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Senate Bill 602: California Food Handler Card

Food Facility Operator Fact Sheet

SB 602 requires food workers to receive food safety training and obtain a food handler card

The California Food Handler Card law is designed to ensure that restaurant employees receive a reasonable level of training in food safety practices to reduce the potential for foodborne illness. Because nearly half of all adults have worked in the restaurant industry at some point in their lives and California is home to more than 1.4 million food industry jobs, SB 602 will, over time, improve food safety in commercial and residential kitchens alike.

Existing food handlers must obtain a California Food Handler Card by July 1, 2011, but no later than December 31, 2011. Between July 1 and December 31 2011, enforcement of the law will initially be limited to education and notification of requirements for compliance. New employees hired after July 1, 2011 will have 30 days from the date of hire to acquire a food handler card.

To obtain a California Food Handler Card, food handlers will need to successfully pass a food handler training course and test with a minimum score of 70 percent from an accredited food protection manager certification organization. The expense and time for the training is the responsibility of the employee, not the employer. California food handlers must maintain a valid food handler card for the duration of his or her employment in the food service industry.

The cards are valid for three years from issuance. After December 31 2011, each food facility must maintain records (a copy of the card) documenting that each employee possesses a valid California Food Handler Card that can be provided to local environmental health officials upon request.

HOW DO I GET A CALIFORNIA FOOD HANDLER CARD?

1. TAKE A COURSE:

- You must take a course (meeting the specifications for courses as outlined in the law).

and

2. PASS A TEST:

- You must take a test and pass with a score of 70 percent or higher.

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There are several providers who offer the course. However, after January 1, 2012: a food handler must obtain a California Food Handler Card only from an organization with an ANSI ASTM 2659E accredited food handler training program.

These organizations are listed below and offer an on-line food handler card course:

- National Registry of Food Safety Professionals: www.NRFSP.com
- National Restaurant Association (ServSafe® California Food Handler program): www.FoodHandlerUSA.com
- Prometric: www.prometric.com/foodsafety
- State Food Safety: <http://ca.statefoodsafety.com>
- Premier Food Safety: www.premierfoodsafety.com
- TAP Series: www.tapseries.com/4u/cali
- National Environmental Health Association: www.nehatraining.org
- Above Training/State Food Safety Program: AboveTraining/StateFoodSafety.com

Q: WHAT TYPE OF POSITIONS FALL UNDER THE CALIFORNIA FOOD HANDLER CARD?

A: Restaurant employees such as those holding the positions of, but not limited to: wait staff, chefs, head cooks, cooks, bussers, bartenders, host/hostesses that handle food, beverage pourers (including alcoholic beverage pourers), and supervisory personnel, such as the general manager or managers (unless they are certified under the existing food managers certification program). The law applies to both salaried and hourly food handlers.

However, certain statutory **exemptions** exist including food handlers in: temporary food facilities (food booths), certified farmers' markets, commissaries, grocery stores (including convenience stores), licensed health care facilities, mobile support units, public and private school cafeterias, restricted food service facilities, retail stores where a majority of sales are from a pharmacy, and food handlers holding a valid Manager's Food Safety Certificate pursuant to current food safety law.

Q. HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

A: The law stipulates that one training course must be available at no more than \$15 to ensure affordability and prevent hardship on the employee. Employers are not responsible by this law to pay for an employee's time and expense to take the training and test unless a food facility provides in-house industry food safety training during normal working hours. (A list of approved in-house food industry training is given at the website below)

For more information and answers to your questions, please go to our [website](#) for the full CALIFORNIA FOOD HANDLER CARD LAW GUIDELINES:

Call the Nevada County Environmental Health office at 530-265-1222 if you have any questions.