

Food Safety is in Your Hands

Retail Food Establishments – Food Safety



Chopping, cutting, cooking, serving, washing, sweeping, etc., hands get quite a workout in the retail food establishment. Many of these tasks are done over and over throughout the day, so they become routine and may often be done without much thought. Between these routine tasks do you remember to wash your hands?

The most common causes of foodborne illness outbreaks in food establishments are improper or infrequent handwashing. Careful attention to when to wash, where to wash, and how to wash is **important** to ensure food safety.

When to Wash

Immediately before:

- Beginning food preparation.
- Putting on a new pair of single-use gloves for working with food.
- Handling clean equipment, utensils, and tableware.
- Handling single-service and single-use items.

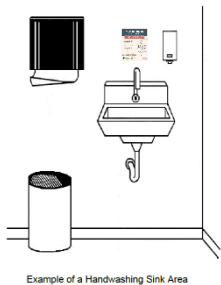
Immediately after:

- Touching body parts (eyes, nose, mouth, face, head, hair, etc.).
- Touching clothing and personal items (phones, purses, bags, hair coverings, etc.).
- Breaks:
 - Eating or drinking.
 - Vaping, smoking, or other tobacco use.
- Visiting the toilet room.
- Coughing or sneezing.
- Handling or removing trash, sweeping, mopping, or other cleaning or maintenance tasks.
- Handling areas of high contamination such as door handles, menus, etc.
- Doing other activities that may contaminate hands.

Hands must also be washed:

- When changing tasks, including switching from working with raw food to working with ready-to-eat food.
- As often as needed to remove food debris and other contaminants.

Where to Wash



Example of a Handwashing Sink Area

Hands must be washed in a handwashing sink only. Washing hands in a warewashing sink, or prep sink could leave unseen germs on sink surfaces that could contaminate food, equipment, or utensils. Using a mop sink for handwashing could expose hands to germs when faucet handles, or surrounding surfaces are touched. Mop sinks and mop sink areas should be used to dispose of dirty mop water and other liquid waste, clean trash cans, and store cleaning supplies such as mops, buckets, and brooms only.

Water at the handwashing sink must be provided through a mixing faucet at a temperature of at least 100°F. Hand sinks must be supplied with soap, and paper towels, or other, approved drying device. Handwashing signage must be located at sinks that are used for handwashing.

Handwashing sinks must always be accessible. Items such as boxes or equipment should not block the path to the sink. Food, equipment, and utensils should not be stored inside the hand sink.

How to Wash



1. Wet hands with warm water.



2. Apply soap to hands and lather making sure soap covers all areas of the hands, front and back.



3. Wash hands for 20 seconds, making sure to scrub between fingers and underneath fingernails.



4. Rinse soap from hands, then dry hands with a paper towel or other approved drying device.

Using hand sanitizers or wearing gloves is not a substitute for handwashing. Wash Your Hands! ([English/Español](#), [English/Chinese](#)) signs may be printed from the [Educational Materials](#) webpage.

