

Penn State Extension is helping produce growers, food processors, and feed manufacturers prepare for new regulatory standards required under the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) of 2011.

## Handwashing

Hand washing is the single most important food safety practice in the farm. Worker hands are some of their working tools and often they have contact with produce or food contact surfaces while they work. If they are not clean, microbes can spread to the produce they work with. Handwashing is an easy and effective way to prevent microbial contamination of food since it reduces the number of microbes on worker's hands.



The produce safety rule requires that workers that handle produce or food contact surfaces wash their hands thoroughly, including scrubbing with soap and clean running water, and drying their hands. Workers need to wash their hands

- Before starting work.
- Before putting on gloves.
- After using the restroom.



- Before going back to work after any break or other absence from the work station.
- After coming into contact with animals or animal waste.
- And at any other time their hands may have become contaminated.

Antiseptic hand rubs such as hand sanitizers cannot be used as a substitute for washing hands with soap and water.



The rule does not require the use of gloves, but if the farm chooses to use gloves for handling covered produce or food contact surfaces, these need to be maintained in an intact and sanitary condition and replace such gloves when no longer able to do so. Always remember that gloves are not a substitute for proper handwashing.

For more information, please follow us at [extension.psu.edu/fsma](https://extension.psu.edu/fsma).

This program was developed by Food Safety CTS, LLC, for Penn State Extension. Supported by a USDA NIFA Food Safety Outreach Program grant titled "Bilingual Produce Safety Educational Programming for Hispanic/Latino Fresh Produce Growers and Farmworkers in Pennsylvania," USDA NIFA Award number 2017-70020-27236



Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences research and extension programs are funded in part by Pennsylvania counties, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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