

Frequently Asked Questions Food Handler Education or Training Program

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/foodestablishments/handler.shtm>

1. My food establishment is permitted by the Department of State Health Services (DSHS); must my employees obtain food handler training?

The Department of State Health Services does not require that food handler training be provided by an *accredited* food handler program. However, it is the responsibility of the person in charge or the Certified Food Manager to ensure that all employees are properly trained in food safety as it relates to their assigned duties.

2. My food establishment is permitted by a local health jurisdiction; must my employees obtain food handler training?

Food establishments that are permitted by a local jurisdiction should contact their local health jurisdiction to obtain information regarding food handler training requirements.

3. Where can I take an accredited food handler program?

An accredited food handler education or training program may be taken at any program listed on the Food Establishments Group website. A link to the list is provided at the top of this page.

4. Can a food handler program be taken on the Internet?

Yes, accredited training providers may offer training on the internet. All internet training providers, along with traditional classroom training providers will be listed on the website listed above.

5. What will I receive to indicate that I've completed training through an accredited program?

A food handler card issued by an accredited program will vary in size and color. However, all food handler cards issued are required to have the food handler program name, address and TXDSHS Accreditation License Number listed on the card.

6. Does a food handler card issued by an accredited food handler program receive statewide reciprocity?

Food Handler Cards issued by an accredited program shall be recognized statewide by regulatory authorities as the valid proof of successful completion of a department accredited food handler education or training program. This was authorized under Texas Health and Safety Code §438.046. A registry of accredited programs is also posted on this website.

7. The Texas Food Establishment Rules require specific training for bare hand contact of ready-to-eat foods. Do the accredited food handler programs meet this training requirement?

All accredited food handler programs are required to meet the training requirements for bare hand contact of ready-to-eat foods as defined in §229.164(e).

8. My food establishment procedures include bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods. What training is required for my food handlers?

All food handlers who contact ready-to-eat food must receive training in the risks associated with this procedure including proper handwashing as specified under §229.163(f), and when to wash their hands as specified under §229.163(h). The specific requirements are addressed in the Texas Food Establishment Rules, §229.164(e), Preventing contamination by employees.

9. Are food handlers still required to have a local health jurisdiction card in addition to the card issued by the training providers?

Food handlers may be required to obtain a local health jurisdiction's food handler card. Food handlers should contact the local health authority for specific requirements. The training provider may also have that information available.

10. Can local health jurisdictions charge a fee for issuing their food handler card?

Local health jurisdictions may charge a fee. However, any fee charged by a local health jurisdiction for a card issued to a food handler trained by an accredited course listed in the registry may not exceed the lesser of: the reasonable cost incurred by the jurisdiction in issuing the card; or the fee charged by the jurisdiction to issue a card to a food handler certified by the jurisdiction as having met the training requirements by any other means. This was authorized under Texas Health and Safety Code §438.046.

11. What if I lose my food handler card?

Candidates who have taken a DSHS accredited Food Handler Training or Education Program must contact the training provider for instructions on how to obtain a replacement food handler card.