



Wisconsin Food Code Fact Sheet



Certificates of Food Protection for Small Operators

Restaurants with five or fewer food handlers are exempt from renewing their food manager certification by completion of a nationally-accredited food protection examination. Instead, these operators or managers have the option to take a recertification course or course designed for small operators.

Frequently Asked Questions

If I later join a restaurant with more than five food handlers, can I use my credential from having completed the small operators course?

No. If you decide to obtain the food safety training for small operators credential, you are restricted to restaurants with five or fewer food handlers. If you want to hold a certificate for a restaurant with more than five food handlers, you must take an accredited examination.



If I have not been certified in the past, can I still receive the food safety training for small operators license?

No. All individuals applying to the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) for the first time must pass an accredited examination. When that expires, a small operator may complete a course approved for small operators.

Who is considered a food handler?

Anyone who handles or assembles food for the patrons (e.g., chefs, line cooks). A server who assembles salads, scoops ice cream, or cuts desserts also would be considered a food handler. A bartender slicing limes and lemons is not a food handler.

If I go to work for a new establishment, will I need to get another certification?

No. As long as you go to work for another small operator, you take your credential with you.

What is the certificate renewal process?

Small operators with five or fewer food handlers that have a food manager who has already taken the full certification exam and is renewing within 90 days after the expiration date of their initial certified food manager credential may use the Food Safety for Small Operators (recertification) course to meet the requirement. Any food manager whose credential is not renewed within 90 days after the expiration date is required take and pass an approved exam.

Certification Courses

Approved Courses and Examinations

Wisconsin accepts the following food manager certification exams:

- [ServSafe National Restaurant Association](#) industry programs
- [Environmental Health Testing, LLC](#), Food Safety First Principles course examination
- [360 Training Inc.](#)
- [Above Training/State Food Safety](#)
- [Always Food Safe Company](#)
- [1 AAA Food Safety](#), Certified Food Protection Manager

A list of certified food manager courses can be found in the [DATCP course directory](#).

Approved Small Operator Food Safety Courses

- [Food Service Safe](#), recertification course
- [M&M Business Solutions](#), Food Manager's Training HQ
- [Moraine Park Technical College](#), Food Manager Refresher Course
- [State Food Safety](#), Online Food Safety Training for Small Operators
- [Tavern League of Wisconsin](#), recertification course
- [Tap Series](#), recertification course
- [Wisconsin Restaurant Association](#), recertification course
- [1 AAA Food Handler](#), online refresher courses for small operators

Additional Resources

- [Food manager requirements](#)
- [Food safety course directory](#)
- [Wisconsin Food Code fact sheets](#)
- [Wisconsin Food Code](#)