



POLK COUNTY

LICENSING AND FOOD NOTES

Spring 2021

ON-LINE PAYMENT AVAILABLE



You have the option of paying for your facility license on-line via credit card, debit card or e-check for a nominal fee. If you wish to pay for your facility license in this manner, copy and paste the following link:

<https://client.pointandpay.net/web/PolkCountyHealthDeptWI>

Indicate which health license type you wish to pay under the payment type drop-down. Make sure to type the address EXACTLY including the “s” in https.

FOODHANDLERS CERTIFICATION EXAM



The ServSafe Foodhandlers course is now available online. Since the exam is required to be proctored, we are now offering a time for those of you that only need to take the proctored exam. The EXAM ONLY sessions are currently scheduled for Monday, June 21, 2021, at 8:30 a.m. and Wednesday, June 23, 2021, at 3:00 p.m. at the Polk County Government Center. Registration form is available at:

<http://www.polkcountyhealthdept.org/services/foodhandlers-certification/>

The ServSafe course is also offered by the WI Tavern League and WITC.

CHANGES IN LICENSING CATEGORIES IN THE NEW FOOD CODE



Significant changes were made to ATCP 75 with passage of the new food, including the fee structure for retail food establishments. The new food code utilizes risk-based licensing based on a hazard assessment completed for each establishment. All establishments selling food will now be considered a retail food establishment. The category of “restaurant” no longer exists. The new categories are:

- Retail food establishment-not serving meals
- Retail food establishment-serving meals
- Transient retail food establishment (formerly referred to as temporary)
- Mobile retail food establishment base
- Vending
- Micro markets

The complexity categories (Simple, Moderate or Complex) will still be based on risk and assigned by evaluating the criteria used in the hazard assessment. For most establishments, the fee structure will remain unchanged, however, some facilities will see an increase and some will see a decrease in the cost of their license.

The new food code went into effect October 24, 2020, and the fees for facilities already licensed will be changed effective for the 2021-22 billing cycle which begins July 1, 2021.



HANDWASHING VIOLATIONS

Improper handwashing is the most noted violation on inspections reports. Poor personal hygiene of foodhandlers is one of CDC's 5 major risk factors that contribute to foodborne illness and is the second leading cause of foodborne illness. Hands are the most common means of transmitting viruses to foods. Preventing bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods is essential for limiting the spread of harmful bacteria and viruses, as handwashing alone isn't enough. According to the FDA:

- Inspections of full service restaurants discovered inadequate handwashing in 75.8% of the visits, and hand contamination in 46.3% of visits
- Norovirus is the leading cause of illness outbreaks according to the CDC. As few as 18 Norovirus particles may be sufficient to infect an individual
- 65% of outbreaks were associated with handling of foods by an infected person and 35% were associated with bare hand contact with food
- Food workers carry out about 9 activities an hour that should involve handwashing, however, workers only wash their hands in 27% of these activities
- Hepatitis A can be transmitted by an infected individual for up to 2 weeks before displaying symptoms
- Food workers that were asymptomatic were responsible for more outbreaks than workers that showed symptoms of fever, vomiting or diarrhea
- Residual bacteria may remain on hands and under nails even after handwashing.

TAKEOUT & DELIVERY: DON'T NEGLECT FOOD SAFETY



As restaurants rush to meet a growing demand for prepared foods for customer pickup or meals delivered to homes and workplaces, it is important to understand unique food safety risks involved. You must address

protecting foods from time and temperature abuse, when sold for takeout or delivery by retail food establishments. Ready-to-eat TCS meals (Time and Temperature Control for Safety) carry potential dangers of bacterial growth or contamination at several points along the transaction. Salmonella and Campylobacter, for example, can proliferate at room temperature, whether in a kitchen or delivery vehicle. Keep the following safety tips in mind to protect your foods from temperature abuse and to minimize pathogen growth during the takeout and delivery process:

- Plan your preparation times in coordination with pickup time to avoid time delays that may contribute to temperature abuse
- Do not allow hot or cold prepared foods to sit for extended periods at room temperature before delivery or pickup. Load hot foods directly into insulated food carriers at the time of pickup. Keep cold foods refrigerated at 41 degrees F. or below before delivery or pickup.
- Guide consumers in storing food they don't plan to eat right away with these tips:
 - Serve food immediately or refrigerate at 41 degrees F. or below
 - Refrigerate leftovers promptly at 41 degrees F. or below
 - Reheat leftovers to 165 degrees F. before serving
 - Discard foods that have been at room temperature for longer than 2 hours

Keep hot food hot and cold foods cold during the delivery process to minimize bacterial growth.

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