

# *The Basics of Tavern Sanitation*



## *Ice and drinks are food.*

If they come contaminated through careless handling, or unsanitary surroundings, customers can get sick, just as they can from mishandled food in restaurants. That's why your tavern is inspected by the Health Department. The guidelines in this pamphlet are designed to protect your customers and your business and they are the law. Take a few minutes to review them.

## *Getting Started*

Your facility must be inspected **before** you open. The Health and Building inspectors will verify that all bar fixtures (ice bins, ice machines, sinks, etc.) are properly plumbed and of adequate number, and that all equipment is approved for commercial foodservice use. Plans for **new** facilities must be submitted and approved **before** the start of construction.

### *Buyer Beware!*

Only the Health Department can determine whether or not a facility meets current standards! Don't rely on information from others when buying or opening a new business.

## *Serving Food*

You don't need a food license to put out free popcorn, cheese & crackers, chips, pretzels or cold cured sausage.

If you plan to serve prepackaged whole, frozen pizzas, or microwave sandwiches, **you must obtain a restaurant food license.**

If you plan to serve any type of food that is not prepackaged (hot dogs and Polish sausage, cold cuts, buffets or appetizers) you must obtain a **full restaurant license.** Plans and additional equipment may be required.

# *Employee Hygiene*

**Hand washing is as important in taverns as it is in restaurants.** Ice, snacks, drinks and the surfaces of glasses aren't heated like many foods-heat kills germs. So, if bartenders don't wash their hands after using the toilet, taking out the garbage, or sneezing, they can transmit diseases such as Hepatitis A, Shigellosis and others.

**Make it convenient to wash hands.** Keep soap and disposable towels behind the bar at the hand sink. Make sure restrooms are **always** supplied with soap and single service towels. Post hand washing signs and keep all restroom fixtures clean. No one to use a dirty restroom!

**Handle ice and glasses correctly.** Hold only the outsides of glasses-don't carry by sticking your fingers in them! Don't use glasses to scoop ice. Minimize hand contact and the risk of glass breaking by using a durable ice scoop with a handle. Store scoops with handles out of the ice so you don't have to dig for them, possibly contaminating your product. For the same reason, don't store bottles in drink ice.

## *Glass Washing*

Glasses must be washed, rinsed and sanitized. After dumping residues and straws from them in a dump, pre-wash sink, wash with soap, warm water, and brushes in a wash compartment.

**Rinse** in the center sink using plain water, then immerse in a sanitizer solution (approved product or bleach at the recommended strength) in the last tank.

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Don't rinse again after sanitizing! Allow glasses to air dry on a clean drain board. Don't towel dry or store on towels.

## *Good Housekeeping*

Good Housekeeping makes common sense, but the basics bear repeating. Empty waste containers daily and don't neglect rubber floor mats when sweeping and mopping. Check ice machines and bins for signs of build-up and follow manufacturer's rules for cleaning and sanitizing them. Make a schedule for cleaning soda guns, holsters, coolers, sinks, and drain boards and stick to it! Doing this will help eliminate fruit flies and other unwelcome pests.

Check your dumpster and recycling container to ensure lids are closed and the area is litter-free. Your neighbors and customers will appreciate well-maintained grounds.

Visit the City of West Allis Health Department on the web:  
<https://www.westalliswi.gov/>