



Texas Department of Health

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Gary R. Bego
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Executive Deputy Commissioner

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Dear Mr. Rupprecht:

I am writing in response to your letter regarding the requirement for the general public to wear shoes in public places, such as restaurants, or any other public establishments. I work for the Retail Foods Division of the Texas Department of Health. We enforce the Texas Food Establishment Rules (TFER) in the restaurants and other retail food establishments in the state. I can explain how the TFER addresses clothing and shoes, but cannot provide any general statement regarding the requirement for shoes in other public places. I do not believe that there are any state regulations that address the issue in regard to the general public.

The TFER specifies the requirements for the food handlers in a food establishment. Section 229.163(h) requires that food employees wear clean outer clothing to prevent contamination of food. Section 229.163(j) requires that food employees wear hair restraints. The requirement for food employees to wear shoes or other footwear is not addressed in the TFER. This is more of a safety issue and may fall under the jurisdiction of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

The TFER does not address the requirements of the general public in any manner except to prohibit persons that are not a necessary part of the food establishment operation from entering the food preparation areas. The focus of the rules is on the safe handling of food by the food employees.