

California Food Handler Card

May 2025

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



Starting January 1, 2012, food facility employees became required to obtain a California Food Handler Card (SB 602 and SB 603). Each state has different food safety training courses. Food service workers employed in California will need to obtain a state or county-specific Food Handler Card.

Who is Required to Have a California Food Handler (CFH) Card?

All food employees who prepare, store, or serve food. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Servers
- Chefs, head chefs, cooks, and head cooks
- Bartenders
- Hosts and hostesses who handle food

Bussers and General Managers or other supervisors may also need to have a CFH Card. Managers who already have a Food Protection Manager Certification do not need to obtain a separate CFH card.

How do You get a CFH Card?

You will need to take a basic food safety training course and pass an exam with a score of 70 percent or higher. Training courses are available through any American National Standards Institute (ANSI) accredited training provider. A list of accredited food handler programs can be found by visiting the ANSI website at: www.ansi.org.

Where are CFH Cards Accepted?

CFH Cards are accepted everywhere in California except Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego Counties; these counties have their own CFH Card Programs.

Who Pays for the Food Handler Training?

The law requires employers to reimburse an employee's time and expenses for taking the training and exam. The CFH Card is the property of the employee who can use it for another employer as long as the card has not expired.

How Long is the Card Valid?

CFH Cards are valid for three (3) years from the date of issuance. Employers **must** keep a copy of each employee's card on file.

For a complete list of exemptions or for further information on the California Food Handler Card, please visit:

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/business/certified-food-handler-manager.htm>, or contact your local Environmental Health District Office.

To locate your local Environmental Health District Office, please visit:

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/EH/about/district-offices.htm>

Who is Exempt from the CFH Card Law?

- Certified Farmers' Markets
- Commissaries
- Convenience Stores
- Grocery Stores
- Licensed Health Care Facilities
- Mobile Support Units
- Public and Private School Cafeterias
- Restricted Food Service Facilities
- Retail Stores where most sales are from a pharmacy
- Temporary Food Facilities
- Cottage Food Operators