



Requirements

Food Safety is everyone's business. It's important to you, as the operator of a retail food establishment, so your customers will continue to patronize your business. It's important to the public so they will know that dining out is safe. And, it's important to the Santa Clara County Department of Environmental Health because it is our job to work with you to help ensure that all food is safe to eat.

A new California law requires that most retail food facilities that handle *unpackaged food of any kind* employ at least one person who is certified in food safety. Certification in food safety simply means that you or at least one of your employees is required to have basic knowledge of the causes of foodborne illness and its prevention, pass an approved examination, and possess a valid certificate in food safety.

As of January 1, 2000, each affected food business - *restaurant, market, bakery, mobile food preparation unit, and commissary* - will have to meet this new requirement. Failure to have at least one certified owner or employee may result in the loss of your permit to operate. One person cannot satisfy this requirement for more than one facility, although multiple facilities at the same location and under the same ownership will need only one person who is food-safety certified. The certified person must be employed at the business, but need not be present at all times. Certification must be renewed every three years by passing an approved examination. Facilities that begin operation after January 1, 2000, or lose their certified owner or employee, will have 60 days to comply with the certification requirement.

The law also establishes that there are currently five providers of food safety testing and certification (see enclosed list). Additional training and testing organizations may be recognized in the future. The Santa Clara County Department of Environmental Health will offer food safety training courses, as well as testing and certification beginning in mid 1999, to help you meet this new California requirement. Our classes will be available in English, Chinese, Spanish, and Vietnamese. To receive information about our upcoming courses, please complete and return the enclosed mailer or call 1-408- 918-3400 and ask to be placed on our mailing list.

A list of frequently asked questions may assist in your understanding of the law. For further information or assistance, please call the Santa Clara County Department of Environmental Health at 1-408- 918-3400 during normal business hours.