

September 1st, 2021

Ottawa Network for Education
Conseil des Écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario
Conseil des Écoles catholiques du Centre-Est
Ottawa Carleton District School Board
Ottawa Catholic School Board

RE: Ontario Regulation 493/17 Food Premises:

- A. Part IV, Section 20, "Mechanical Dishwashers"**
- B. Part III, Section 7(3)(c) and 7(4), "Operation and Maintenance".**

The purpose of the letter is for Ottawa Public Health (OPH) to confirm in writing, the practices that have been determined by OPH to be effective food safety measures for the Ottawa Network for Education's School Breakfast Program (ONFE SBP).

Ottawa Public Health (OPH) is a proud supporter and partner of the ONFE SBP. OPH believes that all children and youth benefit from the opportunity to participate in healthy meal and snack programs at school. As such, OPH is committed to working closely with the SBP and its four school board partners* to determine the most effective food safety practices and equipment for the program.

ONFE SBP program delivery sites (schools) are considered to be Food Premises and as such, sites are inspected and expected to comply with Ontario Regulation 493/17 [O.Reg.493/17]. OPH understands that Ottawa's four school boards are responsible for ensuring that the physical environments and equipment meet legislated requirements to operate as a Food Premise.

Amendments to the Food Premises Regulation [O.Reg.493/17] made under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* relating to this matter came into effect on January 1, 2020. These amendments respond to the needs of the community meal programs and food premises serving lower risk food, while balancing public health and safety.

The following amendments to the Food Premises Regulation apply to food premises that prepare only low-risk* foods and/or distribute pre-packaged ready to eat food items (*see description of Low-Risk Foods for School Breakfast and Snack Programs in the text box below):

Clause 7 (3) (c) Handwashing stations

Applicable food premises are no longer required to have the specified handwashing stations in a food premises. However, there is still a regulatory requirement for food premises operators to ensure that food handlers wash their hands as often as necessary to prevent the contamination of food or food areas.

S. 18 Dishwashing equipment

Applicable premises are no longer required to provide the structural number of a two- or three-compartment sink and/or a commercial mechanical dishwasher. However, any utensils used to prepare food must be cleaned and sanitized in accordance with current regulatory requirements (e.g., sections 19 – 23).

S. 32 Food handler training

Applicable premises are no longer required to ensure there is at least one food handler or supervisor on the premises who has completed food handler training. However, OPH encourages program coordinators and volunteers to be aware of safe food handling practices and OPH is working to support that awareness through the transition of our past training to an on-line/ on-demand resource.

***Low-Risk Foods**

The types of food items listed below, when prepared in Ottawa schools for the purposes of School Breakfast and Snack Programs, are considered by OPH to be **Low-Risk Foods** under the Amendments to the Food Premise Regulation O.Reg.493/17 described in this letter.

- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Frozen fruits and vegetables
- Canned fruits and vegetables (including also, for example: apple sauces etc.)
- Bread, baked goods, grain products (including also, cereals, crackers, muffins etc.)
- Legumes (including also, for example: hummus, soy spreads etc.)
- Dairy products (for example: milk, cream, cheese, yogurt, and products containing these items)
- Eggs – (HACCP audit conducted. Preparation steps are approved by OPH)
- Condiments (for example: jam, margarine, spreadable cheese etc.)

We look forward to our ongoing partnership with ONFE SBP and Ottawa's four school boards to support student nutrition programs in Ottawa schools.

If you have any questions, please contact Blayr Kelly, Supervisor, Public Health Inspections, Ottawa Public Health: Blayr.Kelly@ottawa.ca or 613.580.2424 ext. 19256.

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