

# Safe Operation of a Food Establishment

Individuals or groups operating a food establishment must operate in compliance with the Minnesota Food Code as well as any applicable local ordinances. This fact sheet provides general information for the safe operation of a food establishment licensed and inspected by Minnesota Department of Health or a delegated public health agency.

## Food Service Employees

Food service employees are the most important link in preventing foodborne illness. Employees who have been ill with vomiting and/or diarrhea should not work in a food establishment for at least 24 hours after their symptoms end. Employees must dress in clean clothing and wear an effective hair restraint such as a hairnet, hat or scarf. While preparing food, a food employee must not have painted or false fingernails, nor wear jewelry on the arms and hands, except for a wedding band or other plain ring.

## Person in Charge

A Person in Charge (PIC) must be present during all hours of operation and service. The PIC is responsible for knowing the food safety rules and the procedures within the food establishment. It is the responsibility of the PIC to provide employees with safe food handling information needed while performing their job, and to ensure that employees follow approved procedures. To protect food and clean equipment from contamination by visitors, necessary precautions must be taken to restrict access to the food establishment, to include preparation, warewashing and storage areas.

## Handwashing

Handwashing is the single most effective means of preventing the spread of disease causing microbes and pathogens. Gloves, wet-wipes, or hand sanitizers are not substitutes for handwashing. Hands must be washed before working with food, clean equipment and utensils, after smoking, eating or drinking, using toilet facilities or any time hands become contaminated.

### *Six Steps to Correct Handwashing*

1. Wet hands with warm water.
2. Apply soap and work up lather that covers hands and forearms.
3. Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds; make sure to wash palms, back of hands, between fingers, and forearms.
4. Use a fingernail brush to clean under fingernails and between fingers.
5. Rinse hands and forearms in warm water. Keep fingertips pointed down while rinsing.
6. Dry hands with single-use paper towels. Turn off the faucet with paper towels to prevent recontamination of hands.



### Glove Use

Limit bare hand contact with ready-to-eat or cooked foods by wearing disposable gloves or using utensils, deli tissue, spatulas, tongs or other dispensing equipment. Single use gloves may be used only after proper handwashing.

### Food Sources

All foods, beverages, and ice must be obtained from an approved source. Conduct food preparation and storage at a licensed food establishment. Food cannot be prepared or stored in a home.

### Safe Food Temperatures

Cook all potentially hazardous food to required temperatures: Cook to the following temperatures or hotter:

Food	Temperature
Poultry	165°F
Ground beef, sausage, gyro	155°F
Pork	155°F
Fish, shrimp, shell eggs	145°F
Beef steak, beef roast, lamb	145°F

Hold hot foods at or above 140°F. Hold cold foods at or below 41°F. Cool and reheat foods to required temperatures. Never thaw foods on the counter at room temperature. Provide thermometers for monitoring the temperature of food.

### Avoid Cross-Contamination

Do not cross-contaminate ready-to-eat foods with raw meats, poultry and fish. Common cross-contaminated items may include cutting boards, cooking utensils, cloths, aprons and hands.



### Cleaning and Sanitizing

Utensils and equipment must be washed, rinsed, sanitized and air dried after each use in an approved sanitizer at the required strength and contact time. Cloths that are used for wiping food spills must be used for no other purposes. Damp or soiled cloths must

be stored in an approved sanitizer at the required strength. Change the sanitizing solution as needed to maintain a clean solution. Dry cloths must be free of food debris and soil. Provide an appropriate test kit to check the concentration of the sanitizer used.

### For more information...

*MDH Food, Pools, and Lodging Services Section*

- Phone: 651-201-4500
- Email: [health.foodlodging@state.mn.us](mailto:health.foodlodging@state.mn.us)
- Contact Us: [www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/food/license/contactus.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/food/license/contactus.html)

### Web Resources:

- MDH Food Business Safety [www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/food/](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/food/)
- MDH Food Safety [www.health.state.mn.us/foodsafety/](http://www.health.state.mn.us/foodsafety/)
- MDH Business Food Safety Fact Sheets <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/food/fs/index.html>
- MDH Food Worker Illness Awareness <http://www.health.state.mn.us/foodsafety/dwi/index.html>
- MDH Foodborne Illness <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/dtopics/foodborne/index.html>
- Demonstration of Knowledge Handbook <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/food/business/~media/Files/food/business/dokhandbook.ashx>