

Food Bites

Winter 2022-23



Save money with our Self-Inspection Program!

Take our in-person Certified Food Protection Manager (CFPM) course and learn about our Self-Inspection Program (SIP)!

The course includes food sanitation, the state food code and how to conduct self-inspections. Complete the course and pass the test to earn a 5-year:

- CFPM Certificate from National Registry of Food Safety Professionals.
- Washington State Food Worker Card.

Most establishments need a CFPM beginning March 1, 2023. You may not need a CFPM if your establishment is lower risk.

Learn more about the CFPM requirement in our frequently asked questions.

Lower your annual permit fee by 25% with self-inspection.

- You must meet the following SIP requirements for 1 year:
- Person in Charge performing the self-inspection must be a CFPM with the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department.
- CFPM must complete and send self-inspections to us once a month. We provide blank inspection forms.
- During a routine Health Department inspection, your facility can't have more than 34 red or 26 blue item violation points. If you do, you need to pay the remainder of the annual permit fee.

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Job Openings

Do you have a science background and an interest in food safety? Enjoy talking to different people? Like work that varies day to day?

Join our team!

We're looking for food safety inspectors who:

- Inspect restaurants to make sure food is prepared safely.
- Educate food operators and workers on regulations.

You'll get great pay and benefits.

We're hiring multiple times this year.

Keep an eye out for Environmental Health Specialist positions for our Food & Community Safety Program!

See [job openings](#).

Upcoming 2023 classes

- March 22
- May 10
- July 26
- Sept. 20
- Nov. 8

Learn more about our CFPM course and how to register.

Questions? Contact us at food@tpchd.org or (253) 649-1417.

Most Common Critical Food Safety Violations of 2022

Critical violations—like not washing your hands or touching ready-to-eat foods with your bare hands—are improper practices or procedures that are more likely to cause foodborne illness or injury.

Top 7 critical food safety violations in Pierce County for 2022

Rank	Violation	Times cited
1	<u>Adequate handwashing facilities (#6)</u> <i>Hand sinks must have:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hot and cold running water.• Soap and paper towels.• No obstructions.	616
2	<u>Proper cold holding temperatures (#21)</u> <i>You must cold hold Time/Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) foods at 41°F or colder.</i>	560
3	<u>No room temperature storage (#19)</u> <i>You must keep TCS foods at:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 135°F or hotter. OR• 41°F or colder.	330
4	<u>Proper cooling procedures (#16)</u> <i>You must cool TCS foods at a depth of 2" or less, uncovered, and in a walk-in refrigerator until 41°F or colder.</i>	290
5	<u>Proper hot holding temperatures (#17)</u> <i>You must hot hold TCS foods at 135°F or hotter.</i>	253
6	<u>Raw meats stored below and away from ready-to-eat foods (#14)</u> <i>You must store raw meats separate by species below and away from ready-to-eat foods.</i>	207
7	<u>Hands washed as required (#4)</u> <i>You must wash hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds often and after contamination.</i>	140

Not having adequate handwashing sinks and proper cold holding procedures are the 2 most common violations for 2 years in a row.

Prevent violations and serve safe food with active managerial control!

Managers or Person in Charge (PIC) make sure food is prepared safely. They:

- Create procedures.
- Train employees.
- Check to keep food safe.

Starting Mar. 1, 2023, most food establishments need access to a Certified Food Protection Manager (CFPM). The CFPM makes sure each PIC is trained and able to control food safety in the food establishment.

Learn more about the [CFPM requirements](#).

Don't let bacteria grow in the fridge!

Proper Cold Holding Temperatures (violation #21) was one of the most cited violations in 2022. This means we found Time/Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) foods above 41°F.

Cold holding temperatures are important.

TCS foods stored in the temperature danger zone (42–134°F) can grow harmful pathogens that cause foodborne illness. Keep TCS foods at 41°F or colder to limit bacterial growth and make foods safer.

Tips for keeping TCS foods cold:

Check temperature of food often. Use a digital thermometer with a thin tip. Do not use the temperature gauge on the refrigerators.

Keep a [temperature log](#) to check if foods are still safe to eat.

Do not overstock prep cooler inserts or refrigerators. Keep lids on prep cooler inserts and ensure proper airflow in refrigeration units.

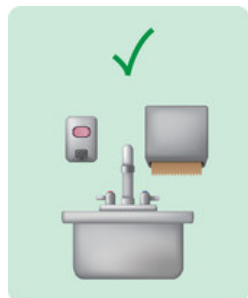
Hold refrigerators at 36–38°F if you open them often.

Do not use broken refrigerators. Repair broken refrigerators right away. Make sure refrigerators hold at 41°F or below before stocking with food.

Take immediate corrective actions if refrigerated foods rise above 41°F. Identify the source of the problem!

Not all foods need temperature control.

See [examples of TCS foods](#) that need to be held at 41°F or below.



Where can I wash my hands?

A frequently used, but often neglected part of kitchens: the handwash sink. Sometimes broken, sometimes missing soap and often lacking paper towels. Who put this trash can in front of the sink? Did no one see the “Do not block” sign?

The first question a food worker should ask when entering a kitchen is always: Where can I wash my hands?



Use the designated handwashing sink that has hand soap, paper towels, and hot and cold water. Handwashing sinks must have water that reaches 100°F within 30 seconds. Any obstacles blocking the sink limit its accessibility, which limits handwashing. Washing hands is one of the most important aspects of food safety.

Imagine this scenario.

The kitchen is incredibly busy, and orders keep coming. A food worker places raw chicken, using gloved hands, on the grill. The next order to prepare includes only cooked foods. It's time to wash hands. Oh no! There is no soap at the hand sink by the grill. The orders keep flying in. It feels like there's no time to leave the cookline to find hand soap. What does the employee do in this situation?

The safest course of action is to find the nearest adequate handwashing station to wash their hands, then stock the hand soap at the previous handwashing station. Unfortunately, the food worker is not set up for success. They will most likely run their hands under the water, dry their hands and proceed to make the next order—potentially spreading harmful diseases.

Keep your handwashing stations stocked with soap, paper towels, hot and cold water. Do not block your hand sinks and keep food safe!



Vomit and Diarrhea Clean-up Plan

Washington Food Code now requires you to have a Vomit and Diarrhea Clean-up Plan. This plan helps protect food establishments and workers from the spread of illness during a vomit and diarrhea incident.

Clean-up plan

Send any sick food workers home immediately. Food workers may not return to work until their symptoms have resolved for at least 24 hours.

Crowd control

1. Move unaffected customers and employees away from the area.
2. Give customers in the splash zone supplies to clean themselves first to avoid spreading to other areas.
 - Give them a trash bag for soiled items they need to take home to wash.
 - If customers use the bathroom to clean up, immediately disinfect it after. Thoroughly disinfect the sink, toilet area and handles. Take out the trash and disinfect the trash can.
3. Block off the affected area.



Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

4. Secure all items of clothing and hair before cleaning up. Put up hair, roll up pants cuffs or long sleeves, remove name badges on lanyards and jewelry, etc.
5. Wear PPE like disposable gloves, goggles, face mask, shoe covers, hair nets, and a disposable apron.

Splash zone clean-up

6. Soak up vomit or diarrhea with absorbent material (like cat litter, baking soda or dry oatmeal) and scoop into a garbage bag.
7. Throw away any food and disposable items in the area. Remove all washable items like dishware, condiment bottles or salt and pepper shakers to the dishwashing area to clean and disinfect. Use a bus tub or bag to prevent the spread of contamination.
8. Use soapy water to clean all surfaces within 8 feet of the area.
9. Disinfect with an approved disinfectant.
10. Clean and sanitize surfaces and utensils within 25 feet.

Finishing up

11. Throw away or sanitize anything used to clean. Discard sanitizer.
12. Take trash to the dumpster immediately.
13. Disinfect the trash can, mop, mop bucket, bus tub and any other equipment used for clean-up.
14. Block off areas that you can't thoroughly clean right away like carpet or upholstery. Steam clean.
15. Thoroughly wash your hands, arms and any other body part that might have been contaminated during the cleaning process.
16. If you or your clothing gets contaminated during the cleaning process, you must change your soiled clothing and shower/wash all contaminated areas before you resume work.

Continued on next page.

Clean-up toolkit

Every food establishment needs a clean-up toolkit. You may create your own vomit and diarrhea clean-up toolkit from items found at a local store or purchase a pre-made kit online.

Toolkits must have:

- Disposable masks.
- Disposable gloves.
- Disposable aprons.
- *Substitute: Wear a large trash bag.*
- Goggles or face shields.
- *Substitute: Use safety glasses used commonly for yard work.*
- Absorbent material like cat litter, oatmeal, baking soda, etc.
- Disposable scoops.
- *Substitute: Cut up an empty milk jug, vinegar bottle or bleach bottle.*
- Garbage bags.
- Paper towels.
- Disposable mop head.
- Mop bucket.
- Caution tape or signs.
- *Substitute: Any color poly rope with signs.*
- Disposable waterproof shoe covers.
- *Substitute: Plastic bags tied or taped around the ankle, add a thick rubber band around each toe to give traction.*
- Disinfectant.

More resources

- Learn more about the plan in the Food Worker Manual.
- Download a Clean-up Plan template.
- Coming soon: Step-by-step clean-up instructions and signs!

Remember to keep your vomit and diarrhea clean-up plan onsite for review!

Questions about how to build your clean-up kit or about your plan?

Contact us at food@tpchd.org or (253) 649-1417.

2023 Fee Service Updates

Tacoma-Pierce County Board of Health adopted the proposed [2023 Fee Schedule](#) on Nov. 16, 2022. New rates began Jan. 1, 2023.

Changes to fees

Most food establishments will see an 8% increase for 2023 fees. However, annual permit fees will decrease for low risk food establishments and mobile units.

Fees cover services and improvements

We are *fee for service*. Fees help us pay:

- Cost of goods and services like inspections and education.
- Building rent.
- Health insurance.
- Cost of living allowance and salary increases.

We continue to improve our services to you while keeping costs as low as possible.

Some improvements include:

- Online permit applications, plan reviews, and status updates.
- Faster responses to permit applications, plan reviews, inspections, and complaints.
- More paperless processes.
- Scanning paper files into our database to cut the cost of file management.
- New easier-to-use website.

Questions?

Contact us at food@tpchd.org or (253) 649-1417.

FOOD & COMMUNITY SAFETY PROGRAM

Contact info

General Info.....	(253) 649-1417
.....	food@tpchd.org
Plan Review.....	(253) 649-1706
Temporary Events.....	(253) 649-1416
Report a Foodborne Illness or Food Safety Concern.....	(253) 649-1417
Food Worker Card.....	foodworkercard.wa.gov