Summary
On September 25, 2010 Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed the California Food Handler Card bill (SB 602) into law. The bill was introduced by Sen. Alex Padilla, D-Pacoima and received ongoing support from the California Restaurant Association. The measure was introduced to improve the food safety practices of food workers in restaurants.

Under the new law, food handlers working in restaurants from now until June 1, 2011 have until July 1, 2011 to receive training and obtain a food handler card in California. Food handlers hired after June 1, 2011 will have 30 days from the date of hiring to obtain the food handler card. Employers are required to maintain records of their workers’ food handler cards.

Who is included under the law?
“Food handler” is defined under the law as any person who is involved in the preparation, storage or service of food in a food facility or temporary food facility.

All food establishments that are not exempted under the law must comply with the new legislation.

Workers employed in any food establishment that is not exempted under the law are required to obtain a food handler card.

Who is exempt from the law?
Food handlers employed in any of the following facilities are exempted from the law:

- Certified farmer’s markets
- Commissaries
- Grocery stores, except separately owned food facilities
- Licensed health care facilities
- Mobile support units
- Public and private school cafeterias
- Restricted food service facilities
- Retail stores in which a majority of the sales are from a pharmacy
2010 California Food Handler Card Law

- A food facility that provides in-house food safety training to all employees involved in the preparation, storage, or service of food if the facility meets certain other conditions set forth in the law
- A facility subject to a collective bargaining agreement with its food handlers

How do food handlers comply with the law?
Food handlers must receive basic introductory instruction in: foodborne illness, time-temperature relationship, personal hygiene, food contamination prevention, equipment and utensil cleaning, and control measures. The food employee must be given an assessment of the required subject matter after the course and must achieve a minimum score of 70% on the assessment. The training can be given by an instructor but may also be received through independent study or the Internet.

If at least one food handler training course and assessment is not made available to food handlers for $15 or less, the requirement to obtain the food handler card cannot be enforced.

A food handler who is subject to an existing local food handler program that took effect prior to January 1, 2009 does not have to meet any new requirements under this law.

When must food handlers comply with the law?
All food handlers covered under the law who were employed before June 1, 2011 must comply by July 1, 2011. All food handlers covered under the law who were employed after June 1, 2011 must comply within 30 days of their hiring date.