

## Frequently Asked Questions Food Handler Training in Illinois

*The following answers are based on Public Act 098-0566 and proposed rules that are in the review process. Some answers are subject to change.*

### **Who is considered a Food Handler?**

A Food Handler is a Food Employee as defined in Section 750.110 of the Illinois Food Service Sanitation Code, “means individual working with unpackaged food, food equipment or utensils, or food-contact surfaces.”

### **Who is required to have Food Handler Training?**

Any food handler working in the state of Illinois, unless that person has a valid Illinois Food Service Sanitation Manager Certification (FSSMC). If someone working in a facility that is not a food handler on a regular basis, but fills in as a food handler when needed, they too must have food handler training.

### **Who is NOT required to have Food Handler Training?**

Anyone working in a facility that is not a food handler by definition or any food handler that has a valid Illinois Food Service Sanitation Manager Certification (FSSMC).

### **What type of training is required and by what date?**

The first thing is to determine what category the facility you work at falls into, which is either a restaurant or non-restaurant. See attached Food Handler Training Determination Tree.

## **Food Handlers working in a Restaurant**

### **What is a restaurant?**

*“Restaurant” means any business that is primarily engaged in the sale of ready-to-eat food for immediate consumption. Where “primarily engaged” means having sales of ready-to-eat food for immediate consumption comprising of at least 51% of the total sales, excluding the sale of liquor, as defined in Section 3 of the Food Handling Regulation Enforcement Act. For the purposes of this definition, restaurants would include concessions and other food service establishments where food is intended for immediate or on-site consumption.*

### **What is the timeline for implementation?**

All food handlers working in restaurants shall have training completed by July 1, 2014. Enforcement will be limited to notification and education July 1-December 31, 2014.

### **What type of training is offered for Restaurants?**

Food handler courses with American National Standards Institute (ANSI) approval can be found on the ANSI website at: <https://www.ansica.org/wwwversion2/outside/ALLdirectoryListing.asp?menuID=212&prgID=228&status=4> (states California, but can also be used in Illinois). The course and assessment can be completed online, 24 hours/day and does not need to be monitored by an instructor. Upon passing the assessment, the certificate is immediately available to print. A local health department that has a Department approved training program may provide training for restaurants. For a list of all local health departments: <http://www.idph.state.il.us/local/alpha.htm>. Any business with an internal training program approved in another state prior to August 27, 2013.

### **How is the training administered?**

Training can be on-line, computer, classroom, live trainers, remote trainers, and by certified food service sanitation managers. For those food handlers working in restaurants, the training must be ANSI approved, unless their local health department has been approved by the Department to provide food handler training to restaurants or they work for a business with a Department approved internal training program.

### **Will everyone receiving Food Handler Training receive a certificate?**

Not every food handler training course will issue a certificate, but proof of training must be available in the facility upon inspector request. All ANSI approved food handler training courses will issue a certificate upon passing the assessment. The Department will provide a sample certificate upon approval that may be used by those with approved training programs.

### **How long is the certificate valid?**

The ANSI food handler training certificates are good for 3 years and those taking other types of trainings that work in restaurants and other facilities such as: nursing homes, licensed day care homes and facilities, hospitals, schools, and long-term care facilities are good for 3 years.

Those working in non-restaurants are not required to take another food handler training unless they go to work for another employer. Food handler training for those working in non-restaurants is not transferable between employers.

### **Will my food handler certificate be valid throughout the entire state of Illinois?**

Restaurant food handler training certificates are valid throughout the entire state of Illinois, unless the training was obtained internally at a facility through a Department approved multi-state training program.

### **Who can teach Food Handler courses?**

Anyone can teach food handler training courses. It is important to remember, it is not who is teaching the training, but that you receive the appropriate training based on whether you work in a restaurant or non-restaurant.

Food handlers in restaurants can take the following trainings:

- Food handler courses with American National Standards Institute (ANSI) approval can be found on the ANSI website at:  
<https://www.ansica.org/wwwversion2/outside/ALLdirectoryListing.asp?menuID=212&prgID=228&status=4>  
(states California, but can also be used in Illinois) The course and assessment can be completed online, 24 hours/day and do not need to be monitored by an instructor. Upon passing the assessment, the certificate is immediately available to print.
- A local health department that has a Department approved training program may provide training for restaurants. For a list of all local health departments: <http://www.idph.state.il.us/local/alpha.htm>
- Any business with an internal training program approved in another state prior to August 27, 2013.

### **Can a “train the trainer” approach be used, where one person attend a training and they go back and teach others within their facility?**

No, this would not be acceptable for food handlers working in restaurants because the food handler needs to receive the training themselves and be assessed by the approved training program provider.

### **Is there a set fee the course?**

No, the Act states there has to be at least one food handler training option available for \$15.00 or less and there are multiple ANSI approved programs available online at that price.

## **Food Handlers working in a Non-restaurant**

### **What is a non-restaurant?**

Non-restaurants are facilities such as: nursing homes, licensed day care homes and facilities, hospitals, schools, long-term care facilities and retail food stores.

### **What is the timeline for implementation?**

All food handlers working in non-restaurants shall have training completed by July 1, 2016. Enforcement will be limited to notification and education July 1-December 31, 2016.

**What type of training is offered for Non-restaurants?**

Any food handler training course that has been registered and approved by the Department is acceptable for food handlers in non-restaurants.

**How is the training administered?**

Training can be on-line, computer, classroom, live trainers, remote trainers, and by certified food service sanitation managers. For those food handlers working in restaurants, the training must be ANSI approved, unless their local health department has been approved by the Department to provide food handler training to restaurants or they work for a business with a Department approved internal training program.

**Will everyone receiving Food Handler Training receive a certificate?**

Not every food handler training course will issue a certificate, but proof of training must be available in the facility upon inspector request.

**How long is the certificate valid?**

Those working in non-restaurants are not required to take another food handler training unless they go to work for another employer. Food handler training for those working in non-restaurants is not transferable between employers.

**Will the State issue Food Handler certifications?**

No, the State will not issue food handler certifications. The State will continue to issue the Food Service Sanitation Manager Certification (FSSMC).

**Will my food handler certificate be valid throughout the entire state of Illinois?**

No, non-restaurant training is not transferable between employers.

**Is the employer responsible for paying for Food Handler training?**

No, an employer is not responsible for paying for food handler training, since it is the property of the certificate holder.

**Who can teach Food Handler courses?**

Anyone can teach food handler training courses. It is important to remember, it is not who is teaching the training, but that you receive the appropriate training based on whether you work in a restaurant or non-restaurant.

Food handlers working in non-restaurants can take any food handler training course that has been registered and approved by the Department.

**Can a “train the trainer” approach be used, where one person attend a training and they go back and teach others within their facility?**

Yes, the train the trainer approach could be used for those food handlers working in non-restaurants.

**Is there a set fee the course?**

No, the Act states there has to be at least one food handler training option available for \$15.00 or less and there are multiple ANSI approved programs available online at that price.