens.
- In the process of eating, drinking, smoking, or chewing gum or tobacco, saliva can be transferred to hands or directly onto the food that is being handled.
- Do NOT eat, drink, smoke, or chew gum or tobacco at any of these times:
 - When prepping or serving food
 - When working or near prep areas
 - When working or near areas used to clean utensils and equipment.
 - Check with your local regulatory agency since some areas allow foodhandlers to drink from a covered container with a straw while in the prep and dishwashing areas.

Policies for Reporting Health Issues

- Staff should always be encouraged to report any health issues before they come to work.
- Staff should also provide immediate notification if they get sick while at work.
- If a foodhandler is sick, she may need to be *restricted* from working around food. Or the foodhandler may need to be *excluded* from coming to work altogether according to the type and severity of the illness.
- Check regulatory requirements in your area for reporting and exclusion mandates in reference to employee illnesses in a food operation.

Handling Foodhandler Illnesses

IF	THEN
The foodhandler has a sore throat with a fever.	<i>Restrict</i> the foodhandler from working with or around food. <i>Exclude</i> the foodhandler from the operation if you primarily serve a high risk population.
The foodhandler has at least one of these symptoms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vomiting • Diarrhea • Jaundice 	<i>Exclude</i> the foodhandler from the entire food service operation. Before returning to work, foodhandlers who vomited or had diarrhea must meet one of these requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have had no symptoms for at least 24 hours • Have a written medical release from a medical practitioner. Foodhandlers with jaundice must have a written release from a medical practitioner before they can come back to work.
The foodhandler has been diagnosed with a foodborne illness caused by one of these pathogens: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salmonella Typhi • Shigella spp. • Shiga toxin-producing E. coli • Hepatitis A • Norovirus 	Exclude the foodhandler from the operation. Notify your local regulatory authority that you have an employee diagnosed with the condition. Work with the foodhandlers medical practitioner and/or the local regulatory authority to decide when the person can return to work.