

Overcoming Challenges - Handwashing

Food establishment management and staff often encounter many challenges when it comes to when, where, and how to wash their hands.

2-301.11 through 2-301.15, and 4-501.16 of the 2013 FDA Food Code states that food employees shall keep their hands and exposed portions of their arms clean by following approved handwashing procedures using approved handwashing sinks.

Common Challenges

There are many challenges associated with handwashing, but three main root causes can be directly correlated to controlling this hazard:

Staff Behavior

- Pressure for speedy service and profits result in shortcuts being taken
- Staff are not following proper handwashing procedures
- Staff are not washing hands when donning gloves or changing tasks

Handwashing Equipment

- Soap & towel dispenser supplies are not maintained
- Handsink locations and food flow processes do not promote proper handwashing

Management Behavior

- Employees not trained on
 - Proper handwashing procedures
 - The importance of handwashing
 - When to wash their hands
- Managers may be under pressure for profits, causing food safety to be lower priority
- Lack of accountability/shared contribution to a food safety culture
- Management does not make time to monitor employees in kitchen

Overcoming Challenges

There are effective options to consider when overcoming handwashing challenges.

- Create Policies**
- Train Staff**
- Verify Policies are Working**