

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES



DIVISION FOR REGULATORY SERVICES ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSUMER SAFETY SECTION POLICY, STANDARDS, AND QUALITY ASSURANCE UNIT FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS GROUP

New Rule for Food Handler Education or Training Program 25 TAC §229.178

A new rule for Food Handler Education or Training Programs was approved for adoption by the Commissioner of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission and became effective on April 24, 2008. The purpose of the rule is to provide the framework for accrediting food safety education or training programs for food handlers in accordance with the Health and Safety Code (HSC), Chapter 438, Subchapter D.§438.0431. This uniform standard governing the accreditation of food handler programs is to enhance the recognition of reciprocity among regulatory agencies and reduce the expense of duplicate education incurred when food handlers work in multiple regulatory jurisdictions. The education of food handlers provides more qualified employees, thereby reducing the risk of foodborne illness outbreaks caused by improper food preparation and handling techniques.

Food Handler Cards issued by an accredited program shall be recognized statewide by regulatory authorities as the valid proof of successful completion of a department-accredited food handler education or training program. This was authorized under Texas Health and Safety Code §438.046.

Cards issued by an accredited program will display their program "TXDSHS license number, program name and address. A registry of accredited programs, along with a sample of the card issued by that program is posted on the Food Establishments Group, Food Handler Program webpage.

A food handler may be required to have a local health jurisdiction card in addition to the card issued by the training provider. The jurisdiction may also charge a fee for issuance. However, any fee charged may not exceed the lesser of: the reasonable cost incurred by the jurisdiction in issuing the card; or the fee charged by the jurisdiction to issue a card to a food handler certified by the jurisdiction as having met the training requirements by any other means. This was authorized under Texas Health and Safety Code §438.046.

A Food Handler Program Initial/Renewal Application form can be found at the following web site: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/fdlicense/apps.shtm#cfm> . A copy of the new rules can be found at: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/foodestablishments/rules.shtm>.

Contact the Food Establishments Group at (512) 834-6753 with any questions. You may also email your questions to the following email address: Ione.Wenzel@dshs.state.tx.us.



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