

Maricopa County's New Food Code: Changes You Need to Know About!

Beginning October 3, 2001, [Maricopa County's Food Code](#) will change to reflect the recommendations of the 1999 FDA Model Food Code, as adopted by the State of Arizona this year, with modifications to comply with local current standards. This new document, which is supported by law and based on scientific justification, also includes the best strategies needed to ensure a safer food supply.

The President's **National Food Safety Initiative** has emphasized safer food handling and processing "from the farm to the fork". All phases of the food flow will be overseen in order to eliminate hazardous practices and provide the safest food-handling methods attainable, thereby making every effort to avoid foodborne illness.

We all need to be responsible participants in this endeavor, becoming well informed and sharing new and better ways with others. We as consumers demand safe food and we as providers and protectors must go the "extra mile" to see that this initiative is fully carried out for the benefit of all. Please do your part in this effort.

The following are specific changes that will be closely observed during health inspections and training exercises for both regulators and industry:

- The person in charge of an establishment must be able to demonstrate knowledge of recommended safe food-handling practices and have a basic understanding of disease transmission via food. Maricopa County requires one Certified Food Service Manager per establishment. This certificate must be renewed every three years. The Certified Manager is directly responsible for the training and supervision of all food service workers so that the benefit of their extended training can be used in the total "team" - safe food service.
- Non-latex gloves will be required when handling ready-to-eat food items. Utensils, such as a tong, fork etc. or food grade tissues may be used to handle food directly; no bare hand contact is allowed. Single use gloves are to be used for one task only and are to be discarded when damaged or soiled. Hands must be washed, each time, before putting on gloves. Workers with fake fingernails or wearing fingernail polish must wear gloves whenever handling exposed food. Slash resistant gloves (used for cutting meat) are permitted for product that will be cooked later.
- In sauces that will not be cooked, pasteurized eggs must be substituted for raw shell eggs.
- If fruits or vegetables are to be cooked for hot holding they must be cooked and held after cooking at 130°F.
- The hot holding temperature of all potentially hazardous foods will be 130°F.
- Cooling temperatures for potentially hazardous foods will change to 130°F cool down to 70°F within 2 hours, then continue down to 41°F within 4 hours.

- ▶ Cold holding for potentially hazardous foods will be 4 days if held at 45°F and 7 days if held at 41°F, and foods must be date marked.
- ▶ The minimum cooking temperature for ground fish or meat is 155°F for 15 seconds.
- ▶ If food is to be cooked in a microwave, it must be covered and cooked to 165°F with stirring in between. Once cooked, it must have a two-minute hold before service.
- ▶ Vacuum or reduced oxygen packaging processes must have a pre-approved Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Point (HACCP) plan by the Division of Environmental Health.
- ▶ Potentially hazardous foods that are maintained in the temperature “danger zone” must be consumed or discarded within four hours.
- ▶ Packaged fruit and vegetable juice must be pasteurized if serving highly susceptible populations (HSP).
- ▶ Use of raw seed sprouts is prohibited if serving highly susceptible populations.
- ▶ Hot water sanitization in commercial dishwashers shall be 160°F spray on the surface of the dish or utensil but the water temperature remains at 170°F for immersion sanitization.
- ▶ Quaternary Ammonium Compounds may vary in strength requirements recommended by the manufacturer. Read the directions on the container.