



# The Hygiene Passport: Information for food business operators and control authorities

## WHO IS REQUIRED TO HAVE A HYGIENE PASSPORT?

An employee must have a Hygiene Passport if they work on food premises **and** handle unpackaged perishable foods (Section 19, subsection 1, Food Act 297/2021). [The Finnish Food Authority's website](#) is more detailed information on who is required to have a Hygiene Passport.

## HOW DO YOU GET A HYGIENE PASSPORT?

You can obtain a Hygiene Passport by successfully completing a Hygiene Passport test, which is organized by a Hygiene Passport Examiner approved by the Finnish Food Authority.

## WHAT INFORMATION IS USED TO ISSUE A HYGIENE PASSPORT?

The Hygiene Passport is issued with the full name and Finnish personal identification number. If the person does not yet have a Finnish personal identification number, the Hygiene Passport is issued with the full name and date of birth. If the Hygiene Passport has issued before 10 June 2024, the Hygiene Passport has issued with the first name, last name and date of birth. The Hygiene Passport also contains the Hygiene Passport Examiners code and name, test date and series number.

## WHAT DOES THE HYGIENE PASSPORT LOOK LIKE?

The Hygiene Passport according to the Finnish Food Authority model consists of an A4-sized paper certificate and a plastic card. The Hygiene Passport is not available electronically. Both original parts can be used as a certificate of hygiene proficiency. You can find a model Hygiene Passport on [the Finnish Food Authority website](#). The Hygiene Passport can also be according to the model of the Food Authority (Hygiene Passports issued in 2002-2006) or the Finnish Food Safety Authority Evira (Hygiene Passports issued in 2006-2018).

## HOW LONG IS THE HYGIENE PASSPORT VALID?

The Hygiene Passport is valid until further notice from the moment it was issued. This means that the Hygiene Passport will not expire unless some legislative amendment later changes this situation. The date of issue is the date on which the holder took the test. If the person's name has changed and the Hygiene Passport has issued based on the date of birth, the person must order a new Hygiene Passport with the correct personal information. If both parts of the Hygiene Passport are lost, it has been more than 5 years since the Hygiene Passport test, and the Hygiene Passport has issued based on the date of birth, the Hygiene Passport test must be taken again.

## OPERATORS GENERAL DUTY TO INSTRUCT

Food business operators are to ensure that food handlers are supervised and instructed and/or trained in food hygiene matters commensurate with their work activity. (Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the hygiene of foodstuffs, Annex II, chapter 12, paragraph 1) The operator's obligation to ensure is continuous.

This concerns all who work on food premises regardless of which foodstuffs are handled, and how. Also those who work on the food premises but are not directly handling foodstuffs, such as service and cleaning staff, have to be aware of and be able to consider the effects of their work methods and procedures on the foodstuffs that are being handled on the food premises.

## WHEN AND HOW DOES THE OPERATOR ENSURE THAT THE EMPLOYEE HAS A HYGIENE PASSPORT?

A food business operator must ensure that the employee has a Hygiene Passport if the employee handles unpackaged perishable food on the food premises. The Hygiene Passport must be required when the employee has been working for the employer for three months. This three-month period also includes similar work carried out by the employee previously. (Section 19 of the Food Act 297/2021)

All employees required to have a Hygiene Passport must present one of the two original parts of the Hygiene Passport to the operator. The operator must also ensure that the Hygiene Passport actually belongs to the person who presents it. No other person or entity (e.g. staffing agency, employment agency) may for example, inform or prove the matter



directly to the operator and on behalf of the employee. Photocopies of the Hygiene Passport, the test date or number series in the Hygiene Passport, with a food sector qualification certificate or foreign hygiene passports are not acceptable as proof of hygiene proficiency.

A Hygiene Passport Examiner approved by the Finnish Food Authority can, if necessary, issue a so-called temporary certificate, for example for a job interview, if a person who has successfully completed the Hygiene Passport test requests it. This is a freely worded certificate drawn up by the Examiner in which the Examiner confirms that the person in question has taken part in and passed a Hygiene Passport test organized by the Examiner. The employee must always present an original Hygiene Passport based on the Finnish Food Authority's model to the operator or employer. A so-called temporary certificate is not an authentic Hygiene Passport based on the Finnish Food Authority's model, and it is not a substitute for an actual Hygiene Passport. The Finnish Food Authority is not responsible for the examiners giving the so-called of temporary certificates.

#### **OPERATOR'S RECORD KEEPING OBLIGATION**

A food business operator must keep records of the food hygiene proficiency of the persons working on the food premises and, upon request, present the information to the control authority (section 19, subsection 3 of the Food Act 297/2021). It is the operator's responsibility to decide how to organize the above-mentioned matters from the point of view of data protection and data security. The privacy protection of employees does not prevent the operator from fulfilling the statutory obligation.

#### **WHAT KIND OF RECORD KEEPING CAN THERE BE?**

These records may consist of copies of Hygiene Passports presented to the employer or a list of the persons who are required to hold a Hygiene Passport and who have presented their original Hygiene Passports to the operator. On the food premises with a small number of employees, a procedure where the employees present their original Hygiene Passports to the control authority may be acceptable. The records may be kept on paper, electronically or with both methods. The operator must be able to present the records to the control authority. The operator should not collect the employees' original Hygiene Passports for themselves.

#### **HOW AND WHAT DOES THE CONTROL AUTHORITY INSPECT?**

The control authority shall ensure that the operator has ensured that each employee who handles unpackaged perishable food and works in a food premises has a Hygiene Passport in accordance with the Finnish Food Authority's model and that the operator has kept records of the Hygiene proficiency of its employees. In connection with the inspection visit, the control authority may ask the employee to present the Hygiene Passport and an identity document. The control authority has the right to ensure that the Hygiene Passport belongs to the employee in question.

The food control authority inspects food premises in accordance with the food inspection information disclosure system Oiva. Verification of hygiene competence is inspected in accordance with 4.6 of the Oiva instructions. If all matters are in order, the control authority shall give the Oiva-assessment Excellent. If some of the matters to be checked are not in order, the control authority shall give the Oiva-assessment Good. If the operator has not fulfilled its obligations under the Food Act, the control authority shall give the Oiva-assessment To be corrected. If the Oiva-assessment To be corrected is repeated, the control authority shall give the Oiva-assessment Poor.

#### **MORE INFORMATION**

[Finnish Food Authority Hygiene Passport website](#), Hygiene Passport Customer Service: [hygieniapassi@ruokavirasto.fi](mailto:hygieniapassi@ruokavirasto.fi),  
Customer Service number 029 5300 402 open on Tuesdays 9–12 am.