**CURRENT METHODOLOGY**

The current health inspection scoring methodology works as follows. Establishments all start with a score of 100, and are docked from that 100 score for each violation. For example, a restaurant with violations totaling 10 would have a total score of 90 (100 – 10 = 90). There are three levels of violations, each docking a different amount of points:

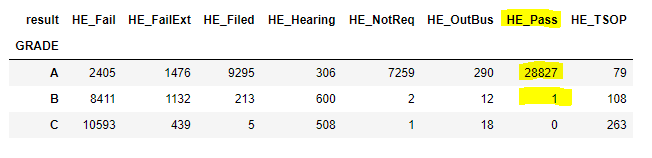
|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Violation Level** | **Penalty** |
| Foodborne Critical Violation | 10 point deduction |
| Critical Violation | 7 point deduction |
| Non-Critical Violation | 2 point deduction |

Foodborne critical violations and critical violations are the most likely to contribute to food contamination, illness, or environmental health hazard. These kinds of violations include things like the mishandling of food during storage or preparation and cleanliness/hygiene concerns. These are the most serious violations and pose the most immediate risk to the public health. Establishments are then given a letter grade based upon their final score. The grading rubric is as follows:

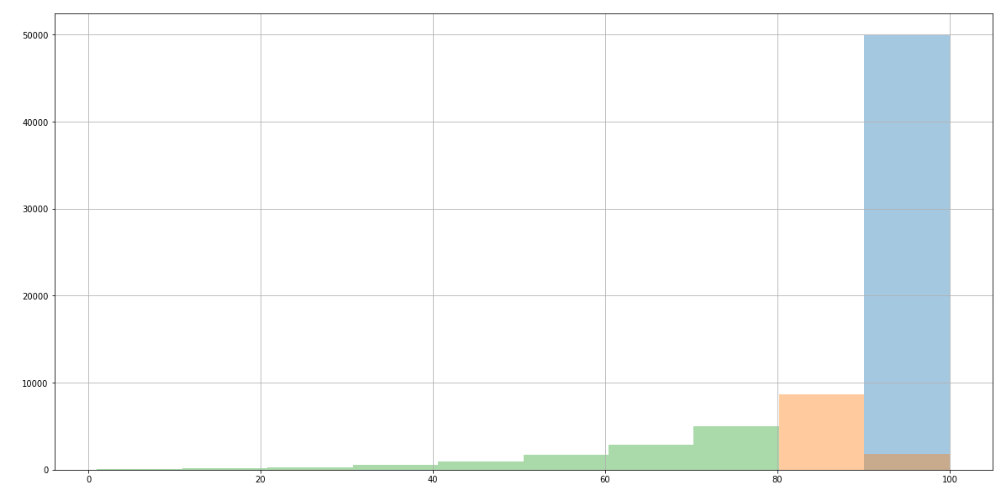
|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Score** | **Grade** |
| 94 – 100 | A |
| 81 - 91 | B |
| Below 80 | C |

**ANALYSIS**

The grades dataset suggests that the only way to pass health inspection is by getting an A, or a score of 94 or above. Only one establishment scored a B who also passed their health inspection.



|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **A** |  |
| **B** |  |
| **C** |  |



**RECCOMENDATION**

It is my recommendation that the health inspection grading methodology be moved to a pass/fail system. A letter grade of ‘A’ is in theory the only score that will allow you to pass your inspection, however there are still establishments with critical level violations being issued passing grades after correction. The pass/fail threshold would be the same as receiving an A grade, or a score of 94 or above. This immediately disqualifies any establishment that has even one critical level violation from passing at the time of initial inspection. Even one critical violation can pose an immediate risk to public health and needs to be dealt with as urgently as possible.

Furthermore, what’s the point of having a ‘B’ or a ‘C’ grade if they effectively mean a failing grade? I believe this is misleading to the public. In educational settings, a ‘B’ or ‘C’ is still a passing grade. However in the context of health inspections, having a ‘B’ or a ‘C’ grade is failing the inspection. If you told a customer that the restaurant they were thinking of eating at had a ‘B’ health inspection grade, they would probably still eat there. But if you told them the restaurant had a critical violation related to the way their food was handled, they might have second thoughts. The fact of the matter is that a restaurant is either safe to eat at or its not, and pass/fail system would remove the misleading context associated with the letter grading system.

The next steps of analysis should be examining how quickly reinspection times compare between the different kinds of violations. Ideally the time between initial inspection and reinspection should be quicker based upon the severity of the violation. However it will be interesting to see how this actually plays out in practice.