

CURRICULUM RESOURCE

Preparing for Safe Food Handling Training

OALCF ALIGNMENT

Competency	Activity Group	Level
Competency A - Find and Use Information	A1. Read continuous text	2
Competency A - Find and Use Information	A2. Interpret documents	2
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	B1. Interact with others	1
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	B3. Complete and create documents	2
Competency D - Use Digital Technology	N/A	2

Goal Paths (check all that apply)

- Employment
- Apprenticeship
- Secondary School Credit
- Postsecondary
- Independence

Embedded Skills for Success (check all that apply)

- Adaptability
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Creativity and innovation
- Digital
- Numeracy
- Problem Solving
- Reading
- Writing

NOTES: This resource should serve as an introduction to Safe Food Handling for learners interested in entering the food service field. More training is required for learners to attain their Safe Food Handling certificate.

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PREPARING FOR SAFE FOOD HANDLING TRAINING

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Overview

Are you interested in working at a job that involves producing or selling food?

Jobs like these are part of the **food service industry**. Food service is a big part of the economy in Canada. There are thousands of jobs in the food service industry.

You might find a food service job at:

- restaurants and cafés
- fast food and takeout places
- supermarkets
- convenience stores
- delis, butchers, and bakeries
- factories that process food
- banquet halls and special vendors

The rules around working in the food service industry have changed. Employers now often require food service workers to have **safe food handling training**.

Jobs that might require safe food handling training include:

- chef or cook
- fast food fry cook or grill cook
- supermarket worker
- baker
- butcher
- factory work in a factory that processes food

In Ontario, you need more than safe food handling training. You will need to earn a **Food Handler Certificate**.

This resource will help you understand the basics of safe food handling. It will explain why safe food handling is important in the food service industry.

After completing this resource, you will be prepared to do the Food Handler Certificate course.



Safe Food Handling

1. What is Safe Food Handling?

Safe food handling is a standard workers use when producing and selling food. It is necessary in the food service industry. Food service jobs require safe food handling practices.

Safe food handling involves:

- safely handling food
- properly preparing food
- correctly storing food
- maintaining good personal hygiene
- thoroughly cleaning and sanitizing
- keeping foods at safe temperatures
- learning about food handling risks
- and much more!

Employers often look for food service workers who have safe food handling training. In fact, many food service jobs require a Food Handler Certificate.



2. Why is Safe Food Handling Important?

Safe food handling is essential in the food service industry. There are many reasons why.

Safe food handling helps:

- reduce foodborne illness
- control the spread of pests
- prevent businesses from getting fines
- keep customers healthy and safe!

Proper safe food handling benefits customers, employees, and the business overall. Here are some ways food premises can benefit from proper safe food handling:

- repeat business from customers who know the food is safe
- employees confident to safely work with food
- food that is tastier and fresher
- less wasted food
- no costs for increased insurance
- not having to close the business because of unsafe conditions

3. Safe Food Handling and the Food Service Industry

Food service businesses employ staff with safe food handling training. A trained staff helps to avoid risks to customers, employees, and the business.

Safe food handling in the food service industry achieves three main goals:

- prevents the spread of foodborne illness
- gives customers peace of mind that their food is safe
- helps businesses to succeed

Food service businesses consider food safety their highest goal.

4. What is the best way to ensure food safety?

Food service employees must learn and practice proper safe food handling. This is why the government has new safe food handling rules. Most food service employees must have a Food Handler Certificate.

- In the next section we will discuss safe food handling regulations.

Activity #1

1. What are three food service jobs? Discuss with your teacher or partner.
2. What is one reason safe food handling is important? Discuss with your teacher or partner.

(Practitioners see answer key on page 21.)

Safe Food Handling Laws

In Canada, there are food handling laws to keep people safe and businesses accountable. All three levels of government regulate the food service industry.

This means that food service businesses must comply with:

- Canadian federal government food safety laws
- Provincial food safety laws
- Municipal by-laws in each district



Laws require food service businesses to ensure their food is safe.

Some laws deal with things employees do not control:

- types of equipment to use
- conditions of the working space

Other laws deal with things the employee is responsible for:

- handling and preparing food
- storing food

Food service businesses and employees are responsible for knowing the laws that apply to them. They must be sure to follow these laws carefully.

1. Federal Legislation

Federal safe food handling laws are made by Health Canada. Health Canada sets food safety standards and policies for food service businesses across Canada.

There are two main regulations that apply to food safety in Canada:

- Safe Food for Canadians Act
- Food and Drugs Act

These laws are enforced by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

2. Provincial Legislation

In Ontario, safe food handling must follow two main acts:

- Ontario Food Safety and Quality Act
- Ontario Food Premises Regulation

Public health units are responsible for enforcing these laws.

3. Municipal Laws

Food service by-laws made and enforced by local governments involve:

- Building standards
- Sewage
- Garbage
- Zoning rules
- Licencing

4. Food Safety Inspectors

Food Safety Inspectors visit food service businesses to enforce the laws. They may be working for the government. They may be working for a regional public health unit.

Food Safety Inspectors have the authority to:

- enter the business at any time without notice
- examine equipment and the premises
- take samples of food and see how food is handled
- check how chemicals are stored
- give out warnings and fines to businesses and food handlers

Inspectors have a right to check workers' Food Handler certificate.

Food service businesses that don't comply with regulations might:

- have food inventory or equipment taken away
- have their reputation ruined and lose customers
- receive a fine or face prosecution
- have their licence revoked and business closed

Activity #2

1. What are two things Food Safety Inspectors have the authority to do? Discuss with your teacher or partner.

2. All food service workers must follow food safety laws. True False

(Practitioners see answer key on page 22.)

Food Handler Certificate

In Ontario, all food service businesses must employ workers that have their **Food Handler Certification**. This is a rule under the Ontario Food Premises Regulation.

Food service businesses must follow certain guidelines. These businesses must:

- employ staff that have obtained a Food Handler Certification
- have at least one certified food handler on the premises during every hour of operation

It's recommended that all food service workers have the certificate.

There is only one way to get the Food Handler Certificate. Workers must complete an **approved** Food Handler Certification course.

There are many different approved courses offered. The courses:

- have differing costs
- may be online or in person
- can take a day or several weeks to complete
- come with different amounts of support
- give one or more exam attempts

Earning a Food Handler Certificate gives you opportunities. Many more jobs are available to people with the certificate.

In Ontario, the Food Handler Certificate lasts for five years. After five years, it must be renewed. This may require more training. There will be a cost involved for the renewal.

Activity #3

1. Do an Internet search to learn what organizations offer training for the Food Handler Certificate.
 - a) Type “food handler certificate training” into a search engine like Google.
 - b) List the names of three organizations that offer the training.
 - c) List the cost of each.
 - d) List any special features like:
 - whether its online or in-person
 - how long the course lasts
 - how many times you can take the exam
 - whether they offer one-on-one support

2. What are two differences between different Food Handler courses? Discuss with your teacher or partner.

3. Earning a Food Handler Certificate could help you get a food service job?

True False

(Practitioners see answer key on page 22.)

Preparation For The Food Handler Course: Course Material

The rest of this resource covers material in the Food Handler course. This will help you to prepare for your training. It will improve your chances of earning a Food Handler Certificate.

Foodborne Illness

Foodborne illness refers to sickness caused by food or drink. Contaminants cause this type of illness. Food contaminants are possibly harmful substances on or in food products, including:

- bacteria
- viruses
- parasites
- human fluids, parts, hair
- insects, animal droppings
- chemicals

These contaminants can cause mild to serious illness. In rare cases, they can cause death. Vulnerable groups are most at risk. Vulnerable groups include:

- young children
- elderly people
- pregnant women
- people with weakened immune systems

Foodborne illness can also be caused by food allergens. Every year millions of Canadians are affected.

a) Biological

A main cause of foodborne illness is biological contamination such as human or animal fluids and wastes. Microorganisms are germ-like contaminants:

- e. coli bacteria found in contaminated meat
- tapeworm and roundworm parasites from undercooked meat and fish
- salmonella bacteria found in raw poultry and eggs
- enteric viruses

The most common spread of viruses to food is human hands.
That's why hand washing is essential!

b) Chemical Contamination

Some dangerous chemicals can get into foods by cross-contamination. Other chemical additives can cause illness.

c) Allergens

Allergens refer to foods that cause allergic reactions. Common allergens are nuts, eggs, and shellfish. More than two million Canadians are affected by food allergies.

Statistics credited to Ontario's Ministry of Health and Long-term Care:

https://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/docs/default-source/ify-businesses/Accessible_Food_Handler_Training_Manual_ENGLISH_05-2013.pdf?sfvrsn=0

Symptoms

The symptoms of foodborne illness can be mild to severe. They include:

- stomach pain
- cramps
- nausea
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- fever
- allergic reactions like difficulty breathing

Food Handling

The main reason for proper safe food handling is to avoid foodborne illnesses. Safe food handling involves a set of industry standards and practices.

Health Canada and other health authorities suggest a four-step model. They call this model **Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill**. It is a good example of safe food handling. There is an explanation below.

Step 1: Clean

- Thoroughly wash hands with soap and water before handling food.
- Wash hands multiple times a shift.
- Clean equipment and surfaces with hot water and cleaning detergent.
- Sanitize with diluted bleach.

Step 2: Separate

- Keep foods separated to avoid cross-contamination.
- Be very careful to keep raw food separate.
- Prepared food should never touch:
 - unwashed hands
 - raw food
 - contaminated equipment (e.g. don't cut fruit with an uncleaned knife that was used to cut raw chicken)

Step 3: Cook

- Food must be cooked to high enough temperatures.
- Bacteria grows in the danger zone temperature.
- The danger zone temperature is between 4°C (40°F) and 60°C (140°F).
- Use a good thermometer to check your temperature.

Step 4: Chill

- Bacteria does not grow well in cold temperatures.
- Store food in the refrigerator at 4°C (40°F).
- Store food in the freezer at -18°C (0°F).

Source: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/general-food-safety-tips/food-safety-you.html>

Cleaning & Sanitizing

Proper cleaning and sanitizing keep contaminants at safe levels. The keys to **cleaning** include:

- Remove any obvious pieces of food, dirt or other debris.
- Use cleaning chemicals and friction like scrubbing to remove the rest.
- Rinse with hot tap water to remove cleaning chemicals.

Sanitizing is an extra layer of protection to reduce contaminants. The steps to **sanitizing** are:

- Clean first, then sanitize.
- Water should reach 77°C (170°F).
- Use a chemical agent like diluted bleach.
- Sanitize objects in hot water and chemicals for 45 seconds.

Activity #4

1. What are two types of contaminants? Can you give some examples? Discuss with your teacher or partner.
2. What is the four-step food handling model? Discuss with your teacher or partner.

(Practitioners see answer key on page 23.)

Food Storage

Food storage is another key part of safe food handling. Here are some food storage tips:

- Be sure to date food when it arrives.
- Use older food first.
- Keep raw food separate from prepared food.
- Wrap food and seal containers to avoid spoiling.
- Hot food should reach a temperature of 60C/140F.
- Store cold foods at 40C/400F or less.

Personal Hygiene

Safe food handling begins before workers arrive at work. They must practice good personal hygiene before and during shifts:

- Come to work clean and tidy.
- Wash hands regularly.
- Wash hands after using the bathroom.
- Wash hands after blowing your nose or coughing.
- Avoid touching your face or body before handling food.

Source: https://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/docs/default-source/jfy-businesses/Accessible_Food_Handler_Training_Manual_ENGLISH_05-2013.pdf?sfvrsn=0

Activity #5

1. What is one food storage tip? Discuss with your teacher or partner.
2. What are three good personal hygiene practices? Discuss with your teacher or partner.

(Practitioners see answer key on page 23-24.)



Food Handler Courses: Tips for Preparation

1. Tips for Exam Preparation

- You may need access to a webcam for the training and exam.
- You may need access to a printer to print your certificate.
- Take notes as you learn.
- Re-read your notes.
- Re-read the course material.
- Study hard before taking the exam.
- Ask for help when you need it.
- You can usually take the exam more than once.



Answer Key for Practitioners

Activity 1 Answers:

1. Food Service Jobs include:

- chef or cook
- fast food fry cook or grill cook
- supermarket worker
- baker
- butcher
- factory work in a factory that processes food

2. Safe Food Handling is important because:

- it reduces foodborne illnesses
- it controls the spread of pests
- it prevents businesses from getting fines
- it keeps customers healthy
- it encourages repeat business from customers who know the food is safe
- employees are confident to safely work with food
- food is tastier and fresher
- there is less wasted food
- there are no costs for increased insurance
- the business does not have to close because of unsafe conditions

Activity 2 Answers:

1. Food Safety Inspectors have the authority to:
 - examine equipment
 - take samples of food
 - enter the business at any time without notice
 - give out warnings and fines

2. True: Food service workers **must** follow food safety laws.

Activity 3 Answers:

2. Some differences between Food Handler courses are:
 - differing costs
 - may be online or in person
 - can take a day or several weeks to complete
 - come with different amounts of support
 - some give extra exam attempts

3. True: The Food Handler Certificate **will** help job-seekers get a job.

Activity 4 Answers:

2. Types of contaminants include:

- bacteria
- viruses
- parasites
- chemicals

3. The four-step food handling model is **clean, separate, cook, and chill**.

Activity 5 Answers:

1. Food storage tips include:

- Date food when it arrives.
- Use older food first.
- Keep raw food separate from prepared food.
- Wrap food and seal containers to avoid spoiling.
- Date all food when it is received. Make sure that older foods are used up first to maintain nutrition and freshness.
- Hot food should reach a temperature of 60C/140F.
- Cold foods should be stored at 4C/40F or less.

2. Some good personal hygiene practices:

- Wash hands regularly.
- Wash hands after using the bathroom.
- Wash hands after blowing your nose or coughing.
- Avoid touching your face or body before handling food.
- Come to work clean and tidy.