

New Chicago Food Code Requires Employee Health Policy

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Effective July 1, 2018, the City of Chicago's Food Code Rules require employers with food handling employees to maintain an "employee health policy." The policy must detail the employer's efforts to comply with the reporting obligations imposed by the Food Code Rules in the event of certain symptoms, diagnoses, or exposures to specific illnesses.

The employer must keep documentation of employees' acknowledgment of their duty to report illnesses, diagnoses, and exposures to managers, and of managers' acknowledgements of their respective duty to report to the Chicago Health Department and to exclude those employees from working with food.

The new Food Code Rules further require employers to train employees in compliance with the Code's provisions on proper handwashing, fingernail maintenance, and good hygienic practices, among other things, and to maintain documentation of employees' acknowledgments thereof.

Although it sounds simple enough, the details of the Food Code Rules should be closely reviewed. While the City of Chicago provides a sample policy on its website, the revised rules appear to require more than the sample policy provides.

As such, any business in Chicago with employees who handle food should audit its policies for compliance with the City's revised Food Code Rules.