



Food Code Implementation Guidance from the  
Washington State Department of Health  
Division of Environmental Health  
Food Safety Program

# Hard Crusted Breads



## WAC 246-215

### References

246-215-030  
246-215-170



### Food Code Reference

3-306.11  
3-306.13

### FSRC Issue Number

2004-01

### Issue Approved by the FSRC

July 15, 2004



### Issue:

Clarification of the protection required for hard-crusted bread items such as baguettes and French-style breads.

### Interpretation:

Hard-crusted breads displayed for retail sale must be protected from contamination. Protection may be provided by product packaging or by display cases furnished with barriers to hand-contact. **If packaged for customer self-service, hard-crusted breads must be completely covered by the bag.** The packaging may be open on one end as long as the wrapping fully covers the loaf. Containers for display of hard-crusted breads must have access points no lower than thirty inches above the floor.

### Background:

State code requires that food service establishment owners protect food from potential or actual sources of contamination during transport, storage, preparation, cooking, display, and service by providing protection through effective measures. Most packaged, ready-to-eat foods are in sealed containers or wrappers that protect the food until opened by the consumer.

Traditionally, hard-crusted breads are not packaged in sealed containers, but are loosely or minimally packaged to appeal to consumers and allow the desired transfer of air and moisture to maintain the bread's character.

### Public Health Significance:

During display, foods can be contaminated through indirect and direct contact. Most ready-to-eat foods displayed for retail sale are protected from these sources of contamination through cases, sneeze guards, utensil use, sealed packaging, and employee monitoring of the product.

Packaging of hard-crusted breads in a full coverage wrapper should protect the bread from contamination while still allowing air and moisture exchange important for the bread's quality.

For more information contact the Department of Health at (360) 236-3330 or your local health jurisdiction.



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