HEALTH CARE AGENCY/PUBLIC HEALTH
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN

TO: **Orange County Retail Food Facilities**

SUBJECT: **No Bare Hand Contact with Ready-to-Eat Foods**

Recent studies indicate that handwashing alone is not enough to prevent foodborne illnesses. Food workers can spread illness when their hands come in contact with ready-to-eat foods. **Effective January 1, 2014**, California Retail Food Code (CalCode) section 113961 prohibits bare hand contact with ready-to-eat food and requires the use of suitable utensils such as scoops, spoons, forks, spatulas, tongs, deli tissue, single-use gloves, or dispensing equipment when handling ready-to-eat foods.

Ready-to-eat foods are those foods that do not require further washing, cooking or preparation and are expected to be consumed in that form.

Examples of ready-to-eat foods that may not be touched with bare hands are:

- Salad and salad ingredients
- Cold meats and sandwiches
- Prepared fruits and vegetables that are served raw or cooked
- Shredded cheese
- Garnishes such as lettuce, parsley, lemon wedges, potato chips, pickles
- Ice served to the customers
- Raw sushi fish and sushi rice
- Bread, toast, rolls and baked goods
- Any food that will not be cooked or reheated after it is prepared

Using gloves does not replace handwashing. Always wash your hands before putting on clean, single-use gloves when working with food and between glove changes.

Follow the instructions below for the use of single-use gloves:

- Change gloves between handling raw products and ready-to-eat products
- Do not wash or reuse disposable gloves
- Discard torn or damaged gloves
- Cover a wound (cut, burn, or boil) with a waterproof covering and disposable glove
- Wear disposable gloves over artificial nails, nail polish, or uncleanable orthopedic support devices

Food operators may allow food employees to use bare hand contact with ready-to-eat food only with a prior approval for an alternative procedure. The alternative procedure must meet all the requirements within Cal Code 113961 and include written procedures for bare hand contact and documentation of proper handwashing practices, an employee health policy and documentation of completed required employee training.

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