

Qualified Food Operator (QFO) Responsibilities for Connecticut Child Nutrition Programs

Note: During the 2017 Connecticut legislative session, [Senate Bill 901](#) was passed to adopt the FDA Food Code. The new code will replace the following current food regulations: 19-13-B40, 19-13-B42, 19-13-B48, and 19-13-B49. [Public Act 18-168](#) (approved June 13, 2018) included language that extends the date for adoption of the FDA Food Code to “Not later than January 1, 2019.” However, the state regulations to implement the FDA Food Code are still in the regulation review process, and will not be approved by January 1, 2019. Therefore, on January 1, 2019, the current food regulations (19-13-B42; 19-13-B40; 19-13-B48; and 19-13-B49) will still be in effect and enforceable by local certified food inspectors, until the state regulations are approved. Contact your local health department for more information.

Effective October 1, 2017, hot and cold holding temperatures for foods that require temperature control to prevent bacterial growth must follow the [FDA Food Code](#).

All schools and institutions participating in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) [Child Nutrition Programs](#) must comply with all applicable requirements of the Connecticut Public Health Code (PHC) for food service establishments. The USDA Child Nutrition Programs include the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP), Special Milk Program (SMP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).



Connecticut PHC Section 19-13-B42(s)(4) requires at least one QFO, who is in a supervisory position, and a designated alternate person to be in charge at all times when the QFO cannot be present, in each food service establishment that prepares and/or serves exposed potentially hazardous foods prepared using hot processes. Each local health jurisdiction is responsible for classifying its local food service establishments.

The regulations define four classes of food service establishments, depending on the type of food preparation and/or service. The QFO requirement is mandatory for all class III and IV establishments.

- **Class III** is “a food service establishment having on the premises exposed potentially hazardous foods that are prepared by hot processes and consumed by the public within four (4) hours of preparation.”

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- **Class IV** is “a food service establishment having on the premises exposed potentially hazardous foods that are prepared by hot processes and held for more than four (4) hours prior to consumption by the public.”

Food service operations should check with their local health department if they are unsure whether a QFO is needed.

In addition to requiring at least one QFO, the Connecticut State Department of Public Health (DPH) regulations further define the responsibilities of both the food service establishment and the QFO. These responsibilities are summarized on the following pages.

Responsibilities of the Food Service Establishment

1. **Appoint a QFO who is in a full-time supervisory capacity on site and has demonstrated knowledge in the safe preparation and service of food.** A QFO is primarily defined as someone who has passed a test administered by a testing agency approved by the Connecticut State Department of Public Health. For more information, see DPH’s [QFO Approved Testing Organizations](#).

2. **Appoint an alternate person to be in charge at all times when the QFO is not present.** The alternate must be able to demonstrate to the food service establishment owner/operator or to the person in charge all the food safety elements of knowledge described in the “[Alternate Person in Charge Demonstrated Knowledge Statement](#),” but is not required to have passed an approved exam. The responsibilities of the alternate QFO include:

- being in charge of food safety when the QFO cannot be present;
- ensuring that employees comply with the requirements of PHC Section 19-13-B42;
- ensuring that food is safely prepared;
- handling emergencies;
- admitting the health inspector; and
- signing the inspection report.



The food service establishment must provide a signed statement attesting that the alternate QFO has demonstrated knowledge of food safety.

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3. **Notify the local health department in writing when the QFO is no longer employed.**
4. **Appoint a successor QFO within 60 days and notify local health department.** The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) recommends that all USDA Child Nutrition Programs have more than one QFO at each food service site. If there is only one QFO and that person leaves, the site will be left without a QFO. The regulations allow 60 days from the termination date of a QFO for a replacement to be employed. A local health department may grant an additional 60 days from the termination date of a QFO.
5. **Maintain on file and provide upon request to the local health department the following:**
 - QFO's certificate from an approved testing organization; and
 - training records of food service employees.

The testing certificate is valid for the period of time designated by the approved testing agency.

Responsibilities of the QFO

1. **Operate the food service establishment in compliance with all provisions of PHC Section 19-13-B42.**
2. **Train food service personnel in safe food preparation practices** including, but not limited to:
 - proper food temperature control;
 - food protection;
 - personal health and cleanliness; and
 - sanitation of the facility, equipment, supplies and utensils.



The QFO is not required to personally *provide* the training, but rather to *ensure* that training is provided.

3. **Maintain written documentation of training programs and training records of individual employees.** These records must be available to the local health department upon request. Training records should be retained for the term of employment of all current employees. Sample training record forms are available on the CSDE's [Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. Schools and institutions participating in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs may choose, but are not required, to maintain information in this format. For additional information on required forms for documenting food service employee training, contact your local health department or DPH.

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4. Direct and inspect the performance of food service workers.

Schools and institutions participating in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs must ensure that current policies and procedures include these responsibilities. Facilities with questions regarding how this information affects their program should contact their local health department.

Resources

Alternate QFO Statement (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/FoodSafe/AltQFO.pdf>

Food Protection Program (DPH):

<https://www.portal.ct.gov/DPH/Food-Protection-Program/Main-Page>

Education and Training (DPH):

<https://www.portal.ct.gov/DPH/Food-Protection-Program/Education-and-Training>

Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Food-Safety-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs>

Food Service Employee Training Record for Sanitation and Food Safety (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/FoodSafe/EmployeeTrain.pdf>

On-site Training Record for Sanitation and Food Safety (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/FoodSafe/OnsiteTrain.pdf>

QFO Approved Testing Organizations (DPH):

<https://www.portal.ct.gov/-/media/Departments-and-Agencies/DPH/dph/FoodProtection/testingorgsupdated3116pdf.pdf>

QFO Responsibilities (DPH):

https://www.portal.ct.gov/-/media/Departments-and-Agencies/DPH/dph/environmental_health/food_protection/pdf/QFOResponsibilitiespdf.pdf

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For guidance regarding the requirements and implementation of Connecticut PHC Section 19-13-B42, visit the Connecticut State DPH [Food Protection Program](#) website and the CSDE's [Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage or contact the [school nutrition programs staff](#) in the CSDE Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This form is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/FoodSafe/QFO_CNPs.pdf.

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