

**October 2005**

**NSF Protocol P155  
Disposable Food Contact Gloves**

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October 2005

# **NSF Protocol P155 Disposable Food Contact Gloves**

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Revised October 2005

Published by  
NSF International  
789 N. Dixboro Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48105

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## Foreword

This edition of the protocol (NSF Protocol P155 – Disposable Food Contact Gloves – October 2005) extends the minimum length and width dimension requirements for LDPE gloves for all available sizes.



# NSF Protocol P155

## Disposable Food Contact Gloves

### 1 General

#### 1.1 Introduction

Disposable gloves are used in numerous applications in food preparation, handling, and service. In the 1999 U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Food Code, single-use gloves are one of a number of suitable utensils for use by employees when handling exposed, ready-to-eat foods. Food contact gloves are used in the industry for tasks requiring different physical properties, dexterity, puncture, and chemical resistance characteristics. Although not regulated by FDA as medical devices, many of the requirements for medical gloves are applicable to food contact gloves. Using medical glove guidelines in combination with food-specific requirements, this protocol intends to be the first comprehensive protocol for disposable food contact gloves.

Prevention of the spread of foodborne disease requires adherence to several key preventative practices to interrupt routes of pathogen transmission. The National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods concluded that gloves, or other suitable utensils, are only one barrier and must be used in conjunction with other barriers such as frequent handwashing, the exclusion/restriction of ill food workers from contact with ready-to-eat foods and food-contact surfaces, and minimizing bare-hand contact with exposed, ready-to-eat food (i.e. food that is edible without washing or is not subsequently subjected to a pathogen kill step – items such as salads, fruits, sandwiches, cooked meats, breads or ice).

Food workers must be educated about the vital importance of hand washing, glove selection, and the correct usage and limitations of all barriers and utensils. The basis for any training of food workers about optimum usage of all barriers, including gloves, should take into account the FDA Food Code's prohibition of bare-hand contact with exposed, raw, ready-to-eat foods and the reasoning behind it (see informational Annex B for more information). Ongoing food worker and management training is highly recommended and should explain the link between foodborne disease, protective barriers, and basic personal hygiene to reduce the risk of transmission of pathogens to foods via the food workers hands.

#### 1.2 Scope

This protocol covers disposable single-task gloves typically used for food handling, preparation, and service tasks. This protocol establishes criteria for product quality in terms of toxicology (indirect food additive), physical properties (tensile strength, elongation), barrier resistance (leakage), and sanitation (bioburden). The criteria in the protocol are divided into general requirements for all gloves and material-specific requirements that apply to the major material-types used in food contact gloves: polyethylene, vinyl, natural rubber latex, nitrile, and other synthetic blends. As new materials are developed in the industry, material-specific requirements may be added in subsequent revisions of the protocol. As new test methods and regulatory requirements (e.g. ASTM, FDA) are developed dealing with durability or other