

INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING THE HEALTH STATUS ASSESSMENTS OF PEOPLE HANDLING FOODSTUFFS

Ensuring the hygiene of those who handle foodstuffs is important. Poor hygiene may spread disease-causing microbes from hands, the mouth or work clothes onto foodstuffs, which may lead to cases of food poisoning.

Food premises must have a person in charge of hygiene training for the personnel, the monitoring of hygiene and the necessary health certificates of the personnel.

A health status assessment in accordance with the Communicable Diseases Act (1227/2016) and the Decree on Communicable Diseases (146/2017) (Valtioneuvoston asetus tartuntataudeista)

- According to the Communicable Diseases Act and the Decree on Communicable Diseases, the employer must require that the employee provide a reliable account of not having contracted salmonella, if the employee **handles unpackaged foodstuffs that are served cold as part of their work tasks and the estimated duration of the employment in the food premises is at least one month.**
- The assessment is required at the **start of employment or each time there is justified reason to believe that the employee may have contracted salmonella** (e.g. they suffer from fever and diarrhoea or their family member has been diagnosed with a salmonella infection).
- The account of the salmonella infection and the assessment of the need for laboratory testing is included in the interview conducted by occupational health care or the health centre physician or nurse, i.e. the health status assessment. The employer arranges for the health status assessment of the employee as part of occupational health care.
- This assessment must also be required of interns and other workers who work at the worksite but do not have employment contracts.
- The good hygiene practices associated with working with foodstuffs must be emphasised to the employee during the interview (You must not come to work when you have symptoms and you must report any communicable diseases that might be passed on through foodstuffs to your employer. The employer must stress the importance of good hand hygiene and provide the employees with hygiene training).
- A **statement** of the health assessment is given.
The food premises must at least have a listing of people who have provided a certificate of the assessment of their health (name of person and date of assessment).
- *This assessment is not required for those who work as cashiers or serve ready-to-serve food, or those who handle unpackaged foodstuffs which are very unlikely to pass on salmonella (e.g. candy, biscuits, fruit cakes and alcohol).*

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

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Customer instructions

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- The Finnish Food Authority website has a table with examples of the assessments and work clothes, etc., required by various tasks.

<https://www.ruokavirasto.fi/en/companies/food-sector/common-requirements-in-the-food-sector/elintarvikehygienia/handling-of-unpackaged-perishable-foodstuffs/>

Laboratory testing

Laboratory testing must be carried out if the employee currently has or has had fever and diarrhoea during the past month. A comprehensive culture examination (F-BaktVi1) or a combination of a culture examination and nucleic acid amplification examination (often the PCR method) is recommended to determine the cause of the fever and diarrhoea. The latter may be able to identify several pathogens. If the person is able to work, occupational health care must be consulted to find them tasks that do not carry the risk of infection.

The employee may return to their original tasks after two days without symptoms, if no salmonella was found in laboratory tests or if no salmonella could be cultured from a PCR positive control sample.

If the employee performing tasks that carry a risk of infection is diagnosed with a salmonella infection, they are suspended from their tasks and they are primarily given other tasks to avoid risk of infection. In this event, **a doctor must be consulted on when they may return to their usual tasks**. Further information on suspension from tasks that carry a risk of infection, monitoring samples, hygienic measures, antimicrobial medication and procedures concerning special groups can be found in the instructions on preventing salmonella infections issued by the National Institute for Health and Welfare (in Finnish)

<https://thl.fi/fi/web/infektiotaudit/taudit-ja-mikrobit/bakteeritaudit/salmonella/toimenpideohje-salmonellatartuntojen-ehkaisemiseksi>