



10 Questions: Major Changes to the Colorado Food Code

Preface

The following list encompasses 10 of the more impactful changes to the Colorado Food Code for food establishment operators. Each topic provides a brief summary of each change, how it will affect operators, and how public health is protected.

This list is not all-inclusive; please refer to the Colorado Food Code transition site for more details: <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/food-code-transition>

New food code effective date is January 1, 2019

Changes

1. Person in Charge/Demonstration of Knowledge → Certified Food Protection Manager (Chapter 2: 2-102.12, 2-102.20)

What has changed: At least one person affiliated with the facility with manager or supervisor responsibilities must demonstrate that they are able to actively manage the food safety risks by being a Certified Food Protection Manager (CFPM) at most establishments. Some exceptions may apply.

How this will affect operators: At least one person with the authority to direct and control food preparation and service shall be a CFPM. In most cases, each facility will need to have a CFPM. Multiple facilities may be able to be managed by one CFPM, for this to be possible, the management of the food safety risks at those facilities will need to be demonstrated and evident. Only Conference for Food Protection ANSI CFPM Courses meet the accreditation requirements.

How this will protect public health: The presence of a CFPM promotes Active Managerial Control in food establishments, which reduces the risks of foodborne illness outbreaks.

2. Date Marking of Ready-to-Eat, Time/Temperature for Safety Food (Chapter 3: 3-501.17)

What has changed: Certain Ready-to-Eat potentially hazardous food which require time and temperature control for safety, kept for more than 24 hours, must be date marked.

How this will affect operators: Certain foods that are potentially hazardous which require time and temperature control for safety, are ready-to-eat, and kept for more than 24 hours must be date marked. These foods must be sold, served or discarded within seven days after food is prepared or opened. The day the food is made or the date of the oldest ready to eat ingredient in the food shall count as day one.

How this will protect public health: Food safety hazards related to microbial growth in certain products are sufficiently controlled.

3. Clean Up of Vomiting and Diarrheal Events (Chapter 2: 2-501.11)

What has changed: Requirements for responding to events that involve the discharge of vomitus or fecal matter onto surfaces in the food establishment have been added to the code.

How this will affect operators: This will require managers to establish procedures for employees to follow when cleaning up vomit or feces. The procedures must address specific actions employees must take to minimize the spread of contamination and the exposure of employees, consumers, food, and surfaces to vomitus and fecal matter.

How this will protect public health: Proper response to vomiting and diarrheal events in a timely manner can help reduce potential for the spread of harmful bacterial or viral pathogens. It may decrease the likelihood that food and surfaces become contaminated and that others may become ill as a result of the accident.

4. Critical/Non-Critical Item → Priority Item, Priority Foundation Item, Core (Chapter 1: 1-201.10)

What has changed: The revision replaces the previous categories of “critical” and “non-critical” with “Priority Item” or “P,” “Priority Foundation Item” or “Pf,” and “Core Item” (unmarked provisions).

How this will affect operators: This identifies code violations as being in one of three categories of importance. Priority Items directly impact hazards associated with foodborne illness or injury (such as food temperatures and date marking), Priority Foundation Items support Priority Items (such as equipment, utensils, and facilities), and Core Items focus on sanitation and good retail practices (such as cleaning frequency and maintenance).

How this will protect public health: The three tiers of code provisions identify risk-based controls within the food code.

5. Potentially Hazardous Food → Time/Temperature Control for Safety (Chapter 1: 1-201.10)

What has changed: The revision redefines “potentially hazardous” food (PHF) as “time/temperature control for safety” food (TCS).

How this will affect operators: This does not change any requirements for the majority of food items but formally defines cut tomatoes, cut melons, and cut leafy greens as TCS. It also provides a method of determining if food is non-TCS based on the food’s water activity and pH or if a product assessment is needed.

How this will protect public health: This clarifies and improves the decision-making process when determining whether or not food can support pathogen growth or toxin formation to reduce the risk of foodborne illness.

6. Variances Required for Specialized Processing Methods (Chapter 3: 3-502.11)

What has changed: The revision will require a variance to be obtained for a specialized processing method from your local health agency. Your local agency will work with Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) to ensure statewide uniformity.

How this will affect operators: Food establishments will be required to obtain variances for smoking, curing, or acidifying food for preservation, some (but not all) reduced oxygen packaging, custom processing animals, sprouting seeds/beans, and other specialized processing methods. This provides flexibility for operators to use preparation methods not specifically prescribed in the food code when approved.

How this will protect public health: Specialized processing methods along with any variance request must be approved to ensure that that food safety hazards are controlled and uniform implementation.

7. Handwashing Signage (Chapter 6: 6-301.14)

What has changed: The revision will require establishments to provide handwashing reminder signs at all handwashing sinks that are used by food employees.

How this will affect operators: Many operators posted this signage voluntarily prior to the newest code revision. For those that do not have signs at their hand sinks, they will now be required to post a sign or poster that notifies employees to wash their hands.

How this will protect public health: Visual reminders increase handwashing behavior.

8. Equipment (Chapter 4: 4-1 and 4-2)

What has changed: The revision allows equipment that is constructed in accordance with parts 4-1 and 4-2 of the Colorado Food Code to be used in addition to ANSI certified equipment.

How this will affect operators: This allows flexibility for operators to use equipment that meets specific design criteria and not only ANSI certified equipment.

How this will protect public health: Food equipment and utensils need to be safe, durable, and cleanable. If they cannot maintain their original characteristics over time, they may become difficult to clean which could allow for the harborage of pathogens and pests. Additionally, they must be designed and constructed so parts do not break, creating an injury hazard to employees and consumers.

9. Take-Home Food Container Reuse (Chapter 3: 3-304.17)

What has changed: The revision will provide allowances for refilling take-home food containers for food and beverages.

How this will affect operators: Operators will need to wash, rinse, sanitize, and inspect the refillable container if it is for food or a TCS beverage before refilling. Non-TCS beverages will be allowed to be refilled by the operator after rinsing with hot water, and can be refilled by the customer if contamination can be prevented.

How this will protect public health: This ensures that reusable containers are durable, and are capable of being adequately cleaned and sanitized before refilling. The design criteria and process is defined by Code.

10. Handwashing when changing tasks (Chapter 2: 2-301.14)

What has changed: Employees will wash their hands before donning gloves to work with food. Previously employees would have to wash hands in between every glove change while working with food.

How this will affect operators: Employees will be able to change gloves without washing hands as long as a task change did not occur.

How this will protect public health: This ensures that employees can efficiently and safely prepare food without unnecessary interruptions. Handwashing will occur when a change of task may introduce risk of food contamination.