

Everything You Need to Know About ServSafe Training



The Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan is a food safety certification training provider offering ServSafe classes and training courses to Tribes of Michigan.

ServSafe classes aim to educate the learners about proper food handling and public safety in accordance with the US Food and Drug Administration codes and by-laws. The classes from ServSafe are endorsed by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation. Most of the ServSafe training certifications are also endorsed by local and federal regulating bodies.

According to the National Restaurant Association (NRA), restaurants are one of the top private-sector job providers in the country. To regulate and maintain the high-quality service of the restaurant industry, certain regulations are being put in place. The ServSafe Program is an accredited American National Standards Institute and Conference for Food Protection (ANSI-CFP) program that provides educational materials and training to the workforce of the restaurant and other related food industries.

Acquiring a ServSafe certificate means you have undergone the necessary training and instruction about food safety and beverage handling. The ServSafe class and certification are for people who handle food and beverages professionally. This includes restaurant and cafeteria staff, food truck operators, hospital cooks, and other related jobs. Having the ServSafe training and the accompanying certificate also means further advancement in your foodservice career.

How Do I Become ServSafe Certified?

There are four ways to become ServSafe certified, depending on which area of the food service industry you wish to be certified. Each of these categories earns you a certification from the National Restaurant Association. These certifications are valid for three to five years, depending on the course you're taking. The ServSafe Alcohol certificates are only NRA-valid for three years, but may be valid longer depending on what state you currently reside. Unless otherwise stated in your local Tribal food code, all certifications are valid through the NRA-validity duration.

ServSafe Food Handler

The **ServSafe Food Handler** Certification is for the employee that primarily handles food on an hourly basis in the restaurant setting. This certificate validates that the holder has a basic food safety learning foundation. This course follows the ANSI ASTM 2659 standards for safe food handling.

The ServSafe Food Handler Certificate is recognized in most states, however, the state guidelines can vary. Although the Food Handler training does provide a certificate, this is a certification level below the ServSafe Food Protection Manager Certificate, which requires a proctored exam. You can check [here](#) whether your locality requires you to have a certain number of training hours in accordance with state regulations. Currently, the state of Michigan does not recognize the ServSafe Food Handler Certification, but it may still give you an advantage when applying for a job in the food service industry in Michigan.

There are five sections for the ServSafe Food Handler Certification. There are no prerequisites for this certificate. All these should be completed before pursuing the assessment exam. Here are five categories:

- Basic Food Safety
- Personal Hygiene
- Cross-Contamination and Allergens
- Time & Temperature
- Cleaning & Sanitation

ServSafe Food Safety Manager

The **ServSafe Food Safety Manager** is primarily for leadership roles within the foodservice operation. Mostly for managers, shift supervisors, owners/operators, or other leadership positions who wish to provide proper training on food handling and sanitation to his or her staff. This certification assures the public that the holder has knowledge on how to protect the public from foodborne diseases. Upon passing the 90-question exam, the holder of this certificate will receive the ServSafe Manager Certificate, which is valid for 5 years. The state of Michigan allows the course and exam to be taken online, but the test is still "proctored" and will require a PC or Mac, as well as a working webcam and microphone. Currently ITCMI does not offer proctoring to online exams, but you can purchase the online option directly through the ServSafe website [here](#) and they will provide the online course and proctoring options for you.

Contents of the ServSafe Food Manager Certification includes the following topics:

- Management of Food Safety Practices
- Hygiene and Health
- Safe Receipt, Storage, Transportation and Disposal of Food
- Safe Preparation and Cooking of Food
- Safe Service and Display of Food
- Cleanliness and Sanitation
- Facilities and Equipment
- 2017 FDA Food Code

ServSafe Alcohol

The **ServSafe Alcohol Certification** is for those who want to learn about proper alcoholic beverage service. This program aims to improve how bartenders, hosts, and other related occupations handle alcohol-related occurrences in the workplace.

The ServSafe Alcohol assessment exams come in two forms: the Servsafe Alcohol Primary Exam that evaluates the basic understanding of alcohol management and the Advanced Proctored Exam that assesses deeper salient points on alcohol intoxication and the laws governing it. Because alcohol laws can be different from state to state, it is best to check with the local requirements before determining which option may be best. The state of **Michigan** requires a specific test but allows for the course and test to be taken online. If you reside in Michigan you can find the course [here](#) if the online approach is best suited for you.

ServeSafe Alcohol includes these topics

- Proper Understanding of Laws and Responsibilities Governing Intoxicating Drinks
- Understanding and Evaluation of Intoxication Levels
- Check identification
- How to Deal with Intoxicated Individuals and Other Related Situations

ServSafe Allergen

The **ServSafe Allergen Certification** is for those who trained in serving people with food allergies and those who want to understand food allergens. This course allows the enrollees to better understand the best and safe food service practices in relation to food allergens.

You should note that many states require additional prerequisites for the ServSafe Allergen classes. Also, renewal and approval for this certificate differ from state to state. Check your local regulatory board regarding this matter.

ServSafe Allergen Training tackles topics such as:

- Identifying what food allergies are
- Knowing the common symptoms of allergic reactions
- Identifying the common allergens
- Knowing the dangers of cross-contact and the danger of allergens
- Understanding the importance of proper cleaning methods
- Proper communication to guests and staff regarding allergens
- Sanitation
- Special dietary requests
- Emergency response in relation to allergens
- Food label information
- Proper food delivery handling
- Proper food preparation for guests with allergic reactions
- Personal hygiene for the prevention of food contamination

How Long Is a ServSafe Class?

The length of time you need to take the ServSafe class depends on the specific type of ServSafe training in which you need..

Here is a run-down of the length of time for each type of ServSafe training class:

- ServSafe Food Handler: 1.5 hours to 2 hours
- ServSafe Food Manager: 6 hours to 8 hours

- ServSafe Alcohol: 4 hours
- ServSafe Allergen: 90 minutes

Cost of a ServSafe Class?

This depends on the type of ServSafe training that is best for you. Also, the cost can vary a little from state to state. The best way to find the best ServSafe training or ServSafe exam option for you is to find a local trainer and contact them directly. Most of the time you can find options by a quick search online, or contacting your state restaurant association. The Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan offers these courses at no administrative cost, once per year, to Michigan Tribes that are part of the Environmental Health Services program, but does require all trainees to purchase their own ServSafe Manager books and answer sheets for the ServSafe Safe Food Manager course. The book with an exam answer sheet included can be found [here](#) on the ServSafe website. If no book is needed and a student only needs an answer sheet, that can be found [here](#) on the ServSafe website. Current costs for these items as well as online course options are as follows:

- ServSafe Manager Book, 7th edition with answer sheet - \$70.30
- A single exam answer sheet - \$38.00
- ServSafe Food Handler Course without test – no cost
- ServSafe Manager Online Course with Online Proctored Exam - \$179.00
- ServSafe Food Handler Online Course and Assessment - \$15.00
- ServSafe Alcohol Online Course and Exam (Michigan) - \$30.00
- ServSafe Allergens Online Course and Exam (Michigan) - \$22.00

How to Get Started with Your ServSafe Certification

Make sure that the course and assessment are accepted in the state where you want to work as a food handler or manager. Some states have particular requirements such as taking the assessment exam with the presence of a proctor while there are some states that allow only an online assessment exam.

Contact ITC's ServSafe Instructor

ITC's Environmental Services Director, Bill Bernier is a certified ServSafe instructor and can be contacted by email at bbernier@itcmi.org or by phone at (906) 632-6896 ext 115. You can also contact your Tribe's Food and Beverage Manager or Safety Department and see if an annual training has been scheduled.

On Finding an In-Person Instructor Other Than ITC

Another way to register for a ServSafe Class is to find local instructors in your area. The easiest way to find local ServSafe classes is to do a quick search online through Google. There is also a database on the ServSafe.com website which lists instructors by state, although the list may not be the most current, or easy to sort through when trying to select the right instructor. The ServSafe instructors in your area should guide, help you through, and buy the right course. Most instructors offer classes throughout the year in different locations to make finding a ServSafe class easy.

Taking the Online ServSafe Course

If you prefer to take the online course, you will have to utilize the [ServSafe website](#) and buy the [online course and proctored exam](#). Once you have your ServSafe User ID or course key, go to the "Take My Course" page on the ServSafe website. From there, click Launch. If you are going to assign an online course, there are three ways to do so:

- Use an email address

- Use a ServSafe User ID
- Create and give a student a course key

Be sure to have your Course Access Key, which you can find on the Course Management button on the My Courses page. Look for your name and under it is your Course Access Key. Should you want to know more about your course, you can always click the Details button. It would direct you to the specific page of your respective course.

Is the ServSafe Test Difficult?

ServSafe tests and learning materials are available in several languages, including Korean, Spanish, Chinese aside from standard English. Except for the ServSafe Food Handler Certifications and the ServSafe Alcohol Certification for the primary level, a proctor will be needed for the ServSafe Food Safety Manager Exam.

The results of the ServSafe exam taken can be received immediately if the exam is taken online, or about a week for the pen and paper exams. The results can be accessed online, or provided directly from the instructor or proctor.

Each exam is in a multiple-choice format. You do have an allocated time for each test. These times vary depending on the ServSafe exam being taken. Here is the summary of the length of time given to complete each exam.

- ServSafe Food Handler: 1.5 hours, untimed
- Servsafe Food Manager: 2 hours, timed; proctored
- Servsafe Alcohol: 2 hours, untimed, proctored
- ServSafe Allergen: no exam

You are allowed to skip some difficult questions and return to them at any time during the test period. You can also change your previous answers, also during this time. It is highly recommended that the book be read to ensure the best understanding of the material.

Passing Scores

All main tests given by ServSafe have 75% passing scores except for the ServSafe Alcohol Advanced Proctored Exam which needs at least 80% or higher passing score. For the Food Handler certificate, you need to pass 30 out of 40 questions, and these are non-proctored.

On Retesting

For first-time retests, you can do this immediately without any window period. For the second retest, you need to wait for 60 days before taking the exam again. But the caveat here is, in one year, you are only allowed to take the same ServSafe test to a maximum of four times.

When taking the retest, you need to purchase an Exam Answer Sheet for the print exam type or if you prefer the online exam, an Exam Access Code. Most of the instructors will provide these for the individuals taking the exams the day of the class, or the proctored exam location. All retests are supervised by an accredited ServSafe proctor.

What Should You Bring during a ServSafe Certification Exam

The things required of you in a ServSafe Certification Exam depend on the type of certification you are applying. Generally, you should bring a photo ID card. For the paper and pencil test, you need to bring more than one (1) Number 2 pencils. If you are taking the exam with a local ServSafe proctor, most of the time they will provide any items needed for the exam or the ServSafe class.

For individuals who are non-native English speakers and wish to take the exam in English, they are allowed to bring a dictionary to translate technical words to their primary language and vice versa during the exam period. Take

note that testing sites have different specific testing rules. More often, you'd encounter that proctors would not allow you to bring electronic gadgets or bags inside the room.

Where Can I get my actual ServSafe Certificate?

You can obtain a copy of your ServSafe certificate by logging in and downloading a copy from the ServSafe website. Or you can contact ITC's ServSafe Instructor and they will send you the certificate.

Should you wish to have your certificate mailed to you, you can request from the ServSafe website for a \$10 fee. Your certificate should arrive at you through the US Postal Service. You should not tamper your certificate with other texts and logos except when you have contacted the National Restaurant Association for permission.

To Reprint or View Your Exam Results Again

Again, the easiest way to access your results should you need them again in the future, is to contact the ServSafe instructor or ServSafe training company you used for the ServSafe class and ServSafe exam. ITC will keep files for every individual exam score and corresponding certificate, and can usually send a copy directly to you quickly.

Another option is to log-in to the ServSafe website. Look for the "Scores" button on the upper right section of the webpage. There is a dropdown menu where you should choose the type of exam you took. Click Next.

If it's your first time to view your exam results, answer the questions required of you located on the lower part of the screen. At the end of the page, you need to fill in your last name, your Score Access Code or Exam Session Number to find your results. If you want to view your exam results again or reprint your certificate, click on the specific course and continue on to the printing task.

ITC's ServSafe Instructor Contact Information

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