

**Chapter 246-217 WAC  
FOOD WORKER CARDS**

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**WAC**

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**DISPOSITION OF SECTIONS FORMERLY CODIFIED IN THIS CHAPTER**

246-217-001	Objective. [Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 91-02-051 (Order 124B), recodified as § 246-217-001, filed 12/27/90, effective 1/31/91; Regulation.87.001, effective 3/11/60.] Repealed by WSR 99-13-019, filed 6/7/99, effective 7/8/99. Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050.
246-217-002	Legal authority of the state board of health. [Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 91-02-051 (Order 124B), recodified as § 246-217-002, filed 12/27/90, effective 1/31/91; Regulation.86.999, effective 3/11/60.] Repealed by WSR 99-13-019, filed 6/7/99, effective 7/8/99. Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050.
246-217-011	Definitions. [Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 91-02-051 (Order 124B), recodified as § 246-217-011, filed 12/27/90, effective 1/31/91; Regulation.86.001, effective 3/11/60.] Repealed by WSR 99-13-019, filed 6/7/99, effective 7/8/99. Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050.
246-217-020	Communicable disease. [Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 91-02-051 (Order 124B), recodified as § 246-217-020, filed 12/27/90, effective 1/31/91; Regulation.87.020, effective 3/11/60.] Repealed by WSR 99-13-019, filed 6/7/99, effective 7/8/99. Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050.
246-217-030	Form of permits—Fees. [Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050 and chapter 69.03 RCW. WSR 92-14-093 (Order 286B), § 246-217-030, filed 6/30/92, effective 7/31/92. Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 91-02-051 (Order 124B), recodified as § 246-217-030, filed 12/27/90, effective 1/31/91. Statutory Authority: Chapter 69.06 RCW. WSR 87-19-069 (Order 346), § 248-86-010, filed 9/16/87; Regulation.86.010, effective 3/11/60.] Repealed by WSR 99-13-019, filed 6/7/99, effective 7/8/99. Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050.
246-217-040	Requirements for permits. [Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 91-02-051 (Order 124B), recodified as § 246-217-040, filed 12/27/90, effective 1/31/91; Regulation.86.020, effective 3/11/60.] Repealed by WSR 99-13-019, filed 6/7/99, effective 7/8/99. Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050.
246-217-050	Examination may be required. [Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 91-02-051 (Order 124B), recodified as § 246-217-050, filed 12/27/90, effective 1/31/91; Regulation.86.040, effective 3/11/60.] Repealed by WSR 99-13-019, filed 6/7/99, effective 7/8/99. Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050.

**WAC 246-217-005 Purpose and authority.** The purpose of chapter 246-217 WAC is to establish state board of health standards for the issuance of food worker cards (food worker permits) under chapter 69.06 RCW and RCW 43.20.050. To promote and protect the health, safety and well-being of the public and prevent the spread of disease by food, all food service workers in the state shall demonstrate through the process of examination that they possess an adequate knowledge of the principles and practices involved in the safe preparation, storage, and service of foods.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 99-13-019, § 246-217-005, filed 6/7/99, effective 7/8/99.]

**WAC 246-217-010 Definitions.** As used in this chapter of the rules and regulations, the following definitions apply:

(1) "Additional food safety training" means completion of a comprehensive training program on food safety of at least four hours in length. Training may include topics such as: Proper cooking, hot-holding, cold-holding and cooling of potentially hazardous foods; cross-contamination prevention; HACCP and/or proper hand washing techniques. Approval of training programs shall be obtained from jurisdictional

health departments or the department by the training provider. Approval of training programs must be obtained in advance.

(2) "Applicant" means an individual applying to obtain an initial or renewal food worker card.

(3) "Department" means the Washington state department of health.

(4) "Food service establishment" means:

(a) A place, location, operation, site, or facility where food is manufactured, prepared, processed, packaged, dispensed, distributed, sold, served, or offered to the consumer regardless of whether or not compensation for food occurs, including but not limited to:

(i) Restaurants, snack bars, cafeterias, taverns, bars;

(ii) Retail food stores, supermarkets, retail meat markets, retail fish markets, retail bakeries, delicatessens;

(iii) Institutional operations licensed by the department, the state department of social and health services or local health officer, such as schools, hospitals, jails, prisons, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and child care facilities;

(iv) Central preparation sites, including caterers;

(v) Satellite servicing locations;

(vi) Temporary food service establishments or mobile food units;

(vii) Bed and breakfast operations;

(viii) Remote feeding sites;

(ix) Adult family homes; and

(x) Vending machines dispensing potentially hazardous foods.

(b) This term does not include:

(i) Private homes where food is prepared or served for consumption by household members and/or their guests;

(ii) Establishments offering only commercially prepackaged nonpotentially hazardous foods;

(iii) Commercial food processing establishments, licensed and regulated by the USDA, FDA, or WSDA; and

(iv) Farmers exempt from licensure under RCW 36.71.090.

(5) "Food service worker" means an individual who works (or intends to work) with or without pay in a food service establishment and handles unwrapped or unpackaged food or who may contribute to the transmission of infectious diseases through the nature of his/her contact with food products and/or equipment and facilities. This does not include persons who simply assist residents or patients in institutional facilities with meals, or students in K-12 schools who periodically assist with school meal service.

(6) "Food worker card" means a food and beverage service workers' permit as required under chapter 69.06 RCW.

(7) "Health officer" means the county, city-county, or district health officer of a jurisdictional health department, or his/her authorized representative, or the representative of the department.

(8) "Jurisdictional health department" refers to one of the following:

(a) Local health district as defined in chapter 70.46 RCW.

(b) City-county health department as defined in chapter 70.08 RCW.

(c) County health department as defined in chapter 70.05 RCW.

(9) "Person" means any individual, partnership, corporation, association, or other legal entity or agency of state, county, or municipal government, or agency of the federal government which is subject to the jurisdiction of the state.

(10) "Secretary" means the secretary of the state department of health.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 69.06.010 and 2012 c 10. WSR 14-08-046, § 246-217-010, filed 3/27/14, effective 4/27/14. Statutory Authority: RCW 69.06.010. WSR 04-16-100, § 246-217-010, filed 8/3/04, effective 9/3/04. Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 99-13-019, § 246-217-010, filed 6/7/99, effective 7/8/99; WSR 91-02-051 (Order 124B), recodified as § 246-217-010, filed 12/27/90, effective 1/31/91; Regulation.87.002, effective 3/11/60.]

**WAC 246-217-015 Applicability.** (1) All food service workers must obtain a food worker card within fourteen calendar days from the beginning of employment at a food service establishment, except as provided in subsection (4) of this section.

(2) In the case of temporary food service establishments, at a minimum the operator or person in charge each shift or during hours of operation must have a valid food worker card obtained prior to the event.

(3) Employers at any food service establishment (permanent or temporary) must provide information or training regarding pertinent safe food handling practices to food service workers prior to beginning food handling duties if the worker does not hold a valid food worker card. Documentation that the information or training has been provided to the individual must be kept on file by the employer and be available for inspection by the health officer at all times.

(4) A food service worker in an adult family home, as defined in RCW 70.128.010, is exempt from possessing a food worker card, if the worker:

(a) Began working in an adult family home after June 30, 2005, has successfully completed basic or modified-basic caregiver training, and has documentation of receiving information or training regarding safe food handling practices from his or her employer prior to providing food handling or service for clients of the adult family home; or

(b) Held a valid food worker card prior to June 30, 2005, and obtained 0.5 hours of continuing education in food handling safety per year since June 30, 2005.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 06-05-008, § 246-217-015, filed 2/2/06, effective 3/5/06; WSR 99-13-019, § 246-217-015, filed 6/7/99, effective 7/8/99.]

**WAC 246-217-025 Issuance of food worker cards—Fees.** (1) In order to qualify for issuance of an initial or renewal food worker card, an applicant must demonstrate his/her knowledge of safe food handling practices by satisfactorily completing an examination conducted by the local health officer or designee.

(2) Each applicant for a food worker card must pay a fee in the amount of ten dollars. The fee shall be used by the jurisdictional health department or designee to defray the costs of food worker training and education, administration of the program, and testing of applicants. Photographic identification may be required at the time of application.

(3) The local health officer or designee must furnish to the applicant a copy of the latest edition of the "*Food and Beverage Service*

*Workers' Manual*" or similar publication, as prepared or approved by the department.

(4) Effective January 1, 2000, prior to conducting the examination of the applicant(s), the health officer (or designee) must provide at least thirty minutes of instruction, including both audio and visual presentations. Instruction content shall include topics related to safe food preparation, storage and service. At a minimum, topics must include: Food borne illness overview; basic bacteriology as it relates to food borne illness; proper cooking, hot holding, cold holding and cooling of potentially hazardous foods; cross-contamination prevention; and proper handwashing techniques. Instruction content must also include the topic of food allergy awareness that is presented and/or distributed to each applicant.

(5) The food worker card examination will be uniform statewide and will be prepared by and/or approved by the department; except that jurisdictional health departments may include additional questions to address local health concerns. The examination will cover topics identified in subsection (4) of this section, except food allergy awareness, as required instruction topics. An exam must be approved by the department prior to its use. To pass the examination the applicant must answer at least eighty percent of the questions correctly.

(6) Upon payment of the required fee and the applicant's satisfactory completion of the examination, the applicant will receive the food worker card.

(7) A copy of the card or the applicable information must be kept on file at the jurisdictional health department.

(8) Copies of food worker cards for all employed food service workers must be kept on file by the employer or kept by the employee on his or her person and open for inspection at all times by authorized public health officials.

(9) All food worker cards must be issued and signed by the local health officer. The local health officer may contract with persons to provide the required training or testing within his/her jurisdiction. The contracts must include test security provisions so that test questions, scoring keys, and other examination data are exempt from public disclosure to the same extent as records maintained by state or local government agencies.

(10) The health officer or designee must make test accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act for those requesting such accommodations.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 06-05-008, § 246-217-025, filed 2/2/06, effective 3/5/06. Statutory Authority: Chapter 69.06 RCW. WSR 02-22-079, § 246-217-025, filed 11/5/02, effective 1/1/03. Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 99-13-019, § 246-217-025, filed 6/7/99, effective 7/8/99.]

**WAC 246-217-035 Validity and form of food worker cards.** (1) All initial cards are valid for two years from the date of issuance.

(2) Effective July 1, 1999, renewal cards are valid for three years from the date of issuance; except: An applicant may be granted a renewal card valid for five years from the date of issuance if the applicant documents that he/she has attended "additional food safety training" within the past two years.

(3) Any legally issued food worker card shall be valid throughout Washington state.

(4) Food service workers may apply for a renewal of a food worker card up to sixty days before the expiration date on their current valid card. Proof of a valid card must be shown at the time of renewal application.

(5) The card shall be approximately three inches by five inches in size and contain the following information:

(a) The identification of the card as a Washington state food worker card or "limited duty card," as applicable;

(b) The identity of the jurisdictional health department issuing the card;

(c) Printed (or typed written) name and signature of the food service worker;

(d) Card expiration date;

(e) Signature of the health officer; and

(f) Any other identifier or other information deemed necessary by the health officer.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 99-13-019, § 246-217-035, filed 6/7/99, effective 7/8/99.]

**WAC 246-217-045 Limited duty food worker cards.** The local health officer may issue a limited duty card when necessary to reasonably accommodate a person with a disability.

(1) A person applying to obtain a limited duty card shall communicate to the local health officer which low public health risk activity(ies) (e.g., dishwashing, bussing tables, filling condiment containers, etc.) he or she will be performing.

(2) The health officer may require the applicant to attend the food safety training associated with the issuance of food worker cards. No written examination is required for the issuance of limited duty cards.

(3) The local health officer shall list the approved activity(ies) on the food worker card.

(4) The fee and length of validity of limited duty cards is the same as all other food worker cards.

(5) The employer should ensure that the individual is provided with information to safely perform the activity(ies) listed on the card.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 99-13-019, § 246-217-045, filed 6/7/99, effective 7/8/99.]

**WAC 246-217-060 Revocation of food worker card.** The food worker card may be revoked by the local health officer, or by the secretary, upon evidence indicating repeated or continuing violations of accepted procedures and practices in the preparation, service, or storage of food offered for public consumption, or upon demonstration of the presence of a communicable disease in the infectious state, or an infectious condition of potential hazard to the public or to the persons' co-workers, or for falsification of information required for issuance of the card. Any food service worker who has had his/her card revoked shall be ineligible for issuance of another card by any local health officer in the state until the conditions for revocation are appropriately resolved.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 99-13-019, § 246-217-060, filed 6/7/99, effective 7/8/99; WSR 91-02-051 (Order 124B), recodified as § 246-217-060, filed 12/27/90, effective 1/31/91; Regulation.86.050, effective 3/11/60.]

**WAC 246-217-070 Right of appeal.** Any food service worker whose food worker card has been revoked by a local health officer, or the secretary, may appeal to the local board of health, or the department's office of professional standards consistent with chapter 246-10 WAC in the event such revocation is by the secretary, for review of the findings. The appeal must be in writing and must be filed with the appropriate board or office within ten days of revocation of the card. While the appeal is pending, the revocation of the card shall be stayed until such time as the appropriate board or office has reviewed the findings and entered its decision.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 99-13-019, § 246-217-070, filed 6/7/99, effective 7/8/99; WSR 91-02-051 (Order 124B), recodified as § 246-217-070, filed 12/27/90, effective 1/31/91; Regulation.86.060, effective 3/11/60.]