

**Conference for Food Protection
2020 Issue Form**

Issue: 2020 III-027

Council Recommendation:	Accepted as Submitted _____	Accepted as Amended _____	No Action _____
Delegate Action:	Accepted _____	Rejected _____	

All information above the line is for conference use only.

Issue History:

This issue was submitted for consideration at a previous biennial meeting, see issue: 2010 III-015; new or additional information has been included or attached.

Title:

Temperature of Water for Handwashing Sinks

Issue you would like the Conference to consider:

Remove from the current published version of the 2017 Food Code Section 5-202.12(A) the requirement that a hand sink must deliver running water at a specific measured temperature and replacing the temperature to require warm water be provided.

Public Health Significance:

Safe food production is dependent on food production workers frequently washing their hands by following the hand cleaning procedure outlined in Section 2-301.12.

Harmonizing the language between 2-301.12 and 5-202.12(A) will help eliminate misinterpretation by many industry partners who try to comply with the food code by requiring employees to wash their hands using the minimum temperature specified in 5-202.12(A).

Additionally, a large percentage of hand sinks are installed in kitchens and restrooms with touch-free faucets. The water is pre-mixed to provide warm and comfortable water for hand washing. The use of touch-free faucets makes it difficult, without assistance of a plumber, for industry to periodically check the temperature of the hot water source at the hand sinks to monitor their compliance with 5-202.12(A).

An October 1, 2015 letter from the FDA titled "Handwashing water temperature" and published to the FDA Food Code Reference System clarifies that "...the FDA Food Code does not specify that hands are to be washed using water at a specific temperature..."

Public health is better protected by following the procedure outlined in 2-301.12 and hands are rinsed using warm, comfortable water as referenced in the attached October 1, 2015 FDA letter.

Recommended Solution: The Conference recommends...:

...that a letter be sent to the FDA recommending a change to the most current version of the 2017 Food Code section 5-202.12 Handwashing Sink, Installation (A) to read as follows: (new language is underlined; language to be removed is in strikethrough format):

(A) A HANDWASHING SINK shall be equipped to provide warm water ~~at a temperature of at least 38°C (100°F)~~ through a mixing valve or combination faucet. ^{Pf}

Submitter Information 1:

Name: Jill Ball
Organization: Kwik Trip, Inc.
Address: 1621 Oak Street
City/State/Zip: La Crosse, WI 54602
Telephone: 6087914390
E-mail: jball@kwiktrip.com

Submitter Information 2:

Name: Jay L.E. Ellingson Ph.D.
Organization: Kwik Trip, Inc.
Address: 1621 Oak Street
City/State/Zip: La Crosse, WI 54602
Telephone: 6087936390
E-mail: jellingson@kwiktrip.com

Content Documents:

- "2017 FDA Food Code"

Supporting Attachments:

- "FCRS 2015 "Handwashing water temperature""

It is the policy of the Conference for Food Protection to not accept Issues that would endorse a brand name or a commercial proprietary process.

Document 1

2017 FDA Food Code

Weblink: <https://www.fda.gov/media/110822/download>

Section: **5-202.12**

Page: 137



Reference Document: 2013 Food Code

Provision(s): 2-301.12; 5-202.12

Document Name: Handwashing water temperature

Date: October 1, 2015

Question: Does the FDA Food Code specify a specific water temperature at which hands are to be washed?

Response:

No, the FDA Food Code does not specify that hands are to be washed using water at a specific temperature.

Section 5-202.12 of the 2013 FDA Food Code establishes criteria for the installation of handwashing sinks used in a retail food establishment. Paragraph 5-202.12(A) states that a handwashing sink must be capable of delivering running water that is at least 38°C (100°F). Section 2-301.12 establishes criteria for how food employees are to clean their hands and exposed portions of their arms at a handwashing sink and specifically indicates that hands should be rinsed under warm running water. The word “warm” is not a defined term in the Food Code. Therefore, while the handwashing sink must be capable of delivering running water that is at least 38°C (100°F), flexibility is provided such that a food employee can adjust the temperature of the running water to suit his or her preference. In practice, this means that per the Food Code food employees may wash their hands under running water that is less than 38°C (100°F). Always check with applicable state and local codes, including plumbing codes, for specific jurisdictional requirements.

The FDA Food Code is neither federal law nor federal regulation and is not preemptive. It represents FDA's best advice for a uniform system of regulation to ensure that food at retail is safe and properly protected and presented. The FDA Food Code provisions are designed to be consistent with federal food laws and regulations, and are written for ease of legal adoption at all levels of government.

References:

1. 2013 Food Code, Section 2-301.12 Cleaning Procedure; Section 5-202.12 Handwashing Sink, Installation

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