



LATEX GLOVE BAN RETAIL FOOD FACILITIES SENATE BILL (SB) 677 (ALLEN 2019)



Effective January 1, 2020, Senate Bill (SB) 677 – California’s Latex Glove Safety Law prohibits the use of latex gloves or utensils in all food service operations and retail food facilities. SB 677 requires food facilities to provide food workers non-latex gloves, scoops, forks, tongs, paper wrappers, or other non-latex utensils for food preparation and service. Recommended alternatives include nitrile, vinyl or polyethylene gloves, non-latex utensils and deli tissues.

Under the California Retail Food Code (Cal Code) food workers are required to minimize bare hand contact during food preparation or when handling non-prepackaged ready-to-eat foods by using an appropriate utensil or through the use of gloves. Glove use is also required under Cal Code for food workers if the worker has cuts, sores, or a rash that could be in contact with food or other food-related items. Although the use of gloves can help keep food safe by creating a barrier between hands and food, the use of latex gloves to prepare or handle food has shown to cause severe allergic reactions in certain sensitized individuals.

Consumers who are sensitized to latex can be at risk if they consume food that has been handled by workers wearing latex gloves. Recent reports indicate that up to 6% of the general population are sensitized to natural rubber latex. Latex allergies can be triggered by simply touching a product containing latex, or through inhaling airborne latex protein particles, or by consuming a food product that has been handled or prepared in contact with latex gloves. Additionally, those food workers, who repeatedly use latex gloves may also be at risk of developing sensitivity to latex which could result in their becoming allergic to latex products.

Latex allergies can produce a variety of symptoms including skin redness, hives, itching, runny nose, sneezing, itchy eyes, scratchy throat, and asthma. Symptoms may occur within minutes of exposure to latex or in the case of allergic skin reactions, take up to two days to become evident. While many cases are mild, in severe cases exposure to latex may result in anaphylactic shock, a life-threatening condition that has a rapid onset and may cause death.

For more information or regulatory oversite inquiries, please contact your local environmental health agency.