HEALTH CARE AGENCY/PUBLIC HEALTH
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN

To: **Orange County Retail Food Facility Owners/Operators**

Subject: **ORANGE COUNTY FOOD HANDLER CARD LAW REQUIREMENTS**

On July 1, 2011, the California Food Handler Card Law (SB602) went into effect, which requires most food workers in the State of California to obtain a Food Handler Card. On September 7th, 2011, the Governor signed into law Senate Bill 303(SB303), an amendment to the current California Food Handler Card Law that took effect this year. The amendment became effective immediately on September 8, 2011.

Who Needs a Food Handler Card?

For the most part, any paid employee in a food facility or mobile food facility (catering or produce trucks, carts, etc.) involved in the preparation, storage or service of food needs a valid food handler card. Food handlers hired on or after June 1, 2011 must obtain a Food Handler Card within 30 days after the date of hire.

Exemptions: There are a variety of exemptions where a Food Handler Card will not be required;

- Food handlers holding a current & valid ***Food Protection Manager's Certificate***
- Grocery stores, except for separately owned food facilities to which this section otherwise apply that are located in the grocery store. "Grocery store" includes convenience stores.
- Public and private school cafeterias
- Temporary Food Facilities
- Certified Farmers' Markets
- Commissaries
- Retail stores where a majority of sales are from a pharmacy
- Any city, county, city and county, state, or regional facility used for the confinement of adults or minors, including, but not limited to, a county jail, juvenile hall, camp, ranch, or residential facility.
- An elderly nutrition program, administered by the California Department of Aging, pursuant to the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. Sec. 3001 et seq.), as amended.
- Certain food facilities with approved in-house food safety training
- Licensed Health Care Facilities
- Food facilities subject to a collective bargaining agreement
- Restricted food service facilities
- Venues with snack bar services in which the majority of sales are from admission tickets (excluding any area in which restaurant-style sit-down service is provided)
- Mobile Support Units (not to be confused with Mobile Food Facilities that DO require a Food Handler Card)

How do I get a Food Handler Card?

The most important question you as an operator or food handler can ask is; "Is the provider of the Food Handler card accredited through the American National Standards Institute (ANSI)?" If the answer is yes, it will be acceptable and it will be recognized throughout the state except for San Bernardino, Riverside and San Diego Counties, who have their own food safety programs.

A food handler must obtain a California Food Handler Card only from an organization with an ANSI ASTM 2659E accredited food handler training program only. Item 1(a) from above will no longer be valid for the issuance of Food Handler Cards (The Food Protection Manager Organizations will still be able to issue Food Manager Certification

Exams for Food Managers, but not food handler cards, unless they also have the new ANSI ASTM 2659E accreditation). This list can be found at:
https://www.ansica.org/wwwversion2/outside/ALLdirectoryListing.asp?menuID=212&prgID=228&status=4

The California Food Handler Card is valid for **three years** from the date of issuance. Food handlers must retake the course and test upon expiration in order to maintain a valid Food Handler Card. ANSI accredited Food Handler Card programs can be offered as online courses.

- ***Important Note:*** Food Handler Cards issued by San Bernardino, Riverside or San Diego Counties, unless they carry an ANSI accredited stamp, **CANNOT** be accepted anywhere but within their own counties.

As an Employer, What is my Responsibility?

The law requires employers to maintain records documenting that each food handler employed by the food facility possesses a valid Food Handler Card. The California Food Handler Law does not require employers to pay for the food handler's training and test. An example of acceptable records would be to maintain copies of the employees' food handler cards at the food facility. **After January 1, 2012**, documented violations will fall into the non-critical (minor) category. Lack of a valid Food Handler Card will **not** be grounds for the immediate removal of an employee from work. As an Owner or the Person In Charge, at the time of the inspection, you will be asked by your inspector if you are maintaining current and accurate records regarding the status of your employee's food handler cards. You may be required to submit proof in the form of a current employee work schedule along with a valid copy of their food handler card.

To view the specifics of the new laws visit: http://www.ocfoodinfo.com/downloads/sb_602_303_bill.pdf

For all other questions regarding the latest on the Food Handler Card Law, visit us at: http://ocfoodinfo.com or the CCDEH website http://www.ccdeh.com/.