



Personal Hygiene for food handlers

Under Food Safety Standard 3.2.2 Food Safety Practices and General Requirements, food handlers have an overall responsibility for doing whatever is reasonable to make sure that they do not make food unsafe or unsuitable for people to eat. Food handlers also have specific responsibilities related to their health and hygiene.

Are you a food handler?

A food handler is anyone who works in a food business and who either handles food or surfaces that are likely to be in contact with food such as cutlery, plates and bowls. A food handler may do many different things for a food business. Examples include making, cooking, preparing, serving, packing, displaying and storing food. Food handlers can also be involved in manufacturing, producing, collecting, extracting, processing, transporting, delivering, thawing or preserving food.

What about personal hygiene?

Food handlers' personal hygiene practices and cleanliness must minimise the risk of food contamination. The most important things they need to know are that they must:

- do whatever is reasonable to prevent their body, anything from their body or anything they are wearing, coming into contact with food or food contact surfaces;
- do whatever is reasonable to stop unnecessary contact with ready-to-eat food;
- wear clean outer clothing, depending on the type of work they do;
- make sure bandages or dressings on any exposed parts of the body are covered with a waterproof covering;
- not eat over unprotected food or surfaces likely to come in contact with food;
- not sneeze, blow or cough over unprotected food or surfaces likely to come into contact with food;
- not spit, smoke or use tobacco or similar preparations where food is handled; and
- not urinate or defecate except in a toilet.

Hand washing

Food handlers are expected to wash their hands whenever their hands are likely to contaminate food. This includes washing their hands:

- immediately before working with ready-to-eat food after handling raw food;
- immediately after using the toilet;
- before they start handling food or go back to handling food after other work;
- immediately after smoking, coughing, sneezing, using a handkerchief or disposable tissue, eating,
- drinking or using tobacco or similar substances; and
- after touching their hair, scalp or a body opening.

How should food handlers wash their hands?

1. Use the hand washing facilities provided by the business.
2. Clean their hands thoroughly using soap or other effective means.
3. Use warm running water.
4. Dry their hands thoroughly on a single use towel or in another way that is not likely to transfer disease-causing organisms onto the hands.

Where do I go for more information?

- **Restaurant and Catering Queensland**
PO Box 101
Royal Brisbane Hospital
QLD 4029
Telephone: 07 3252 8880
Facsimile: 07 3252 7554

Email:
rcqld@restaurantcater.asn.au

Web Site:
www.restaurantcater.asn.au

or contact the Environmental Health Officer from you local government



Queensland Government
Queensland Health



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION OF QUEENSLAND INC.



Australian Institute of Environmental Health

*A joint initiative between **Restaurant and Catering Queensland, Queensland Health, Local Government Association of Queensland and the Australian Institute of Environmental Health** to assist the food service industry produce safe food.*