

# Food Bites

## Summer 2018



## Food Safety Program fees and you

We partner with our local food service establishments to help ensure local dining is a safe experience. The fees you pay to operate include the costs of regular inspections and education on how the Washington State Food Codes apply to your business.

We charge local food service establishments fees to cover these services. In fact, our revenue model is called fee for service. We don't get any tax revenues to support our work.

We continue to improve our work and service to you to keep costs as low as possible. Our customers benefit from these time and money savings:

- Food workers can get the training they need online and in many languages.
- Business can apply for permits online.
- Businesses with a trained food service manager can submit self-inspections to get reduced fees.
- Businesses can submit plan review applications and get status updates online.



In 2017, our Food Advisory Board Budget Workgroup asked us to develop a three- to five-year plan to raise fees. The goals are to make fees more predictable and reduce our budget deficit. We created this three-year plan: 6% increase in 2018 fees, 4% increase in 2019 fees, and 4% increase in 2020 fees. As part of our 2019 budget planning, we expect to propose our Board of Health approve a 4% increase this fall. These fee increases help us pay for rent, health insurance, cost of living allowance and salary increases.

We base fees on the food establishment size by seating and the complexity of the menu. We also offer reduced permit fees for businesses with a trained food service manager who submits self-inspections. Our fees remain lower than several neighboring counties.

View past and current fees at [www.tpchd.org/about/fee-schedule/](http://www.tpchd.org/about/fee-schedule/).

You can learn more about our fees at [www.tpchd.org/feeupdate](http://www.tpchd.org/feeupdate).

Please contact us at [food@tpchd.org](mailto:food@tpchd.org) or (253) 798-6460 if you'd like to learn more or provide input on future fees we propose to the Board of Health.

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### January norovirus outbreak

If you were close to social media in January, you probably heard about the norovirus outbreak at two local restaurants. Sharing information about the outbreak on our blog and social media helped us hear from more people who may have gotten sick after eating at the restaurants.

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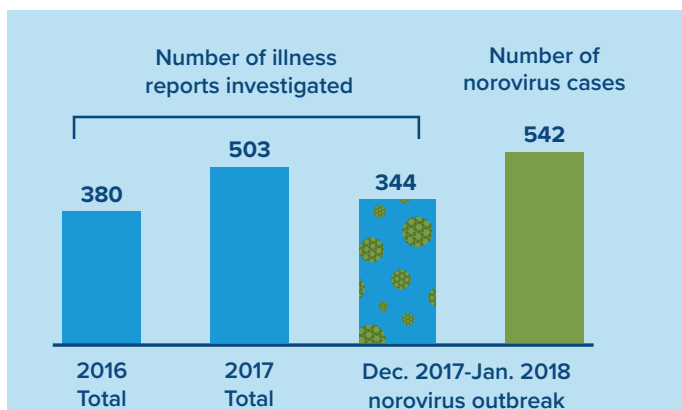
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Usually we receive about 350-400 illness notifications each year. During the January outbreak, we received 542 illness notifications.

When people contact us after they've eaten out and gotten sick, it helps us find possible causes and stop the outbreak from spreading. We then quickly work with the establishment to prevent more people from getting sick.

Outbreaks are bad news for you, your customers, your workers and your bottom line. You can prevent outbreaks with these easy steps:

- Wash your hands often.
- Stay home when you're sick and encourage others to do the same. See paid sick leave story on page three.
- Don't handle foods with your bare hands.
- Report a concern or learn more at [www.tpchd.org/food](http://www.tpchd.org/food).



Norovirus is a very contagious virus. Norovirus spreads through the feces and vomit of infected people.

Norovirus symptoms are diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting. Some people also have fever, chills, and headache.

Symptoms last one to three days.



To prevent spreading norovirus, wash hands frequently, disinfect surfaces with bleach and wash clothing in hot water.



## Know your food supply!

- Food safety issues can happen during harvesting, washing, shipping and distribution. Contamination can happen at any of these steps between you and the source of your food.



- Ask your growers and other suppliers about the practices they use to raise and harvest the crops.
- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration developed new rules to improve food supply safety. These may result in fewer recalls. Read more information at [www.fda.gov/FSMA](http://www.fda.gov/FSMA).

## Where do your shellfish come from?

Your customers can get sick and even die when they consume shellfish from areas not safe for harvesting. Illegally harvested shellfish may come from areas with dangerous marine toxins and bacteria. Cooking or freezing don't kill these toxins.

Paralytic shellfish poisoning symptoms range from mild numbing in the mouth to paralysis. Amnesic shellfish poisoning symptoms range from nausea to short- or long-term memory loss. The name says it all when it comes to the symptoms of diarrhetic shellfish poisoning.

Tags on legally harvested commercial shellfish allow health departments to track shellfish and prevent illnesses and deaths. For more information go to [www.tpchd.org/shellfish](http://www.tpchd.org/shellfish) or call (253) 798-6470 and press 7.

## Food recalls

Get retail and consumer information at [www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/FoodSafety/Recalls](http://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/FoodSafety/Recalls).

- You can sign up to receive alerts for national recalls at [www.recalls.gov/food.html](http://www.recalls.gov/food.html).
- If you have any questions about a recall, call the product supplier or manufacturer.



## Paid sick leave law in effect – Are you in compliance?

By Samantha Louderback, Washington Hospitality Association

Maintaining a healthy and productive workforce helps create communities that thrive. Is your business in compliance with the paid sick leave policies in Washington State?

Voters approved Initiative 1433 in 2016, which included paid sick leave. Beginning Jan. 1, 2018 employers must provide most employees with paid sick leave. Employers must also notify employees of their rights. Employees accrue paid sick leave. They may use it to care for themselves or immediate family members.

Tacoma, SeaTac and Seattle have more generous paid sick leave policies. Employers in these cities must follow the more generous paid sick leave policies.

Want to learn more? The Washington Hospitality Association developed a toolkit with FAQs and other information, available at <https://wahospitality.org/blog/i-1433-paid-sick-leave-toolkit/>.

Samantha Louderback and Joe Bushnell represent the Washington Hospitality Association on the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department's Food Advisory Board.

## New mobile unit commissary law – Who doesn't need a commissary?

The Washington State Legislature passed House Bill 2639, the mobile food truck bill, last session. It offers more convenience for mobile food truck operators, while maintaining safe food standards.

If your food truck meets all of these requirements, you don't need a commissary:

- Equipment and utensils for complete on-board preparation of the approved menu. This includes any produce rinsing, meat preparation and utensil washing.
- Protection from environmental contamination when not in use.
- Food kept at the required temperatures during storage, preparation, service and transit.
- Dedicated handwashing sink to allow frequent handwashing at all times.
- Mobile unit must have on-board water capacity to clean multiuse utensils.
- The mobile unit must be able to store tools needed for cleaning and sanitizing.
- Prepare all food, water and ice used onboard or get it from approved sources.
- Remove wastewater and garbage following your approved written plan or use a licensed service provider.
- Use approved menu and plan of operations.

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## MAKING CHANGES?

If you're planning to change your menu, remodel, add a buffet or start catering, contact our plan review staff at [food@tpchd.org](mailto:food@tpchd.org) or (253) 798-4711.



## WHEN DO I NEED TO CLOSE MY ESTABLISHMENT?

Close your food establishment when it has one or more of these health hazards:

- Lack of refrigeration.
- Lack of hot water.
- Sewage or septic failure.
- Loss of power.
- Brown water or contaminated water advisory.
- Repeated red (high risk) violations during inspections.

Let us know ASAP by calling (253) 798-6460. Learn more at [tpchd.org/food](http://tpchd.org/food).

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### Challenges you may face:

- You may need larger waste water and fresh water tanks for food prep and multiuse utensil washing.
- Most menus involve advanced preparation, such as produce rinsing, meat prep and cooling.

### Mobile units must continue to meet these requirements:

- Contain all equipment on mobile unit. No detached tables, BBQs or other equipment allowed.
- Electric equipment. Ice is not allowed as the only cold holding method.
- Equipment must remain running during transport.
- No cooling of foods on mobile unit. If any items on your menu need advanced prep with cooling, you must keep using your commissary.
- Enough refrigeration for your menu. At least two separate units installed on board. A prep top cooler is often one of the required units.
- On-board restrooms are not allowed. Your mobile unit must be within 200 feet of a restroom, for easy access.

If you have questions about how the new requirements apply to your mobile food truck business, contact us at [food@tpchd.org](mailto:food@tpchd.org) or call (253) 798-4711.

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(253) 798-4709

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