

Dress Guidelines for Food Handlers



Capital Health
EDMONTON AREA

Rationale: Hairnets or hats not only control hair but may also prevent loose hair or broken hair fragments from falling onto food and food preparation areas.

- b) **Beards, if any, must be trimmed and tidy. The use of beard nets is strongly recommended for bearded food handlers working in all food preparation establishments.**

Rationale: Same as above.

3. FOOTWEAR

- a) **Footwear must be clean and free of dirt and accumulated food particles on both the top and bottom.**

Rationale: Accumulation of food particles and dirt on footwear may allow microorganisms to multiply and may subsequently affect the general sanitary conditions of the premises.

4. JEWELRY AND MAKE-UP

- a) **Wearing jewelry or other cosmetic enhancing items during food handling activities is discouraged. These include, but are not limited to:**

- Rings
- Nail polish
- Wrist watches, bracelets
- Clip-on earrings
- False nails, false eye lashes



In cases where rings are difficult to remove, approved gloves should be worn by the food handler while handling open foods.

Rationale: Jewelry worn on hands or wrists can collect dirt and food particles. Such conditions provide excellent breeding grounds for bacteria, and may result in the inadvertent contamination of food.

Public Health Division
Environmental Public Health Services

For more information, please contact your nearest Environmental Public Health Services office.

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Alberta Public Health Act - Food Regulation (Alberta Regulation 31/2006)
Section 30(1) states:

A food handler shall:

- (a) wear clean clothing and footwear,
- (b) exhibit cleanliness and good personal hygiene,
- (c) ensure food is not contaminated by hair,
- (d) wash hands as often as necessary to prevent the contamination of food or food areas,
- (e) refrain from smoking in a food area, and
- (f) refrain from any other conduct that could result in the contamination of food or food area.

Moreover, section 30(3) requires that an operator of a food establishment ensure that the aforementioned section is complied with. Sections 5.1 through 5.7 of the Alberta Health Food Retail and Food Services Code (October 2003) deals with these issues.

Intent of These Guidelines

The intent of these guidelines is to supplement, and not to replace the existing

Food Regulation. It is often difficult to determine whether certain clothing is clean or not. The Environmental Public Health Division of Capital Health has therefore developed these guidelines

- ✧ to assist management of food facilities and food handlers to maintain sound public health practices
- ✧ to achieve high standards to protect the consumers' health
- ✧ to identify and assess health risks in association with food handlers' clothing, and
- ✧ to provide answers to the most frequently asked questions.

1. UNIFORMS

- a) Uniforms should be changed on a daily basis, or whenever they have become soiled.**

Rationale: Food handlers tend to wipe their hands on uniforms and aprons. Both could become excellent breeding grounds for bacteria when exposed to warm temperatures, and as such increases the likelihood of cross-contamination.

- b) Aprons should be worn and should be changed at least once during the day, preferably in the middle of an eight-hour shift, whenever they have**

become soiled, or whenever a food handler changes work stations from raw food preparation activities to ready-to-eat food preparation activities.

Rationale: Same as above.

Frequent changing would avoid build-up of food particles and bacteria on aprons. This practice would further prevent the transfer of bacteria from dirty aprons to hands and then onto food items and utensils.

- c) Food handlers should not wear aprons outside food preparation areas.**

Rationale: This procedure would minimize possible contamination of aprons by airborne pathogens, dirt, dust, and possible soiling by wash-room fixtures and other unsanitary articles.

2. HAIR CONTROL

- a) The hair of food handlers must always be kept under control. The use of hairnets, or hats by all personnel entering food preparation areas is strongly recommended.**