

The most frequent contact a food service operator has with the Health Department is during a food service inspection. In order to obtain the maximum benefit from an inspection, the Macomb County Health Department believes it is essential that food service operators understand the mission of the Food Protection Program and the purpose of a food service establishment inspection.

The mission of the Food Protection Program is to perform activities toward the prevention of foodborne illness and the meeting of consumer expectations for safe and sanitary food service.

The purpose of the food service establishment inspection is to verify that the processes, practices, equipment and structure or the establishment are in compliance with the Michigan Food Law and the FDA Food Code.

As a food service establishment owner/operator, it is your responsibility to prevent foodborne illness, meet consumer expectations and comply with regulatory requirements. To do so, it is essential that you understand the violations listed on the inspection report including:

- What the violation is
- Where it was observed
- Why it is a health problem
- How to correct the violation
- When it must be corrected

The environmentalist performing the inspection can answer these questions for you at the time of the inspection or you may call her/him at the health department office.

The following are some of the more frequently asked general questions about the inspection process.

• **How often can I expect an inspection?**

The Michigan Food Law requires local health departments to inspect food service establishments a minimum of once every 6 months. Establishments that operate 9 months or less are to be inspected at least once every 12 months.

• **When can inspections be conducted at my restaurant?**

Inspections can be made any time your facility is open for business. To be of greatest value, inspections are attempted when active food preparation and service is being conducted.

• **How do I know if the individual really is from the Health Department?**

All Macomb County Health Department environmentalists carry photo identification cards. For security reasons, you should always ask to see ID.

• **Should I accompany the environmentalist during the inspection?**

This is a personal decision depending on the time you have available during the inspection. If this is your first inspection, it may be of value to accompany the environmentalist in order to take a look at your facility from a "public health" perspective. Whether or not you choose to accompany the environmentalist, it is recommended that you take the time to review the report with the environmentalist and have her/him point out the location of any violations.

• **Why are some items designated as Critical and others are designated as Non-Critical?**

Critical items are violations which directly impact public health by causing foodborne illness or chemical intoxication. These items must be corrected immediately. If necessary, follow-up inspections are conducted to verify these violations have been addressed.

Non-critical items are operational and structural deficiencies which impact the establishment's ability to operate in a sanitary

manner and to avoid conditions which could lead to a foodborne illness. Non-critical items are to be corrected by a date specified by the environmentalist or no later than the next routine inspection.

• **What can I do if I disagree with the inspection report**

Discuss these items with the environmentalist who conducted the inspection. If this does not resolve

your concerns regarding the report, you have the right to appeal any of the listed violations to the Health Department.

• **I corrected several violations during the inspection, but the environmentalist would not remove the violations from the report to reflect the improvement. Why?**

You are to be commended for taking prompt action to correct these items and the environmentalist most likely made notations on the that they were corrected at the time of the inspections. However, for program statistics and program management purposes, the department uses statistics from the initial inspection data to evaluate what was actually occurring at the time of the inspection. This data is also of more value in the development of training efforts. It can also serve as a reinforcement for proper practices in your internal training activities.

• **After the environmentalist left my restaurant I had more questions about the report. How can I contact the environmentalist?**

Staff try to maintain office hours between 8:30 – 9:30 a.m. and 4:00 – 5:00 p.m. If they are not available, leave a message and your call will be returned.

• **Where are the Health Department offices located?**

Central Health Center
43525 Elizabeth Road
Mt. Clemens, MI 48043
586-469-5236

Southwest Health Center
27690 Van Dyke
Warren, MI 48093
586-573-2240

www.macombcountymi.gov/publichealth

• **I am having a problem training and motivating my employees to use proper food handling and sanitation practices. Can the Health Department help?**

As the operator, you are ultimately responsible for preventing foodborne illness, maintaining a high level of sanitation and meeting consumer expectations within your establishment. However, the Health Department has several resources available to assist you including:

- Food Service Manager Certification Course
- Video Lending Library
- Educational Pamphlets and Brochures
- Customized Training Programs

Hopefully, the above questions and answers reflect many of the questions which you may have had about food service establishment inspections. Should you have additional questions, please feel free to contact the Environmental Health Services Division of the Macomb County Health Department.

FOOD SERVICE OPERATOR'S GUIDE

FOR

FOOD SERVICE ESTABLISHMENT INSPECTIONS



Developed in cooperation with the Macomb County Health
Department Foodservice Advisory Committee