



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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Department of Health requires food handlers certification for all food establishments statewide

HONOLULU - The Hawai'i Department of Health's (DOH) Sanitation Branch, which successfully launched the state's color-coded placard system, is reminding all food establishments statewide of regulations that require existing and new permit holders to complete a food handlers education course approved by the department. The new requirement became effective Sept. 2, 2017 and will be enforced beginning Sept. 4, 2018, as the Department of Health gave the industry a year to meet the new standards.

Section 11-50-20(c), Hawai'i Administrative Rules (HAR), requires that the person in charge of a food establishment during normal work hours (including during food preparation) complete training in proper food handling in order to obtain certification. DOH will accept certification recognized by the American National Standards Institute. Proof of certification will be required during health inspections beginning Sept. 4, 2018.

"Extensive studies have shown food establishments with managers formally trained in food safety have fewer occurrences of critical violations during routine inspection," said Peter Oshiro, Sanitation Branch manager. "This lowers the risk of contracting a food-borne illness by the public. This is a true win-win situation for the food establishments and for public health."

The new food handlers training requirement also applies to individuals and organizations that intend to distribute food at special events (and therefore need a special event permit) and purveyors of homemade food who distribute products such as cookies and breads directly to consumers.

Food Safety classes are offered at no charge by the DOH, statewide. To sign up for DOH sponsored classes go to <https://health.hawaii.gov/san/food-safety-education/> and select the location. Resources are also listed for online classes offered by DOH

approved vendors as well as multilingual classes available for a fee (usually less than \$15).

The new state food safety rules (chapter 11-50, Hawai'i Administrative Rules), designed both to better protect public health and simplify the regulation of food establishments, went into effect on Sept. 2, 2017. DOH amended Chapter 50, Food Safety Code, after completing public hearings on Hawai'i Island, Kaua'i, Maui and O'ahu in December 2016 and March 2017. The amended rules affect all food establishments statewide with new requirements for the industry. DOH allowed the industry one year to comply with the food protection certification provisions.

The DOH Sanitation Branch protects the health of Hawai'i residents and visitors through education of food industry workers and regulation of food establishments statewide. The branch conducts routine health inspections of food establishments where food products are prepared, manufactured, distributed or sold. The branch also investigates the sources of food borne illnesses and potential adulteration; and is charged with mitigating foodborne outbreaks and/or the prevention of future occurrences. Health inspectors work closely with business owners, food service workers, and the food industry to ensure safe food preparation practices and sanitary conditions.

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