

Texas Training Supplement to the ServSafe® Food Handler Course (Instructor-Led and Online)



To pass the examination at the end of the ServSafe® Food Handler Course, you must learn the content of this supplement in addition to what you’ve learned in the course. We highly recommend that you study this supplement after you have finished the training portion of the course and before you take the examination. The content of this supplement is used with permission from the Texas State Department of Health Services.

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How Food Becomes Unsafe

As you know, a foodborne illness is a disease that is transmitted to people through food. A foodborne-illness outbreak happens when:

- Two or more people get the same illness
- The people have eaten the same food

When to Wash Your Hands

Hands must be washed after all of the activities mentioned in the course. In addition, you must wash your hands after:

- Caring for your own assistance animal
- Handling fish or shellfish in a display tank

Bare Hand Contact with Ready-to-Eat Food

Some operations, such as daycare centers and senior living centers, serve food to people who are at higher risk for getting a foodborne illness. If your operation does this, you may not touch ready-to-eat food with your bare hands.

If your operation doesn't primarily serve these types of people, you can touch ready-to-eat food with your bare hands if you wash your hands correctly and take two of these listed precautions. Check with your manager about which ones to use.

The precautions include:

- Washing hands twice
- Using a nail brush to scrub under nails
- Using a hand antiseptic after washing hands
- When you are sick, talking to your manager about the incentive program to stay home
- Using other practices approved by the local regulatory authority

If you notice that someone isn't following these rules, tell your manager so the contaminated food can be dealt with and corrective actions can be taken and documented.

Also, you must sign a document to show that you have received training on handwashing and the additional precautions needed for handling ready-to-eat food. These documents will be kept at the establishment.

Managers of operations that allow bare hand contact with ready-to-eat food must also take steps to ensure compliance. First off, the permit holder needs to obtain approval from the regulatory authority. The operation must also keep written bare hand contact procedures and a list of all ready-to-eat food items and food additives that are touched by bare hands. And the operation must document that hands are washed before food preparation and as necessary whenever ready-to-eat food items are touched by bare hands.

The operation must also maintain written employee health policies that cover employee health reporting as well as signed statements by employees and the person in charge that they acknowledge their responsibilities. And finally, the operation has to maintain documentation that corrective actions are taken anytime there is an error related to bare hand contact with ready-to-eat food.

The operation must maintain written documentation for all of these. And the documentation must be provided upon request by the regulatory authority, such as during an inspection.

What to Do if You Are Sick

If you are sick or you have close contact with someone who is sick, you could spread pathogens to the food you work with. Don't let this happen. Tell your manager when you are sick. Keep in mind that you may be restricted from certain jobs or excluded from working altogether. Your manager will tell you what to do.

It is important to talk to your manager if you have any of the illness symptoms identified in the course. In addition, tell your manager if you have:

- Infected wounds, including lesions containing pus
- Persistent sneezing, coughing, or runny nose that causes discharges from the eyes, nose, or mouth
- An illness caused by one of these pathogens (whether you have the illness or someone you have been in close contact with has the illness):
 - Norovirus
 - *Salmonella* Typhi
 - *Shigella* spp.
 - Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli*
 - Hepatitis A
 - Nontyphoidal *Salmonella*

Note: If you have persistent sneezing, coughing, or runny nose causing discharges from the eyes, nose, or mouth; you cannot work with:

- Food
- Clean equipment
- Utensils
- Linens
- Unwrapped single-use items

Food Most Likely to Become Unsafe

Any type of food can be contaminated. But some types are better for pathogen growth. These potentially hazardous food items require time and temperature control for safety (TCS) to limit pathogen growth. So they are known as TCS food for short. They include:

- Milk and dairy products
- Eggs
- Meat: beef, pork, and lamb
- Poultry
- Fish
- Shellfish and crustaceans

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- Baked potatoes
- Heat-treated plant food, such as cooked rice, beans, and vegetables
- Tofu or other soy protein
- Synthetic ingredients, such as textured soy protein in meat alternatives
- Sliced melons
- Cut tomatoes
- Sprouts and sprout seeds
- Cut leafy greens (fresh leafy greens that have been cut, shredded, sliced, or chopped)
- Untreated garlic-and-oil mixtures

Ready-to-Eat Food

Like TCS food, ready-to-eat food also needs careful handling to prevent contamination. Ready-to-eat food is exactly what it sounds like: food that can be eaten without further preparation, washing, or cooking. Here are some examples:

- Washed fruit and vegetables, both whole and cut
- Deli meat
- Bakery items
- Sugar, spices, and seasonings
- Cooked food

Cooking TCS Food

Roasts of pork, beef, veal, and lamb must be cooked to an internal temperature of 145°F (63°C) for 4 minutes.