



FOOD ESTABLISHMENT INSPECTION REPORTS

- Introduction
- Violation Point Details
- Abbreviations and other terms
- What Thurston County Does with the Inspection Information: Re-Inspections and Solving Problems
- Additional Information: Other Things we Pay Attention to in Inspection
 - A note on refrigerators
 - A note on sinks
 - A note on cooling food

INTRODUCTION

Thurston County Public Health & Social Services Department staff conducts routine and unannounced inspections of all retail food establishments in the county. The latest inspection results are available through this webpage. If you are interested in previous inspection reports, please contact us at 360-867-2667 with the name and address of the establishment you are interested in.

Violation Point Details

There are 50 food safety violations, in two types; red or blue. Red violations can directly lead to foodborne illness, while blue violations can be indications of problems in keeping the kitchen clean and well-maintained. Each violation can have a range of points from 25 to 2. The 25 point violations are the most serious and these are most likely to lead to illness and include: handwashing, bare hand contact, and working while ill. Other serious violations include not keeping food hot or cold enough, not cooling food in the proper way, or keeping foods out at room temperature.

When reviewing the reports, please keep the following points in mind:

- Red violations by establishments are those most likely to cause food-borne illness and must be fixed immediately if feasible or by a set amount of time. For example:
 - Food found not hot enough must be reheated, or possibly thrown away.
 - A refrigerator that is not cold enough must have its thermostat adjusted or be emptied and fixed before being used again, depending on its temperature.
 - A hand wash sink that is full of dishes, or is out of soap or paper towels, must be emptied (so that it can be used for hand washing), or restocked.
- Blue violations relate to the overall cleanliness and condition of the establishment and must be fixed by a set timeframe. For example:
 - A damaged floor that needs to be replaced because it is hard to keep clean may need to be repaired within six months.
 - Grease and food accumulation on the floor underneath the cook line needs to be cleaned up within seven days.

The violation points are weighted so that more severe problems are worth more, such as not washing hands (25 red points), leaving food on the counter instead of keeping it hot or cold (25 red points), or expired food worker cards (5 red points). Blue violations are between 2 and 5 points each.

Abbreviations and Other Terms [Top of Page](#)

3-comp - Three-Compartment sink: main sink used to wash-rinse-sanitize dishes and cooking utensils

BHC - Bare Hand Contact: a food worker should not directly touch food to be served with bare hands

CH - Cold Hold: if not immediately serving food, cold food must be kept at or below 41°F to keep germs from growing in the food

Commissary - an approved commercial kitchen used to prepare and store food, usually for food trucks or caterers

DW - Dish Wash: dish washing or ware washing, usually in reference to the 3-compartment sink

FW - Food Worker: employee or volunteer who is preparing food

HH - Hot Hold: if not immediately serving food, heated food must be kept at or above 135°F to keep germs from growing in the food

HW - Hand Wash: usually referring to a specific sink, dedicated to washing hands

PHF - Potentially Hazardous Food: food that germs can grow on if not kept refrigerated or hot. Examples include: raw meats, lettuce and other greens, cooked rice or potatoes, dairy.

PIC - Person In Charge: person in the restaurant who is in charge at the time of inspection

PPM - Parts Per Million: measurement of concentration; for example, chlorine bleach for sanitizing should be between 50 and 200 parts per million

RTE - Ready To Eat (food): food that will not be further cooked before serving, such as a salad, or plated hot meal

USDA - US Department of Agriculture

WSDA - Washington State Department of Agriculture

What Thurston County Does With the Inspection Information (in addition to making it available to residents) [Top of Page](#)

Re-Inspections

If the violations exceed either 45 red points or 65 total points, then a re-inspection must be done. An additional fee is charged and the inspector comes back around 7-10 days later. The problems that were fixed during the original inspection are confirmed to still be fixed, and it is also confirmed that any remaining red point violations were fixed. Sometimes it is to confirm that staff have been re-trained on proper handwashing, or that out-of-date food worker cards have been renewed. Notes made during the re-inspection are shown next to the original inspection.

Solving Problems

Our preference is to correct violations through education and to work with an owner or manager to make sure they and their staff have the equipment or training to fix the food safety problem identified during an inspection. It is well known that violations are fixed quicker and those fixes stay in place longer if those in charge understand the food safety reasons behind the regulations.

If violations are not fixed, or they recur, then further enforcement action may include additional visits (and more fees), being called in for an administrative hearing, or ultimately being closed until the problem(s) is/are fixed. A closure may be for just a few hours, if for instance their main refrigerator dies, and they have to repair that before opening again, or if there is a plumbing problem. Or a closure may last several days if there are many violations to correct or if staff must be re-trained in food safety techniques.

Additional Information – Other Things We Pay Attention to in Food Safety Inspections:

[Top of Page](#)

A note on refrigerators:

Commercial refrigerators are designed and built to survive the constant opening and closing that happens in a restaurant kitchen. Their compressors are built to keep food below 41 °F despite frequent openings, and their doors, gaskets, shelves are also built tough against such abuse. They are also certified to be easily cleanable so that spills from open containers of meats, eggs, or other foods are not a source of contamination.

Merchandizer – Refrigerators of this type are designed to keep closed cans and bottles of beverages cold or other cold merchandise. Usually cheaply made and with glass doors, they are not designed to be working refrigerators used in commercial kitchens. They are not easily cleaned if something spills and they are challenged to keep food cold, if opened frequently all day long.

Home-style – These refrigerators are not designed to withstand the constant use and abuse that commercial refrigerator units receive. Although much less expensive than commercial units, they tend not to last too long and are not reliable for keeping cold temperatures under normal commercial conditions.

Undercounter – These refrigerators are half-height and fit under the counter.

Prep-cooler, prep-table-, prep-case – These are terms for undercounter refrigerators that also have a refrigerated top with bins and a cover to keep cold ingredients handy for making salads, sandwiches, and the like.

A note on sinks:

Restaurants need to have at least three, sometimes four, different types of sinks. They each have specific purposes and should not be used for other tasks:

- Handwash sink
- Three-compartment sink
- Produce sink
- Mop sink

The most important sink for food safety is a handwash sink. These sinks are usually small and should be near any area where food preparation is happening. If the kitchen is larger, more than one may be needed to ensure that they are convenient for food workers to get to quickly. We know from experience that if they are too far away or too inconvenient, then hands do not get washed as often as needed to prevent food contamination. Handwash sinks must always be available to be used and supplied with warm water, soap, and disposable towels.

The three-compartment sink is generally large and has three basins for the washing, rinsing, and sanitizing of dishes and utensils. Restaurants may also have commercial dishwashers to make washing easier but the three-compartment sink is the cleaning workhorse of the kitchen.

The produce or “prep” sink is used to rinse fruits or produce as well as to thaw or rinse raw meats. When thawing meats in the sink, the meat must be kept under cold running water to ensure that the outside of the meat stays below 41°F while the thawing. This sink must be kept clean and sanitized between uses so that raw meat juice does not end up on the lettuce or similar foods.

Mop sinks can either look like a utility sink or be on the floor with a raised sill around it (like a shower pan with a tall edge around it). This is where mop buckets are dumped, mops are rinsed, floor mats are hosed off, etc.

A note on cooling: [Top of Page](#)

A lot of restaurants and delis cool food, including cooling cooked potatoes to make into potato salad, cooling rice to make sushi rolls, or cooling scratch-made soup. These items are usually made in large amounts so having space in a refrigerator to put them and spreading the food out so that it cools within a few hours are challenges for some restaurants. When it takes too long to cool food, say a 10-gallon pot of chili, bacteria are given the chance to multiply to an amount that could make you sick if eaten. This is different than the food going "bad" or rotting. You cannot smell or taste the bacteria, and some bacteria make a toxin that cannot be cooked away. A 10-gallon pot of chili placed in a walk-in refrigerator may take over 24 hours to get cold all the way through, leaving bacteria in the middle of the pot to enjoy a nice place to reproduce. Food should be divided into shallow (two inches or less) pans or cooled in an ice bath with someone stirring frequently to speed up the process. This should take less than six hours to get to below 41°F. Generally food that has been improperly cooled must be thrown out.