

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is a Food Handler Card (CFH CARD)?

A: A California Food Handler Card (CFH Card) is a certificate that is required for all food employees who are involved in the preparation, storage, or service of food in a food facility.

The CFH Card is obtained after attending a food safety training course and passing an examination from an accredited organization. A listing of Accredited Organizations can be found at the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) website at: www.ansi.org.

Q: What is a Certified Food Protection Manager (CFPM) certificate?

A: A Certified Food Protection Manager (CFPM) certificate is required for the owner or an employee of a food facility that prepares, handles, or serves non-prepackaged, potentially hazardous food.

- There shall be at least one CFPM person at each food facility.
- The CFPM certificate is obtained after attending a food safety training course and passing an examination from an accredited organization.

A list of Accredited Organizations can be found at the www.ansi.org.

Q: What is the difference between the CFH Card and the CFPM certificate?

A: Both, the CFH card and the CFM certificate are required under the current laws and focus on food handling, employee's hygiene and the prevention of foodborne illness. The differences are as follows:

	CFH	CFPM
Training required	At least 3 hours (including training and exam)	At least 8 hours (including training and exam)
Number of Questions during the Examination	40 questions	80 questions
The certificate is valid for	3 years	5 years
Can I use the certificate in multiple food facilities?	Can be used in multiple facilities	Can only be used in one facility at a time

Q: When is a CFH Card and a CFPM certificate required?

A: There are different food facilities that require these certificates.

The CFH Card and the CFPM certificate are required when the food facility handles non-prepackaged potentially hazardous food.

Note: Refer to the CCDEH guidelines for facilities that are exempted from the CFH Card at www.ccdeh.com

Q: How many CFH Cards or CFPM certificates are required per food facility?

A: There shall be at least one CFPM person at each food facility and any food employee who is involved in the preparation, storage, or service of food in a food facility must have a CFH Card.

Q: How can I obtain a CFH card or the CFPM certificate?

A: In order to obtain a CFH card or the CFPM certificate, the owner/employees must complete a training course and successfully pass the exam issued by the accredited testing organization.

Q: How can I find an approved provider?

A: The CFH card or CFPM certificate can be obtained by contacting one of the approved California Food Handler Certificate Programs directly. Please see The American National Standards Institute website at: www.ansi.org

Additionally, a listing of Accredited CFPM Programs can be found at www.ansi.org. Be sure your training company uses one of the approved program listed.

Q: Are there certificate training courses and examinations offered in different languages?

A: Yes, the training courses can be offered in different languages, however the employee must contact the provider to check for the availability of a specific languages.

Q: If I am already CFPM certified, do I also need a CFH Card?

A: No, if you already have a CFPM certificate, you will not need to obtain a CFH Card.

Q: What would happen if my food facility does not have the certificates (CFH Card or CFPM) when requested by the inspector?

A: If the required certificates are not available on site at the time of inspection, your food facility may be cited for violation of State Law.

Q: How long do I have to obtain a CFH Card or the CFPM Certificate if I just opened my business?

A: A food facility that begins operation, changes ownership or, no longer has a certified owner or employee, must obtain a CFPM certificate within 60 days.

Employees (food handlers) that do not have a CFH card must obtain it within 30 days from their hiring day.

Q: Can employees use their CFH Card or CFMP Certificate in more than one food facility?

A: CFPM certificates cannot be used in more than one food facility. A CFPM may only serve at one food facility as a CFPM.

California Food Handler Cards are accepted everywhere in California except Riverside, San Bernardino and San Diego Counties where local programs already exist.