

Food Safety Newsletter

Environmental Health, Food & Living Environment

360-416-1500 | EH@co.skagit.wa.us | www.skagitcounty.net/HealthFood

Re-Inspection triggers

Re-Inspections – Nobody wants to get them; nobody wants to give them.

Re-Inspections are triggered by 35 or more red-points in violations or a repeated red-point violation.

The 9 violations that have caused the most re-inspection are:

- 04. Hands Washed
- 05. Bare Hand Contact w RTE
- 06. Hand Wash Station
- 16. Cooling
- 17-25. Hot Holding
- 19. Room Temperature Storage
- 21-10. Cold Holding
- 26. Not following approved plan

All safe food practices must be followed but the food code tends to boil down to three simple rules:

Hot foods – Hot
Cold food – Cold
Keep it clean

When am I required to submit restaurant plans for review

Well, serving food to the public in Skagit County requires a health permit issued by the Skagit County Public Health.

To obtain a health permit, a one-time plan review application and fee is first required and must be submitted to the health department for review and approval.

A Plan Review is the process by which we ensure that your plans and equipment meet the state and local health requirements before you begin construction of your project.

By communicating with you early, we hope to prevent costly mistakes, while ensuring that your food service establishment is built in compliance with the minimum standards and in the best interest of the public's health.

Plan review is required when the food establishment is:

- 1) New construction
- 2) A conversion of an existing structure or facility
- 3) Remodeled or there is change in menu
- 4) Change in permit holder

Contact our office to discuss your next proposed project or upcoming remodel.



Fee Schedule Changes

When: April 1, 2023

What: Permit and Application Fees

Learn more at
<https://www.skagitcounty.net/EH>

Why doesn't asparagus get lonely?



Because it always comes in bunches!



Behind the Score: Date Marking

Do you habitually date mark foods prepped for tomorrow? Or for an extended amount of time? Then you are ahead of the game!

Since 9/1/2023, we have been seeing a lot of confusion about this new requirement. The goal is to minimize growth of *Listeria monocytogenes*, which can grow at refrigerator temperatures.

Date marking only applies to:

- Ready to eat foods
- TCS food that is in the refrigerator for more than 24 hours

TCS foods must be used within **7 days** from the day of preparation or opening (if commercially packaged).

How is date marking cited on the inspection report?

Depends on the food type most susceptible to *Listeria monocytogenes* growth.

Violation 11 (10 points) is a high-risk violation cited when the below TCS foods are observed without a date mark:

- Deli meats
- Pate and meat spreads
- Frankfurters
- Smoked Seafood
- Pasteurized Milk
- Soft Cheeses

Violation 31 (5 Points) is a low-risk violation cited when the below TCS foods are observed without a date mark:

- Cut Melons
- Cut tomatoes
- Peeled hard-boiled eggs
- Sushi

Why is the control of *Listeria monocytogenes* important to Public Health?

Per the CDC, listeriosis is the third leading cause of death from foodborne-illness in the U.S. The case fatality rate is 20%. Nearly one-quarter of pregnancy-associated cases result in fetal loss or death of the newborn (Centers for Disease Control, 2021).

Hand Washing When, How, and Why

Hands must be washed after potential contamination. This sounds straight forward but may have some aspects you might not have considered.

After using the restroom (kind of obvious) AND when returning to work. This would be twice; at the restroom and when returning to work

Why?

Dirty hands have been the number one cause of food outbreaks and illness in Washington for decades

How to wash hands - basics

Soap, Warm water, Vigorous and complete scrubbing of hands to the wrist or higher, Rinse and Dry with paper towel.

A general rule would be: if you would not like to lick what you touched – wash your hands.

Food Safety Advisory Committee

Do you eat at, work in, or manage a food business in Skagit County? Would you like to help Public Health provide food businesses the tools they need to serve food safely? Or would you like to provide feedback on food code or fee schedule changes? If so, then we want to talk to you!

Please visit

<https://forms.office.com/g/UdvaEiARhp> to sign up for more information about the new Food Safety Advisory Committee.



Skagit County Public Health

Mon – Fri., 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM

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The Food and Living Environment program is on the 3rd floor of the Downtown Mount Vernon County Building. While you can always drop in, staff are often working out in the field and may not be available.

Please make an appointment for complex questions or plan review consultations.