



Section 4, Staff

In this section, you will learn

- ▶ Who needs a hygiene passport?
- ▶ How should the state of health of employees be examined?
- ▶ What kind of protective clothing is needed?
- ▶ When and how to wash your hands?

Persons who process perishable foods professionally must have a hygiene passport and wear appropriate protective clothing. A hygiene passport is a certificate of competence for demonstrating familiarity with food hygiene.

If necessary, the employees must also be able to reliably demonstrate that they do not have salmonella infection.

The purpose of all these requirements is to ensure the safety of foodstuffs.

A hygiene passport

Personnel processing perishable foodstuffs must demonstrate an adequate working knowledge of food hygiene.

This can be demonstrated by a hygiene passport received through a competence test or as part of a food industry degree.

The employer must ensure that all persons who process perishable foods have a hygiene

passport. The hygiene passport must be obtained no later than three (3) months from the start of employment. Competence tests are organised and hygiene passports issued by competence testers approved by Evira.

Employees' state of health

Persons who process food that will be served unheated must provide a health certificate or, in practice, proof that they do not carry salmonellosis. The aim is to find carriers of the salmonella infection and to prevent the spread of salmonella through food-processing personnel.

If the employee only works the cash register, serves ready meals, or washes dishes, a health certificate or salmonella test will not be required.

What is salmonella?

Salmonella is an intestinal bacterium that can be transmitted through contaminated food or water and causes food poisoning.

The symptoms of a salmonella infection or salmonellosis can include

- nausea;
- abdominal pain;
- diarrhoea;
- fever; and
- headache.

How does salmonella spread?

Salmonella is most commonly transmitted through raw or poorly cooked poultry or pork, or through raw milk and vegetables.

Salmonella can also spread through foodstuffs contaminated by an infected worker.

Health examination at the start of employment

New employees require a health examination at the employer's occupational health care provider. This ensures that the person will not pose a risk of infection at work.

If necessary, a salmonella test will also be taken.

Salmonella tests should also be taken immediately if there is cause to suspect a Salmonella infection.

For example, if the employee has been travelling abroad and manifests symptoms of a stomach disorder.

Employees with a stomach disease are not permitted to process food.

In addition to Salmonella, many other bacteria and viruses can also cause stomach disorders.

More information on stomach disorders transmitted through food is available on the website where the link to this guide is found.

Protective clothing

Employees who process food must wear protective clothing.

The recommended protective clothing includes an appropriate uniform, hat or other headgear and work shoes.

The purpose of protective clothing is to prevent the contamination of foods being processed.

Waiters do not need to wear protective clothing.

If employees go outdoors, they should change out of or cover their protective clothing. This can be achieved, for example, by putting on a jacket.

Protective clothing must be changed and washed sufficiently often.

The staff can also wash and take care of their protective clothing at home.

Protective gloves

Employees can also wear protective gloves. Protective gloves are intended to protect food from dirt and harmful bacteria and viruses, which may spread through the hands of employees.

When must protective gloves be used?

Protective gloves must be used at least by employees with

- artificial nails;
- jewellery; or
- cuts on their hands.

Personnel who use protective gloves must change them often enough and wash their hands sufficiently often.

There are different kinds of protective gloves. You will need to select gloves appropriate for your purpose.

The processing of fatty foods requires different protective gloves than processing dry food.

Working at the cash register and unprotected food

Working at the cash register and processing non-prepacked foodstuffs is not a good combination.

If you nevertheless have to both process food and work at the cash register, be especially careful about washing your hands and changing protective gloves.

Use of jewellery and working with food

■ What is the principal rule regarding the use of jewellery?

Employees working with food, especially ones processing non-prepacked foodstuffs, should not wear jewellery.

The use of jewellery can be allowed, however, if they are covered with protective clothing.

■ Why is jewellery a risk?

Wearing jewellery can pose a food hygiene risk.

For example, moisture and dirt can accumulate under a ring.

A piece of jewellery or part thereof can break off and end up in the food.

■ Are false eyelashes permitted?

Use of false eyelashes is not recommended.

They can be permitted if there is no possibility of them falling into the food.

■ Why are piercings forbidden?

The use of visible piercings is forbidden if they cannot be covered with protective clothing.

■ Why are piercings a risk?

Piercings break the skin and mucous membranes and pose a hygiene risk.

A large number of bacteria live on the skin and mucous membranes and can be transmitted into food through the hands.

■ Are piercings permitted on the inside of the mouth?

Piercings inside the mouth can be permitted.

Washing hands

Hands have their own natural bacteria and can pick up bacteria from dirty surfaces. Some bacteria are harmless, but others may cause food poisoning.

For the prevention of food poisoning, it is essential to wash the hands sufficiently often when processing foodstuffs.

Wash your hands carefully:

1. always before starting work;
2. during work if necessary;
3. between work stages, for example, after processing ingredients and soil-covered, dirty or spoiled food;
4. after visiting the bathroom;
5. after handling money;
6. after smoking; and
7. after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.

A cut on your hand? Follow this procedure:

1. Protect the wound with, for example, a plaster.
2. Wear protective gloves.

When you use protective gloves, you prevent the spread of bacteria from the wound to non-prepacked food.

Summary

- ▶ Employees who process food must be able to demonstrate the ability to process it hygienically. This is demonstrated with a hygiene passport.
- ▶ Personnel who process food must provide a health certificate at the start of employment and whenever necessary after that. The certificate demonstrates that the employee does not carry Salmonella or other infectious diseases.
- ▶ Employees who process food must wear protective clothing. The recommended protective clothing includes an appropriate uniform, headress and work shoes.
- ▶ Protective gloves are used if necessary.
- ▶ Follow the instructions on hand-washing.