

HEALTH DEPARTMENT INSPECTION RESOURCE GUIDE



Background

Local Health Departments regularly visit food service establishments to make sure they are following regulations, practicing safe food handling, and eliminating risks for foodborne illness. The inspector will verify proper holding temperatures and monitor employees who are handling food. Cleanliness and facility repair will also be evaluated. The Health Department may visit the food service establishment on a regular schedule, if a consumer complaint was reported, or because of other circumstances.

Responsibilities

Person in Charge in the Store: The person in charge in the store is responsible for following the health inspector throughout the inspection, correcting violations immediately, communicating deficiencies to employees handling food, and working with their store's leadership to implement long-term plan of correction.

Store Personnel: Employees are responsible for practicing safe food handling.

How to Prep

Prepare for health inspections by keeping documentation readily available. This includes temperature logs or line checks, food safety manager certifications and food handler cards, policies, etc.

Procedure

When the health inspector arrives in the food service establishment, the person in charge in the store should follow him or her throughout the inspection and take notes.

During and after the inspection:

- Correct violations immediately. If you have a question or an issue that cannot be corrected during the inspection, communicate your plan with the inspector.
- After the inspection, meet with your managers and supervisors to communicate the deficiencies that were found. Develop a long-term plan of correction for each violation.

Additional Information

Your local jurisdiction may use varying terminology on the inspection report. These terms include critical and non-critical violations or Priority, Priority Foundation and Core items.

- The FDA 2017 Food Code defines a Priority Item as a provision in the Food Code whose application contributes directly to the elimination, prevention or reduction to an acceptable level, hazards associated with foodborne illness or injury and there is no other provision that more directly controls the hazard.
- A Priority Foundation Item is a provision in the Food Code whose application supports, facilitates or enables one or more Priority Items.
- A Core Item usually relates to general sanitation, operational controls, sanitation standard operating procedures (SSOPs), facilities or structures, equipment design, or general maintenance

Note that health inspections are public record.

References

U.S. FDA 2017 Food Code

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