

5.0 Hygiene and Communicable Diseases

All operators and personnel of food establishments are responsible for ensuring that food products are handled (throughout storage, preparation, display, service and presentation) in a manner that prevents contamination.

5.1 Training

Food handlers should be trained in safe food handling techniques that are appropriate for their level of responsibility. Review sessions should be done on a regular basis.

5.2 Clothing

All personnel in food preparation areas shall wear clean outer garments. If food preparation causes the clothing to become soiled, the clothing should be changed as necessary.

5.3 Aprons

Food handlers that change workstations from raw food preparation activities to ready-to-eat activities should remove any soiled clothing, such as aprons.

5.4 Hair

Personnel involved in food preparation and any person entering a food preparation or storage area should wear hair restraints such as clean hats or a hair net. Where required, beards should be completely covered with beard nets.

5.5 Personal Habits

- a) Food handlers who engage in activities which may result in the transfer of bacteria (e.g., sneezing, touching hair/eyes/mouth/nose, etc.), must wash their hands before resuming food service activities and food handling.
- b) Food handlers shall not smoke while handling food, utensils or food surfaces.

5.6 Handwashing

Food handlers are to thoroughly wash their hands before commencing work. In particular, food handlers shall wash their hands each time after using the washroom, after returning from a break, after snacking or eating, after handling raw food products, or after any other activity or instance where hands may become soiled.

- a) A thorough hand washing includes vigorously rubbing together the surfaces of the lathered hands and exposed arms for at least 20 seconds followed by a thorough rinsing with warm clean water.
- b) In addition to the procedure outlined in (a), it is recommended that a nailbrush and soap be used to clean underneath the nails, followed by a thorough rinsing with warm clean water. As well, particular attention must be given to the tips of the fingers and between all fingers. This is particularly important after using the washroom.

5.7 Personal Effects and Jewelry

Food handlers should remove their watches, rings and jewelry before working with food. Loose fitting jewelry (e.g., earrings) which could become detached and contaminate food should not be worn while engaging in food handling activities.

5.8 Illness and Disease (also reference *Communicable Diseases Regulation*)

- a) The operator of a food establishment shall ensure that all personnel who come into contact with food are free from any symptomatic signs of illness or communicable disease that are transmissible through food. If a food handler is suffering from an illness or communicable disease, managers are responsible for ensuring appropriate action is taken, that may include excluding that individual from activities that involve the handling of food or food contact surfaces, or authorizing the individual's absence from the work place.
- b) Any employee suffering from a communicable disease, that is communicable through food, must advise management. Any employee suffering from a temporary illness should obtain medical leave or, depending on the nature of the illness, be reassigned to work that will not allow contamination of the food.
- c) When returning to work after medical leave or illness, food handlers should have written clearance from the treating physician, particularly in the case of diagnosed, reportable communicable diseases.
- d) Generally, a person is considered to be suffering from a communicable disease in the following situations:
 - i) they have one or more of the symptoms associated with an acute gastro-intestinal illness, such as diarrhea, fever, vomiting, jaundice and/or sore throat with fever;
 - ii) they are suspected of causing or being exposed to a confirmed communicable disease outbreak; or
 - iii) they live in the same household as a person who is diagnosed with a communicable disease.

Rational

Several types of communicable diseases can be transmitted through the ingestion of food. The role of the food handler is critical in eliminating the opportunity for pathogenic microorganisms to be transferred to the food.

Food handlers can carry communicable diseases, especially if they themselves have been infected or are in contact with persons or objects that may carry the harmful microbes of those diseases. Consequently, food handlers may spread these diseases throughout the food establishment if they do not maintain an appropriate level of personal hygiene and avoid habits that may contaminate food.

5.9 Injuries

- a) Personnel with open wounds should not participate in food handling activities. This applies to persons who have a lesion containing pus that is open and draining, and is:
- on the hands or wrists, unless an impermeable cover protects the lesion and a single-use glove is worn over the affected area;
 - on the arms, unless the lesion is protected by an impermeable cover; or
 - on other parts of the body, unless the lesion is covered with a dry, tight-fitting bandage.
- b) Personnel with cuts and/or bandages must wear vinyl gloves or refrain from handling foods entirely.

5.10 Visitors

Any visitor to a food preparation area should observe the same hygiene and dress code as food handlers, including handwashing and hair restraint policies. They should refrain from coming into proximity or contact with food and food equipment, and from any activities that could contaminate food.