

ServSafe Manager Cheat Sheet 2026

The night-before summary, built like the exam.

90 Questions	2h Time limit	70% Passing score
— Exam fee	National Restaurant Ass... Governing body	

Exam Format at a Glance

- 90 total multiple-choice questions
- 80 scored + 10 unscored pilot (research) questions
- Time limit: 120 minutes (2 hours)
- Passing score: 70% — at least 56 of 80 correct
- Certification is valid for 5 years

The 10 pilot questions are unidentified, so answer every question as if it counts.

Temperature Rules — Memorize These

- Danger zone: 41°F–135°F — pathogens grow fastest here
- Max 4 hours total in the danger zone, then discard
- Cooling (two-stage): 135°F -> 70°F within 2 hours, then 70°F -> 41°F within 4 more hours (6 hours total)
- Hot holding: 135°F or higher · Cold holding: 41°F or lower

Minimum Cooking Temperatures

- Poultry & stuffed items: 165°F for 1 second
- Ground meat: 155°F for 17 seconds

Tip: 165 > 155 — the higher the contamination risk, the higher the required temperature.

Personal Hygiene & Contamination

- Handwashing: designated sink, at least 20 seconds, soap + warm running water
- Prevent cross-contamination: separate raw from ready-to-eat, use separate equipment, clean and sanitize surfaces

Exclude from food handling when the employee has:

- Vomiting, diarrhea, or jaundice
- Diagnosis of Salmonella, Shigella, E. coli, Hepatitis A, or Norovirus

The "Big 9" Allergens

Milk, eggs, fish, shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, soy, sesame.

Responsible Alcohol Service

- Acceptable ID: valid, unexpired, government-issued photo ID (driver's license, state ID, passport, military ID)
- Signs of intoxication: slurred speech, impaired balance, glassy/bloodshot eyes, lowered inhibitions or aggression
- Dram shop liability: the establishment can be liable for injuries caused by a patron served while visibly intoxicated or a minor
- Only time lowers BAC — food and water do not sober a person up

Last-Minute Number Recall

- Danger zone 41–135°F · Cooling 2 + 4 = 6 hrs · Danger-zone limit 4 hrs
- Poultry 165°F · Ground meat 155°F · Handwash 20 sec
- Pass 56/80 (70%) · 120 min · valid 5 yrs

Official sources

- U.S. Food and Drug Administration — FDA Food Code 2022: <https://www.fda.gov/media/164194/download?attachment>
- National Restaurant Association — ServSafe Food Protection Manager Certification Examinee Handbook: <https://www.servsafe.com/ServSafe-Manager>
- National Restaurant Association (ServSafe) — ServSafe Manager Online Proctoring FAQs: <https://www.servsafe.com/ServSafe-Manager/Online-Proctoring-FAQs>

Free practice questions for this exam: www.everyexamprep.com/exams/servsafe-manager/practice-test