

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 (852/2004/EU) on food hygiene, a food enterpriser is to take care that all employers 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 highly 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 Food Safety Authority Evira; 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 in-house control.

Demonstrating hygiene proficiency, and proficiency examiner

A hygiene passport is acquired by passing a particular proficiency test set up by Evira, or by producing a certificate of examination or education considered containing similar skills. Appendix 2 to Evira's Regulation on Hygiene Proficiency (1/2009) contains more specific information on accepted exams and educations.

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

Proficiency tests are arranged by proficiency examiners approved by Evira who independently operate in various parts of Finland, and they issue hygiene passports of Evira's model. A list of proficiency examiners who have allowed the publication of their contact data can be found at the website (<https://www.evira.fi/en/foodstuff/hygiene-passport/>).

Evira neither arranges courses in hygiene proficiency or proficiency tests nor awards hygiene passports.

Proficiency test

A proficiency 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. Proficiency examiners separately may apply at Evira for authorisation to arrange a proficiency test in some other language than Finnish or Swedish. During tests in special situations, the use of a dictionary is allowed, or the examiner may in advance have the statements translated into another language. However, during

no proficiency tests one may utilize aids (notes, discussions with others etc.) that give guidance to correct answers.

Fees on demonstrating hygiene proficiency

Evira charges the proficiency 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 proficiency examiners are entitled to charging their clients the actual costs of arranging tests.

Prices set by proficiency examiners on proficiency tests vary depending on whether the proficiency 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 proficiency 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, Evira is to approve proficiency examiners and control their activities. Regulations and the instructions of Evira regulate the activities of proficiency examiners. Proficiency examiners are persons exerting official authority when they function as proficiency examiners. The regulations on offence in office of Chapter 40 of the Penal Code are applied to proficiency examiner exerting official authority. Evira may recall the authority of a proficiency examiner to function as proficiency examiner, if they significantly violate the regulations concerning said activities.

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

Additional information

Evira's website on Hygiene Passport: <https://www.evira.fi/en/foodstuff/hygiene-passport/>

Hygiene Passport Customer Service:

hygieniapassi@evira.fi

Customer Service number 029 5300 402 Tuesdays 9-12 am