

ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION

Bare Hand Contact with Ready-to-Eat Foods

Texas Food Establishment Rules

§229.164(e)(1)(D)(i)-(iii)

Bare hand contact with ready-to-eat food is strongly discouraged. Foodborne illness organisms are frequently spread to food because of poor or non-existent hand washing procedures. Bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods is only allowed under the following strict conditions:

No. 1: Documentation is maintained at the food establishment that the food employees acknowledge they have received training in all of the following areas:

- 1) risk of contacting the specific ready-to-eat foods with their bare hands;
- 2) proper hand washing methods;
- 3) when to wash their hands;
- 4) where to wash their hands;
- 5) proper fingernail maintenance;
- 6) prohibition of jewelry;
- 7) good hygienic practices;
- 8) employee health policies (employee illness, exclusions, restrictions)
 - **The employee has to sign the acknowledgement of receiving the training.**
 - **The documentation must be maintained at the food establishment.**

No. 2: Documentation is maintained at the food establishment that food employees contacting ready-to-eat foods with bare hands utilize two or more (2+) of the following control measures to provide additional safeguards:

- 1) double hand washing;
- 2) nail brushes;
- 3) a hand sanitizer after hand washing;
- 4) incentive programs that assist or encourage food employees not to work when they are ill;
- 5) other control measures approved by the regulatory agency.

NOTE: These safeguards are in addition to proper hand washing.

No. 3: Documentation is maintained at the food establishment that corrective actions are taken when steps 1 and 2 are not followed.

- Documentation has to include the plan for corrective action; and
- Documentation has to be written, but may be included as part of the establishment's HACCP monitoring logs.

No. 4: Documentation is maintained at the food service establishment listing the foods and food handling activities that involve bare hand contact.

Failure to comply with any of the four conditions is a violation of critical item # 11. ALL DOCUMENTATION LISTED ABOVE IS REQUIRED. IT IS MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO INSURE THAT FOOD EMPLOYEES DO NOT CONTAMINATE FOOD WITH THEIR BARE HANDS.