

Food Manager Requirements

Requirements for food manager certification or training will change November 1, 2016. Please review this information carefully.

Most licensed food establishments must have at least one manager or operator certified in food protection practices. Certification is required for most food establishments, but not all. Simple food establishments that serve only single service, individual, already pre-wrapped foods from a licensed food distributor or serve/sell only non-potentially hazardous foods are exempt from the certification requirement. Restaurant with five or fewer food handlers must have a manager who holds a license for Food Safety Training for Small Operators. Operators of Temporary Restaurants are exempt from this requirement. Only DATCP establishments that engage in restaurant activities are required to have a certified food manager.

Beginning on November 1, 2016, DATCP will no longer issue Wisconsin Certified Food Manager (CFM) certificates or the Food Safety Training for Small Operators licenses. A recent evaluation of the current program revealed that successful completion of an approved national food manager's exam, or the approved course for small operators when applicable, is equivalent to holding a valid Wisconsin CFM certificate or Food Safety Training for Small Operators license. Therefore, we are removing the extra step of requiring the submission of course completion documentation to the Department. Instead, to meet regulatory requirements, required personnel must simply post the exam certificate, taken within the past 5 years, for review by inspection staff. Small operators must post the course completion certificate. During this time of transition, if required personnel no longer have the exam completion certificate, a valid Wisconsin CFM certificate or Food Safety Training for Small Operators license will still be accepted. Applications received prior to November 1 will continue to be processed.

The operator or manager of an establishment that is new or undergoing a change-of-operator must have a food manager with the appropriate credential within 6 months after the business opens. Within the first 90 days, the operator or manager must be registered to take a course with an approved exam.

With the exception of small operators, all food managers are required to take and pass an approved exam every 5 years. Small operators that have 5 or fewer food handlers that have a food manager that has already taken the full certification exam and is renewing within 6 months of expiration 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 6-months of expiration is required take and pass an approved exam.