

BVPPH Newsletter to our Food Establishments

BVPPH – Blackstone Valley Partnership for Public Health

Representing the Towns of Blackstone, Douglas, Hopedale, Mendon, Millville, Northbridge, Upton and Uxbridge
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Dear Newsletter Recipient,

Welcome to the 4th Quarterly Newsletter from the Blackstone Valley Partnership for Public Health! This month, we'll be discussing a particularly important component of food safety: the use of gloves in a food establishment. Gloves are a commonly used tool in many food establishments to reduce bare-hand contact with food during the process of preparation and serving. When properly worn, gloves can reduce the likelihood of foodborne illness by reducing the risk of contaminating food. However, while gloves seem pretty straightforward, below we will discuss a few tips and tricks to make sure you use gloves safely and correctly and keep your establishment clean and free from foodborne illness.

Gloves

According to 105 CMR 590, the Massachusetts Food Code, FC 3-301.11, "...Food Employees shall not contact exposed, ready-to-eat food with their bare hands and shall use suitable utensils such as deli tissue, spatulas, tongs, **single-use gloves**, or dispensing equipment." (Emphasis ours).

While the other alternatives listed are also commonly used, especially during the cooking steps, direct contact with food is all but inevitable. In those situations, gloves help by providing an additional barrier between your bare hands and the food. However, while that much is commonly known, what sorts of gloves are best to use? How should you stock them? What are best practices for their use? And finally, how do you take them off without needlessly contaminating your hands?

Types and Size

When stocking gloves, there are a few things that you should keep in mind. First, single-use disposable gloves can come in a variety of materials. When selecting an appropriate material, always check to make sure the gloves are food safe. While latex gloves are acceptable, 105 CMR 590 (the Massachusetts Food Code) discourages their use, since latex allergies are increasingly common. Latex-free alternatives are ideal whenever possible.

Make sure that when you provide gloves for your staff that you stock multiple different sizes. There are no true one-size-fits-all gloves, and improperly sized gloves can be complicated to put on or easily damaged. Too small, and the gloves will be prone to tearing. Too large, and they can slip off and impede motion and manual dexterity. Remember that the easier it is for your staff to

put on and wear their gloves, the easier it will be to encourage them to make a habit of wearing gloves.

When to Wear, When to Change?

According to 105 CMR 590, gloves should be worn to avoid bare-handed contact with ready-to-eat food (RTE Food), which is any food that does not require any additional cooking steps before it can be served to a customer. While the code does not outright require gloves be worn while handling raw food, it is strongly encouraged. FC 3-301.11C states that “Food employees shall minimize bare hand and arm contact with exposed food that is not in a ready-to-eat form.” You should also wear gloves when handling harsh chemicals, or when cleaning up potentially hazardous spills, such as bodily fluids.

So, ideally, gloves should be worn when preparing food, and must be worn while handling RTE food (with a few small exceptions, see below). However, keep one important thing in mind: wearing gloves should *never* be done instead of handwashing. In fact, the code requires that hands be washed before putting on a fresh pair of gloves, unless you are returning to a task identical to what you were doing before removing the gloves *and* your hands have not been otherwise contaminated (FC 2-301.14H). So always remember to wash and then properly dry your hands before putting on a fresh pair of gloves.

Now, while gloves are a good barrier between your hands and the food you’re handling, they are still a surface that can become contaminated. And of course, they aren’t indestructible. Whenever your gloves become too worn down or torn, you should replace them (and make sure to wash your hands before putting on a fresh pair). In addition, gloves do not protect against cross-contamination, so whenever you switch from handling one type of food to another, you should change your gloves to a fresh pair.

Never wash and re-use gloves. If your gloves become dirty enough that you’d need to wash them, you should throw out the dirty gloves and replace them with a fresh pair instead. Whenever you suspect your gloves have been contaminated, either because of visible dirt or grime, or because you used your gloved hands to (for example) touch your face or hair or other potentially contaminated surface, you should replace them.

You should also change gloves if you were touching non-food items or surfaces and you intend to switch over to handling food. For example, if you wore gloves while cleaning a surface with sanitizer or another cleaning chemical, you should change your gloves before handling food. Finally, you should change your gloves a minimum of every four hours, even if you have not otherwise changed tasks or otherwise damaged or contaminated your gloves.

How to Remove

While you should always wash your hands after taking off your gloves, sometimes, you should take additional precautions when removing your gloves. This is especially important if you’ve just finished handling potentially hazardous materials, such as bodily fluids like blood, or certain dangerous chemicals. Removing gloves properly requires practice, and you should encourage your staff to get into the habit of removing their gloves properly even during more common uses,

to make safe removal a habit.

Provided below for your convenience is a poster on proper glove removal that you can follow.

Safe glove removal consists of these simple seven steps:

1. Without touching your bare skin, grab the outside of one glove at the wrist or inside palm.
2. Peel the glove away from your body, pulling it inside-out.
3. Hold the glove you just removed in your still-gloved hand (it makes it easier if you ball it up).
4. Peel off the second glove using your now bare hand. Put a finger inside the glove at the top of the wrist, careful not to touch the outside of the glove with your now-bare hand.
5. Turn the second glove inside out as you peel it off and away from your body. Make sure to keep the first glove inside the second one.
6. Once removed, dispose of the gloves in appropriate waste container. Do not re-use the gloves.
7. Wash your hands thoroughly with hot water and soap. Don't forget to dry your hands afterwards if you need to put on a fresh pair of gloves.

Exceptions

In 105 CMR 590, the Massachusetts Food Code, there exist a few exceptions for bare-handed contact. Under these (and only these) conditions, you do not have to wear gloves when handling RTE food.

- If the food is being added as an ingredient to a food item that does not contain raw animal product that is about to be cooked at the food establishment, provided the cooking step heats all parts of the food to a minimum of 145 degrees Fahrenheit (63 Celsius)
- If the food is being added as an ingredient to a food item that does contain raw animal product that is about to be cooked at the food establishment, provided the cooking step heats all parts of the food to a minimum temperature as required by that type of animal product (usually between 145 to 165 degrees Fahrenheit)

Unless you meet either of these two conditions, gloves should *always* be worn when directly handling RTE food.

Blackstone Valley Partnership for Public Health - BVPPH

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Northbridge Board of Health (508-234-3272)
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Uxbridge Board of Health (508-278-8600 x8)

How to Remove Gloves

To protect yourself, use the following steps to take off gloves



Grasp the outside of one glove at the wrist.
Do not touch your bare skin.



Peel the glove away from your body,
pulling it inside out.



Hold the glove you just removed in
your gloved hand.



Peel off the second glove by putting your fingers
inside the glove at the top of your wrist.



Turn the second glove inside out while pulling
it away from your body, leaving the first glove
inside the second.



Dispose of the gloves safely. Do not reuse the gloves.



Clean your hands immediately after removing gloves.