



Food hygiene proficiency

Hygiene proficiency requirements

Hygiene proficiency implies the skill and proficiency of those working in food companies who handle food in their work, regarding the following fields and that this skill and knowledge continually is updated as regards these sub-sectors.

- 1) *Basic microbiology and food contaminations*
- 2) *Food poisonings, hygienic working methods*
- 3) *Personal hygiene*
- 4) *Cleaning*
- 5) *Own or in-house control*
- 6) *Legislation, authorities.*

Practical hygiene proficiency means that this competence is applied to daily work. Hygiene proficiency is a statutory liability of the food industry.

By the general EU regulation (853/2004/EU) on food hygiene, a food enterpriser is to take care that all employees are oriented, instructed and when necessary trained in matters concerning food hygiene in a manner adapted to their work assignments.

The National Food Act (23/2006) requires that *those who in their work handle unpackaged and easily perishable food* in a food space mandatorily approved according to the Food Act shall confirm their hygiene proficiency with a certificate on food hygiene proficiency compliant with the model set by the Finnish Food Safety Authority (from 1.1.2019 Finnish Food Authority); i.e., a so-called "Hygiene Passport". Food enterprisers are at their own cost required to take care that these requirements are fulfilled as regards their employees as a part of their own check.

Demonstrating hygiene proficiency, and Hygiene Passport Examiner

A Hygiene Passport is acquired by passing a particular Hygiene Passport test set up by Finnish Food Authority, or by producing a certificate of examination or education considered containing similar skills. Appendix 2 to Finnish Food Authority's Regulation on Hygiene Proficiency (11/2019) contains more specific information on accepted exams and educations.

The Hygiene Passport comprises a certificate on paper of format A4, and a plastic card. Each part of the Hygiene Passport can be used for demonstrating hygiene proficiency.

Hygiene Passport tests are arranged by Hygiene Passport Examiners approved by Finnish Food Authority who independently operate in various parts of Finland, and they issue Hygiene Passports of Finnish Food Authority's model. A list of Examiners who have allowed the publication of their contact data can be found at the website (<https://www.ruokavirasto.fi/en/private-persons/hygiene-passport/>).

Finnish Food Authority neither arranges courses in hygiene proficiency or Hygiene Passport tests nor awards Hygiene Passports.

Hygiene Passport test

A Hygiene Passport test is completed in Finnish or Swedish. The test has 40 statements on food hygiene where the person being tested selects an alternative they consider being correct. The test is approved when the relation of correct responses is at least 34/40. Hygiene Passport Examiners separately may apply at Finnish Food Authority for authorisation to arrange a test in some other language than Finnish or Swedish.



During tests in special circumstances, the use of a dictionary is allowed, or the examiner may in advance have the statements translated into another language. However, during no tests one may utilize aids (notes, discussions with others etc.) that give guidance to correct answers.

Fees on demonstrating hygiene proficiency

Finnish Food Authority charges the Hygiene Passport Examiners for each issued Hygiene Passport a fee as defined in a regulation by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry on fees on performances. Currently, the fee is 6,00 €/Hygiene Passport. By the Food Act, the Examiners are entitled to charging their clients the actual costs of arranging tests.

Prices set by Hygiene Passport Examiners on Hygiene Passport tests vary depending on whether the Examiner prior to the test arranges a course, and on the extent of this course and the nature of other costs of arranging the test (space rent, etc.). Thus, worthwhile is to inquire on the price at several Examiners. Employers are recommended carefully to survey the need for courses and tests in the work place, and together with an Examiner plan matters involving possible courses and tests.

Control

By the Food Act, Finnish Food Authority is to approve Hygiene Passport Examiners and control their activities. Regulations and the instructions of Finnish Food Authority regulate the activities of Examiners. Hygiene Passport Examiners are persons exerting official authority when they function as Examiners. The regulations on offence in office of Chapter 40 of the Penal Code are applied to Examiner exerting official authority. Finnish Food Authority may recall the authority of an Examiner to function as Examiner, if they significantly violate the legislation and regulations concerning said activities.

Municipal food control authorities control that food companies comply with the obligation to implement hygiene proficiency.

Additional information

Finnish Food Authority's website on Hygiene Passport: <https://www.ruokavirasto.fi/en/private-persons/hygiene-passport/>

Hygiene Passport Customer Service:

hygieniapassi@ruokavirasto.fi

Customer Service number 029 5300 402 Tuesdays 9-12 am