

# Kitchen Manager Certification and Food Safety

## EHS-Net Study Findings and Recommendations

Certified kitchen managers (CKMs) have passed a test to show knowledge of food safety. It is believed that CKMs are better able to control factors that can lead to foodborne illness. But research on the link between kitchen manager certification and restaurant food safety is conflicting. Thus, it is important to collect quality data to help understand that link.

### What the Study Described

This study looked at links between restaurant food-safety inspections and certification of kitchen managers.

### What the Study Found

**Restaurants with CKMs had fewer of most types of critical violations.** This suggests that CKMs may be better able to control risk factors for foodborne illness. CKMs may also provide better on-the-job training, which increases safe food handling by food workers.

**Restaurants with CKMs did not have fewer critical violations in plumbing, water, and sewage.** Kitchen managers may not have control over fixing these problems.

**Restaurants with CKMs did not have fewer critical violations in most time and temperature control activities** such as cooling and cold holding. But they did have fewer critical violations in hot holding of food. Proper hot holding may be easier than other food temperature and time control activities. For example, hot holding may be easier than cold holding because hot holding has a larger acceptable range of temperatures. Also, violations in temperature and time control could be due to poor equipment. Kitchen managers may not have much control over poor equipment.

**Restaurants that mainly serve liquor may be less likely to have a critical violation** because they typically serve food that requires little preparation. This may decrease the chance for violations.

**Fast-food restaurants may be less likely to have a critical violation** because they tend to serve food that requires little preparation. This may decrease the chance for violations. These restaurants may also be more likely to have food safety measures in place.

**Restaurants that make less money may be less likely to have a critical violation** because they sell less food. This may decrease the chance for violations.

Restaurants with kitchen managers certified in food safety were less likely to have critical violations on their inspections.



This study was conducted by the Environmental Health Specialists Network (EHS-Net). EHS-Net is a federally funded collaboration of federal, state, and local environmental health specialists and epidemiologists working to better understand the environmental causes of foodborne and waterborne illness. Visit EHS-Net at <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/EHSNet>.

## EHS-Net Recommends

Certification of kitchen managers may affect foodborne illness risk factors in many ways. Some ways are better management and better on-the-job training. More research is needed to fully understand this link.

We need to know the links between certification and food temperature and time control. We also need to know the links between certification and plumbing, water, and sewage. Training in these areas may need to be improved.

Food-safety programs and restaurants should consider encouraging or requiring certification of kitchen managers.



### Key Terms

**Certified kitchen manager:** manager who passed a test to show knowledge of food safety.

**Cold holding:** keeping cold food at a specific temperature to reduce germ growth.

**Critical violations:** violations found during restaurant inspections that are more likely to lead to foodborne illness.

**Environmental health specialists:** public health workers who enforce health and safety standards related to food and other consumer products. They conduct restaurant inspections.

**Inspection:** regular visit to see how well restaurants follow local food safety rules.

**Foodborne illness:** an illness caused by germs in food.

**Hot holding:** keeping hot food at a specific temperature to reduce germ growth.

**Temperature and time control:** using temperature or time to reduce germ growth in food. For example, food can be kept refrigerated or it can be held at higher temperatures for no more than 4 hours.