

Hand Washing in Food Establishments: What You Need to Know

Foodborne illness outbreaks in restaurants commonly occur when food items are contaminated by disease-causing agents on the hands of food workers. Hand washing is an effective and necessary practice to remove bacteria, viruses, and other contaminants from the hands of food workers. To stop the spread of foodborne illness, food workers should wash their hands frequently and properly.

To properly wash your hands, follow these steps:

1. Wet your hands with hot/warm water.
2. Apply soap to your hands.
3. Scrub your hands together for at least 20 seconds. Make sure to scrub in between your fingers, underneath your fingernails, and any uncovered portions of your wrists or arms.
4. Remove all the soap from your hands by rinsing in hot/warm water.
5. Use a clean paper towel to turn off the faucet of the hand sink.
6. Thoroughly dry your clean hands with either a clean paper towel or with an air dryer.



Hands must be washed in sinks that are labeled and used only for hand washing.

- Hands must **never** be washed in prep sinks, three-compartment sinks, dump sinks, or mop sinks.
- Sinks that are intended for hand washing must **never** be used for any purpose other than washing hands.
- Only washing hands in labeled hand sinks reduces the risk for cross-contamination between hands and other items that could be placed in the sink.



Hand washing sinks must be located in areas that are convenient for employees to use as needed.

- All food preparation areas, food dispensing areas, ware washing areas, and restrooms must be equipped with at least one hand sink each.
- Food establishments must have more than one hand sink available for use outside of the restrooms. In establishments with only one hand sink, the kitchen area must be sufficiently small so that the sole hand sink is reasonably accessed from all areas, and the level of activity in the establishment must not discourage use of the hand sink due to time pressures.



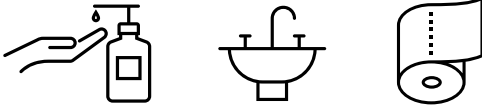
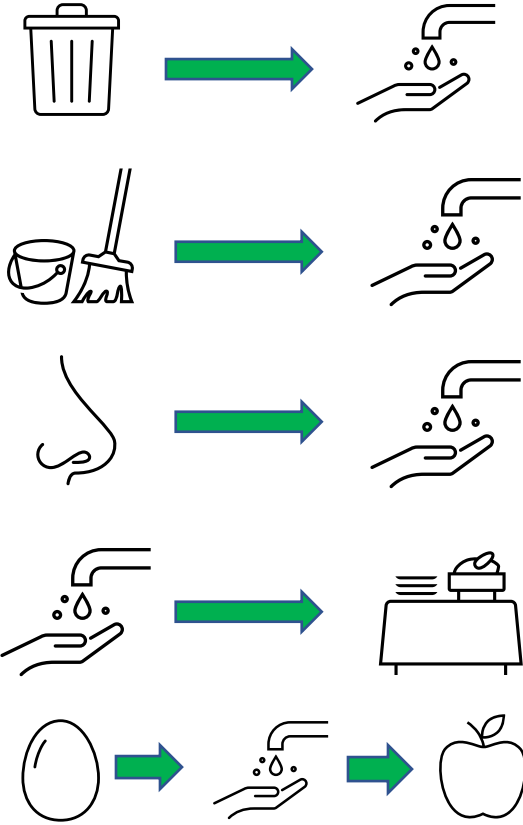


Hand washing sinks must be available for food workers to use at all times.

- There must never be items blocking access to hand sinks.
- Hand sinks must be kept in good repair so that they are functional for proper handwashing.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

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<p>Hand washing sinks must be properly supplied at all times.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand sinks must have both hot and cold water. Water temperatures must never be so hot or so cold that it is uncomfortable for food workers to keep their hands in the water for at least 20 seconds to complete a proper hand wash. • Hand sinks must always be supplied with soap and paper towels so that it is easy for employees to properly wash their hands. • Hand sinks must be labeled for hand washing only. 	
<p>Hand washing must occur frequently.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees must wash their hands <u>immediately before</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ beginning food preparation, ○ Putting on a new pair of single-use gloves for working with food, ○ handling clean equipment and utensils; and, ○ handling unwrapped single-items (silverware, to-go boxes, etc.). • Employees must wash their hands <u>immediately after</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Touching bare human body parts (eyes, face, nose, mouth, etc.), ○ Touching clothing or personal items (purses/bags, cellphones, hair coverings, etc.), ○ Using the restroom, ○ Coughing, sneezing, using a handkerchief or tissue, using tobacco, eating, or drinking, ○ Handling areas of high contamination (trash cans, door handles, menus, etc.), ○ Handling soiled equipment or utensils; and, ○ Engaging in other activities that may contaminate hands. • Employees must wash their hands when changing tasks, including switching between working with raw food and working with ready-to-eat food. • Employees must wash their hands as often as necessary to remove food debris and other contaminants. 	
<p>Use of hand sanitizer does not replace a proper handwash. Employees must only use hand sanitizer immediately after properly washing their hands.</p>	
<p>Proper hand washing must be used in addition to single-use gloves, utensils, and other methods when handling ready-to-eat food items. Bare-hand contact with ready-to-eat food items must never occur, even in establishments with perfect hand washing.</p>	

For more information: email foodsafety@nnph.org or call 775-328-2434 option 8 to connect with an inspector.