



# TOWN OF HALIFAX COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

## Board of Health

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## Eight Rules of Safe Food Handling

All employees should know the eight basic rules of safe food handling, and are responsible for safe food practices in their assigned areas.

1. **Practice strict personal hygiene.** Employees should wash their hands regularly and in between tasks. *Never touch ready-to-eat food with bare hands.*  
Employees who are ill should not report to work.
2. **Monitor time and temperature and prevent cross-contamination** when storing and handling food during preparation.
3. **Make sure raw products are kept separate from ready-to-eat foods.**
4. **Avoid cross-contamination by cleaning and sanitizing food-contact surfaces,** equipment, and utensils before and after every use, and at least once every four hours during continuous use. Wipe cloths must be in buckets of sanitizing solution at all times when not in use.
5. **Cook foods to their required minimum internal temperature or higher.**
6. **Hold hot foods at 140°F (60°) or above and cold foods at 41° (5°C) or below.**
7. **Chill cooked food to 41°F (5°C) with in four hours.** (Alternatively, cool cooked food to 70°F (21°C) within two hours, and then chill to 41°F (5°C) within four hours.)
8. **Reheat foods for service to an internal temperature of 165°F (74°C) for fifteen seconds within two hours. Then hold it at least at 140°F (60°C).**

## Summary

Safe food handling practices don't stop once food is properly prepared and cooked. To make sure the food you serve is safe, you must continue to protect it from temperature abuse and contamination until it is eaten.

When holding foods for service, keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Make sure all employees, including servers, practice good personal hygiene. Train employees to avoid cross-contamination when handling utensils, service items and tableware. Customers, too, can unknowingly contaminate foods in self-service areas such as food bars and buffets. Take special precautions when preparing, delivering, or serving food off-site. Finally, make sure all employees know and understand the eight rules of safe food handling.