



Facts about...

The FOOD CODE requires that FOOD EMPLOYEES wear hair restraints. *The purpose of the hair restraint is to prevent hair from contacting food and food-contact surfaces and to deter FOOD EMPLOYEES from touching their hair.* Hair restraints must keep hair from contacting exposed food; clean equipment, utensils, linens; and unwrapped single-service or single-use articles.

What is a hair restraint?

Hair restraints may include items such as hats, scarves, hairnets, beard restraints and clothing that covers body hair. Depending on the hair style, they may also include rubber bands and clips that effectively restrain the hair.

Does all hair need to be covered or restrained?

No. The code requires hair be effectively restrained. For instance, if the hair style (e.g., short hair) effectively keeps hair from contacting food or food-contact surfaces and deters the FOOD EMPLOYEES from touching their hair, a hair restraint is not required.

Are there any food employees who aren't required to restrain their hair?

Yes. FOOD EMPLOYEES who present a minimal risk of contaminating exposed food; clean equipment, utensils, and linens; and unwrapped single-service or single-use equipment are not required to restrain their hair such as;

- counter staff who only serve beverages & wrapped or packaged foods
- hostesses
- most wait staff
- table bussers
- bartenders
- baristas
- grocery checkers & grocery courtesy clerks

Can customers get sick if hair touches their food?

Although hair in food is a periodic source of customer complaints, it is unlikely that customers will get sick from hair. Hair is an undesirable foreign object and all reasonable steps should be taken to keep it out of food.

For questions and/or more information contact
Kitsap County Health District
Environmental Health Division - Food Safety Program
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