

# Retail Food Code Standards for Allergen Awareness

Updated July 23, 2024

The following information is provided to assist municipalities, food establishments and other interested parties in interpretation of the Retail Food Code. Additional information is available on our website at [Food Allergen Awareness Guidance | mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/food-allergen-awareness-guidance).

## DEFINITIONS

1. Major food allergen means:
  - a. Milk, egg, fish, (such as bass, flounder, cod, and including crustacean shellfish such as crab, lobster, or shrimp), tree nuts (such as almonds, pecans, or walnuts), wheat, peanuts, and soybeans; or
  - b. A food ingredient that contains protein derived from a food containing a Major Food Allergen. **(590.001(C); FC 1-201.10(B))**
2. Major food allergen does not include:
  - a. Any highly refined oil derived from a FOOD specified in Subparagraph (1)(a) of this definition and any ingredient derived from such highly refined oil; or
  - b. Any ingredient that is exempt under the petition or notification process specified in the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act of 2004. **(590.001(C); FC 1-201.10(B))**

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF PERSON IN CHARGE

1. The person in charge must be capable of demonstrating their knowledge of foods identified as major allergens, and the symptoms that a major food allergen could cause in a sensitive individual who has an allergic reaction. **(590.002(B); FC 2-102.11(C)(9))**
2. The person in charge shall ensure that employees are properly trained in food safety, including food allergy awareness, as it relates to their assigned duties. **(590.002(D); FC 2-103.11(N))**

## LABELS AND CLEANING

1. When packaged, foods shall be labeled with the name of the food source for each major food allergen contained in the food, unless the food source is already part of the common or usual name of the respective ingredient. **(590.003; FC 3-602.11)**



2. Food contact surfaces of equipment and utensils that have contacted a raw animal food that is a major food allergen such as raw fish must be cleaned and sanitized prior to contacting different types of raw animal foods. **(590.004; FC 4-602.11)**

## **ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

1. Poster - Food establishments shall prominently display in the employee work area, a poster related to major food allergens, no smaller than 8.5 by 11 inches, and deemed approved by the Department. **(590.011(C)(1))**
2. Notice - Food establishments shall include on all printed menus and menu boards a clear and conspicuous notice requesting a customer to inform the server before placing an order, about the customer's allergy to a major food allergen. The notice shall state: *Before placing your order, please inform your server if a person in your party has a food allergy.* **(590.011(C)(2))**
3. Awareness - Food establishments shall have on staff a certified food protection manager who has been issued a Massachusetts certificate of allergen awareness training by an allergen awareness training verification program deemed approved by the Department. The certificate will be valid for 5 years. **(590.011(C)(3))**

