

HANDWASHING BY FOOD SERVICE PERSONNEL

Emphasis on personal hygiene is a primary fundamental of food protection and sanitation practice. Handwashing is probably the most important aspect of personal cleanliness. Unclean hands can easily transmit microbial agents to food products.

MANAGEMENT has the responsibility to provide (with adequate maintenance and supplies) handwashing sinks, hot water, soap, and paper towels (air dryers) in kitchen and restroom areas, and to encourage employees to use the facilities throughout the work day as necessary. Sinks used to prepare foods shall not be used to wash the hands.

FOOD SERVICE PERSONNEL have the responsibility to practice good personal hygiene with special attention to wash their hands when beginning work and frequently (and effectively) during the work period and every time after having performed one of the following activities:

1. Use of restroom (toilet) facilities.
2. Handled raw foods, meat, poultry, shell eggs, fish products, fresh produce, etc., to avoid cross-contamination.
3. Coughed or sneezed into hands, handkerchief, or tissue.
4. Performed any personal body function, such as touching (fixing) the hair or face area, blowing or wiping the nose, scratching any part of the body, etc.
5. After smoking; saliva from the butt will contaminate the hands.
6. Had contact with any dirty equipment and/or work surfaces, cleaning or wiping cloths, dirty clothing etc.
7. Cleaning and/or scraping used tableware or any equipment.
8. Handled garbage (trash).
9. After any work break.
10. Handled boxes, crates, packages, or other soiled articles.
11. Handled ANYTHING soiled.

ARE YOU FOLLOWING THE ABOVE SUGGESTIONS?

Control bad hand habits when at work. Do not scratch nose, head, ears, or other body parts, arrange the hair, stroke a moustache, pick pimples, etc. If these are accidentally done, wash the hands. It is essential, but difficult, to control these habits. Foods can be contaminated by careless hand habits.

Keep hands and fingers out of food. Use utensils for preparing food as much as possible. Tongs, spoons, forks, etc. can be used to reduce direct handling; they become contaminated just like hands and shall be replaced with clean gloves as necessary.

Keep fingernails short and clean (free of polish). Long nails are difficult to clean can harbor bacteria.

HANDS, HANDS, HANDS. Many tasks in a kitchen involve use of the food worker's hands. Frequent handwashing is the answer. Handwashing cannot be overemphasized.

Good hand habits are essential in food service to provide clean, safe food to the customer. **Proper handwashing procedures** include several steps that will insure a thorough cleaning of the hands:

1. Wet hands with warm water and apply enough soap to attain a good lather.
2. Rub front and back, from the fingertips to the wrist; using friction action, scrubbing for at least 20 seconds between the fingers and the back of the hands is necessary.
3. Rinse thoroughly under running water.
4. A second handwashing would be beneficial, especially after completing a dirty job.
5. Dry hands, using single-service paper towel or hot-air dryer (not an apron or other inappropriate cloth).

A sign reminding all workers to wash the hands before returning to work should be conspicuously displayed in employee restrooms.