

Food Handler Card Frequently Asked Questions
Senate Bill 602 and Senate Bill 303

What is a Food Handler Card?

Most California food facility employees are now required to obtain a Food Handler Card, which certifies they have successfully completed a food safety class and test.

Who is required to have a Food Handler Card?

Anyone involved in preparation, storage or service of food in a food facility is considered a food handler and must obtain a Food Handler Card. Food handlers include wait staff, chefs, head cooks, cooks, employees that set or clean tables, bartenders, host/hostesses who handle food, beverage pourers and supervisory personnel. This law applies regardless of an employee's age or number of hours worked.

Who is NOT required to have a Food Handler Card?

- Food handlers who have a valid food manager's safety certificate
- Volunteers
- **Employees at:**
 - Temporary food facilities
 - Certified farmers markets
 - Commissaries
 - Grocery stores, including convenience stores (except separately owned food facilities inside the store, for example, Starbucks or sushi businesses operating in a supermarket)
 - Licensed health care facilities
 - Mobile support units are carts or vehicles used to provide services (replenish supplies, provide cleaning, or disposal of waste water) for a mobile food facility.
 - School cafeterias
 - Restricted food service facilities
 - Retail stores where a majority of sales are from a pharmacy
 - Food facilities that provide approved in-house training, including training approved for use in another state (Florida) that has adopted FDA Model Food Code Requirements
 - Food facilities subject to a collective bargaining agreement

What is the timeline for implementation?

The Environmental Health Division of Contra Costa Health Services is educating operators on requirements. Enforcement will begin after January 1, 2012.

When must employees have a California Food Handler Card?

Food handlers must obtain a Food Handler Card within 30 days of being hired.

Note: Senate Bill 303 extends the deadline for food handlers hired before June 1, 2011 to obtain a card by January 1, 2012.

How do I get a California Food Handler Card?

Successfully complete a course with a test score of 70% or higher from one of the approved organizations below:

- National Registry of Food Safety Professionals: www.NRFSP.com
- National Restaurant Association (ServSafe): www.FoodHandlerUSA.com
- Prometric: www.prometric.com/foodsafety
- Above Training/State Food Safety.com: www.statefoodsafety.com
- ABC Food Safety: www.abc-foodsafety.com
- TAP Series, LLC: www.tapseries.com/4u/cali

Effective January 1, 2012, all training providers must be ANSI approved. Providers currently meeting the new standard:

- Above Training/State Food Safety: www.statefoodsafety.com
- ABC Food Safety: www.abc-foodsafety.com
- TAP Series, LLC: www.tapseries.com/4u/cali

Note: *check the link below often for updates as training providers receive their approvals from ANSI*

- <https://www.ansica.org/wwwversion2/outside/ALLdirectoryListing.asp?menuID=212&prgID=228&status=4>

How long is my card valid?

Food handlers must obtain a new card every three years.

Will my Food Handler Card be valid everywhere in California?

A Food Handler Card is valid everywhere except in Riverside, San Bernardino and San Diego counties, which have pre-existing local food handler programs. Employees who have food handler cards from a county with a pre-existing program will need an additional card for all other counties.

What documentation must a facility keep?

Employers are responsible for keeping records that show each employed food handler possesses a valid Food Handler Card. These records must be available to EHD on request.

Is the employer responsible for paying for Food Handler Cards?

No. The Food Handler Card is the property of the employee. The employee may change jobs without having to obtain a new card.

Where can I get more information about the California Food Handler Card Law?

- Contra Costa Environmental Health website at <http://cchealth.org/eh/>
- California Conference of Directors of Environmental Health (CCDEH) <http://www.ccdeh.com/>