

HEALTH STATUS ASSESSMENTS

Instructions for working with food

Health status assessment in accordance with the Communicable Diseases Act (1227/2016, section 56)

- According to the Communicable Diseases Act and Government Decree on Communicable Diseases, the employer must require a reliable assessment that any person handling or preparing unpacked, perishable food does not suffer from salmonella.
- The assessment is required at the **start of the employment** when the employment relationship in the food premises is assumed to last for at least one month. The assessment is also required for trainees.
- The salmonella certificate **shall be renewed at all times after febrile diarrhoea or when there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that the worker may be a carrier of salmonella bacteria** (e.g. a family member diagnosed with a salmonella infection).

Health status assessment based on an interview

The assessment of salmonella infection and the need for laboratory testing is included in the interview conducted by occupational health care or the health centre physician or nurse, i.e. the health status assessment. Good hygiene practices associated with working with foodstuffs must be reviewed during the interview (you must not come to work when you have symptoms, you must report any communicable diseases that might be passed on through foodstuffs to your employer, and the importance of good hand hygiene). A certificate is provided after the health assessment.

Own-checks shall indicate:

- From which employees is a health status assessment required?
- Where are health status assessments stored?
- Own-check records stating that the suitability of the persons in question for working with food has been established.

When a food worker is diagnosed with salmonella

An employee who is diagnosed with salmonella is suspended from work that involves processing unpacked food or preparing food. The employee will be provided with tasks that do not pose the risk of infection, if possible. A doctor must be consulted on when they may return to their usual tasks.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

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More information on health assessment is available on the website of the Finnish Food Authority:

<https://www.ruokavirasto.fi/en/foodstuffs/food-sector/hygienic-actions/personnel/handling-of-unpackaged-perishable-foodstuffs/>

Example table: Handling of unpackaged, easily perishable foodstuffs in a food establishment: when an employee is required to have a Hygiene Passport or provide a health status statement.

https://www.ruokavirasto.fi/globalassets/yritykset/elintarvikeala/elintarvikealan-yhteiset-vaatimukset/pakkaamattoman-helposti-pilaantuvan-elintarvikkeen-kasittely/pakkaamattoman_helposti_pilaantuvan_elintarvikkeen_kasittely_17.6.2021_eng.pdf

Instruction on preventing salmonella infections issued by the Finnish institute for health and welfare (high-risk tasks) (in Finnish):

<https://thl.fi/fi/web/infektiotaudit-ja-rokotukset/taudit-ja-torjunta/taudit-ja-taudinaiheuttajat-a-o/salmonella/toimenpideohje-salmonellatapauksiin>