

Personal Hygiene for Restaurant Employees

Hand washing

Hand washing is one of the easiest, most effective ways to demonstrate good hygiene. Hands must be washed and dried before starting work with food, after restroom use, between tasks and if work is interrupted.

For hand washing to be effective, washing must include the backs of the hands, palms, exposed arms, between fingers and under fingernails. Hands should be rubbed vigorously with soap for a minimum of 20 seconds, then rinsed and dried with a clean paper towel.

Ill or infected employees

Employees with the following symptoms should notify their supervisor immediately:

- Fever
- Sneezing and coughing
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Sore throat with fever
- Jaundice

Ill employees should not be allowed to prepare or handle food, sanitize equipment or perform other duties that present potential for possible contamination. This includes handling utensils and linens.

Fingernails and jewelry

When preparing food, employees should:

- Keep their fingernails trimmed so they are easy to clean.
- Wear gloves when working with food if wearing fingernail polish or artificial nails.
- Not wear jewelry on the arms and hands. This does not apply to a plain ring such as a wedding band.

Cuts, wounds and sores

All cuts, wounds or open sores on the hands and arms must be covered by a waterproof bandage. Single-use gloves must be worn over any bandage on the hands and fingers.

Hair restraints

Employees who prepare food should wear hair coverings such as hairnets, hats or scarves. Bearded employees should wear beard nets. Employees such as counter staff, hostesses, wait staff and bartenders may not be required to wear hair restraints if they present a minimal risk of contaminating food and equipment.

Clothing

Employees should wear clean outer garments when preparing or serving food products or washing and sanitizing equipment and utensils. Personal belongings should be stored away from food handling, preparation and storage areas. If employees routinely change clothing at the establishment, a room should be provided for this use. Changing areas should be separate from food preparation and storage areas.

Eating and tobacco use

Eating and tobacco use of any kind are activities that should take place in designated areas only. The designated area should be located where no contamination of food or equipment can occur.

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