

Training on Recent Amendments to Ontario Regulation 493/17 (Food Premises)

March 2020

Agenda

Training on Recent Amendments to Ontario Regulation 493/17 (Food Premises)

- Background
- Overview of recent amendments
- Questions and Answers
- Implementation materials

Background: Government's Open for Business Initiative

The amendments to Ontario Regulation 493/17 (Food Premises) under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, seek to reduce regulatory burdens identified by small businesses.

The regulatory amendments respond to concerns raised by stakeholders such as food banks, religious organizations, food rescue and recovery organizations, before and after school programs, student nourishment, home-based businesses, and those with seasonal outdoor eating areas.

Dogs in food premises (1)

Background

Prior to the recent regulatory amendments, with limited exceptions, the Food Premises regulation did not allow live animals to be present in any rooms of food premises where food is prepared, packaged, served, etc.

Operators found this restrictive as it did not allow them to meet the needs of customers. The recent regulatory amendments enable small businesses to remain competitive and sustainable through greater flexibility in their business models.

Dogs in food premises (2)

Dogs are now permitted in the following areas of food premises:

Outdoor eating areas (patios)

Operators now have the discretion to allow dogs in outdoor eating areas of a food service premises if:

- food is not prepared in the eating area.

Indoor eating areas

Operators now have the discretion to allow dogs in an indoor eating area of a food service premises if:

- the only food items that are manufactured, processed or prepared at the food service premise are low-risk food items; and
- the dogs are in a room where only low-risk or pre-packaged ready-to-eat food items, or both, are served, sold, offered for sale or displayed, and no manufacturing, processing or preparation of food items takes place in the room.

Best practices for permitting dogs at food premises:

- Operators have the discretion to permit or not permit dogs on their premises;
- On-site restaurant signage to indicate if the premises is dog-friendly;
- Dogs should be under the control of the handler and kept on leash;
- Employees should not touch the dogs;
- Consumers should wash hands immediately after touching or cleaning up after a dog;
- Dogs should avoid contact with table and chairs;

Best practices for permitting dogs at food premises cont'd:

- Dogs should not come in contact with utensils or dishes used to serve patrons;
- Patrons should ensure necessary supplies to clean up after dog feces (i.e. bag);
- In the case of a waste-related incident, employees should clean and sanitize the affected area immediately and then wash their hands thoroughly;
- Dogs with symptoms of illness such as diarrhea, vomiting, coughing, skin lesions etc. should not be permitted;
- Dog scratches or bites must be reported to the local public health unit. Clean affected area immediately with soap and water and seek medical attention.

Frequently Asked Questions (1)

Will service animals be affected?

The Food Premises regulation allows service animals to be in areas of food premises where food is sold, served or offered for sale. The amendments do not impact the accessibility for service animals, which are covered under the Food Premises Regulation as a separate requirement. The *Blind Persons Rights Act* and *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* contain legal requirements related to Guide Dogs and service animals in Ontario.

Frequently Asked Questions (2)

Can dogs enter a food premises to access the outdoor patio?

Dogs may be permitted to enter the food premises if they never access a room where food is prepared, processed, packaged, served, transported, manufactured, handled, sold, offered for sale or displayed.

Frequently Asked Questions (3)

What are the risks associated with dogs in food premises?

- Allergic reactions due to accumulation of dog hair, dander or debris in the environment.
- Physical injuries and related consequences from dog bites and scratches.
- Human disease due to contamination of food by direct or indirect contact with dog saliva, feces, urine, nasal secretions or other bodily fluids.
- Human exposure to external parasites that dogs may carry such as fleas and ticks.

Food premises serving low risk food (1)

Background

These recent amendments respond to the needs of community meal programs and certain other food premises preparing low risk food and serving pre-packaged ready-to-eat food, while balancing public health and safety. The amendments align with the government's commitment to reduce burden and increase flexibility for small businesses.

Regulatory exception

The regulatory exception applies to food premises that:

1. do not prepare food and that distribute only low-risk food items, pre-packaged food items, or a combination of low-risk food items and pre-packaged food items;
2. prepare only low-risk food items and serve only, low-risk food items, pre-packaged, ready-to-eat food items, or a combination of low-risk food items and pre-packaged, ready-to-eat food items.

Food premises serving low risk food (2)

Applicable regulatory requirements under the Food Premises Regulation

Clause 7 (3) (c) Hand wash stations

These food premises are no longer required to have the specified handwash stations in a food premises. However, there is still a regulatory requirement for food premises operators to ensure that food handlers wash their hands as often as necessary to prevent the contamination of food or food areas.

S. 18 Dishwashing equipment

Applicable premises are no longer required to provide the structural number of a two- or three-compartment sink and/or a commercial mechanical dishwasher. However, any utensils used to prepare food must be cleaned and sanitized in accordance with current regulatory requirements (e.g., sections 19 – 23).

S. 32 Food handler training

Applicable premises are no longer required to ensure there is at least one food handler or supervisor on the premises who has completed food handler training.

Food premises serving low risk food (3)

Best Practices

While some structural requirements may not be required under the Food Premises regulation, there are best practices to ensure food continues to be prepared safely.

Hand washing

Hand washing is required prior to handling any food item. Hand washing may be conducted by using a hand wash sink that is available to the food handler that is supplied with liquid soap and paper towel or an air dryer.

Dishwashing equipment

Clean and sanitize utensils after use. This may be conducted using a domestic dishwasher or by using a two-sink or three-sink method. If an adequate number of sinks are not available, it is recommended to wash and rinse utensils in a separate sink from handwashing or ensure the sink is thoroughly cleaned and sanitized prior to dishwashing. The sanitizing step should be conducted in a second or third sink. However, if not readily available, substituting the second or third sink with a dishwash container or bin may be used to complete the sanitizing step.

Food handler training

The food handler training required by the Food Premises regulation may not be required however, it is important to understand safe food handling practices while handling food. The food premises operator may consider implementing internal food safety training or the development of procedures to ensure staff and volunteers are provided with food safety knowledge.

Frequently Asked Questions (1)

What is the definition of 'low-risk' food ?

- Low-risk food is defined in the regulation as food that is not potentially hazardous (i.e., does not require time and temperature control).
- However, it should be noted that some low risk food such as low moisture food (e.g., peanut butter), fresh fruits and vegetables can still become contaminated through handling or production processes and has been associated with foodborne illnesses and outbreaks.
- Food in this category can include:
 - shelf-stable food (items that do not require refrigeration);
 - commercially canned or pasteurised products;
 - non-perishable food (dry goods such as cereal, crackers, breads and pastries without cream fillings); and
 - some perishable food such as whole, intact, raw fruit and vegetables.

What is pre-packaged ready-to-eat food?

- Pre-packaged ready-to-eat food is food that is packaged at a premise other than the premises at which it is offered for sale and does not require further processing before eating. Examples include pre-packaged yogurt, cheese, salad, deli meats, etc.

Frequently Asked Questions (2)

What are examples of snack or breakfast program food items utilizing a combination of low risk and ready-to-eat pre-packaged food?

- Serve washed whole fruit or vegetables, or sliced if served immediately
- Provide cereal and pasteurised milk
- Assemble yogurt and berries to make a parfait
- Serve sliced pita bread and portioned hummus
- serve pre-packaged cheese, yogurt, cottage cheese
- Pre-packaged deli meats
- Pre-packaged sliced or chopped vegetables, fruit or salad mix

Implementation Materials

- Summary sheets
- Questions and answers
- Training webinar
- Reference Document for Safe Food Donation

Thank you for your participation

For questions please contact:

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