

# STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) FOR ELIMINATING BARE HAND CONTACT WHEN HANDLING READY-TO-EAT FOODS

(Sample SOP)

**PURPOSE:** To prevent foodborne illness due to hand-to-food cross-contamination.

**SCOPE:** This procedure applies to foodservice employees who prepare, handle, or serve food.

**KEY WORDS:** Ready-to-Eat Food, Cross-Contamination

1. **READY-TO-EAT FOOD** means food that:

- Is in a form that is edible without additional preparation to achieve food safety or a raw or partially cooked animal food and the customer is advised of the hazard.
- Ready-to-Eat Food includes but is not limited to:
  - Raw animal FOOD that is cooked as required in Cooking and Reheating SOP
  - Raw fruits and vegetables which are thoroughly washed to remove soil and other contaminants.
  - Fruits and vegetables which are cooked and held for hot holding, as required in Cooking and Reheating SOP
  - All potentially hazardous food that is cooked as required in the Cooking and Reheating SOP, and cooled as required in the Cooling SOP.
  - Plant food for which further washing, cooking, or other processing is not required for food safety, and from which rinds, peels, husks, or shells, if naturally present are removed.
  - Substances derived from plants including but not limited to spices, seasonings, and sugar, that will not be cooked.
  - A bakery item including but not limited to bread, cakes, pies, fillings, or icing for which further cooking is not required for food safety.
  - Commercially processed food for which further cooking is not required for food safety.

2. **CROSS-CONTAMINATION** means the passing of bacteria, microorganisms, or other harmful substances indirectly from one surface to another through improper or unsanitary EQUIPMENT, procedures, or products.

## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Train foodservice employees on using the procedures in this SOP.
2. Follow Northern Nevada Public Health regulations.
3. Use proper handwashing procedures to wash hands and exposed arms prior to preparing or handling food or at anytime when the hands may have become contaminated. See Washing Hands SOP.
4. Do not use bare hands to handle ready-to-eat foods at any time unless washing fruits and vegetables.
5. Use suitable utensils when working with ready-to-eat food. Suitable utensils may include:
  - Single-use gloves
  - Deli tissue
  - Foil wrap
  - Tongs, spoodles, spoons, spatulas, and other dispensing equipment

**SOP for Eliminating Bare Hand Contact When Handling Ready-to-Eat Foods, continued**  
(Sample SOP)

**MONITORING:**

A designated foodservice employee(s) will visually observe that bare hand contact of ready-to-eat-food is eliminated and that gloves or suitable utensils are used and changed at the appropriate times during all hours of operation.

**CORRECTIVE ACTION:**

1. Retrain any foodservice employee found not following the procedures in this SOP.
2. Discard ready-to-eat food touched with bare hands.

**VERIFICATION AND RECORD KEEPING:**

The foodservice manager will verify that foodservice workers are using suitable utensils by visually monitoring foodservice employees during all hours of operation. The foodservice manager will complete the Food Safety Checklist daily. The designated foodservice employee responsible for monitoring will record any discarded food in the corrective action section of the Food Safety Checklist. The Food Safety Checklist is to be kept on file for a minimum of 6 months.

**DATE IMPLEMENTED:** \_\_\_\_\_ **BY:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE REVIEWED:** \_\_\_\_\_ **BY:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE REVISED:** \_\_\_\_\_ **BY:** \_\_\_\_\_