

# **FOOD OPERATORS' FOOD FACILITY INFORMATION PACKET**

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY**

**2025**



## **OUR COMMITMENT TO SERVICE EXCELLENCE**

Food safety in Los Angeles County is a partnership between the LA County Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Division (EH), and the food industry. Together, we strive to ensure that the community is provided with safe food. EH is committed to improving our quality of service and our relationship with food facility operators. To build and strengthen this partnership, it is important that food facility operators understand what they can expect from us, as well as understand their rights and responsibilities.

### **What Food Facility Operators Should Expect from Environmental Health:**

- Considerate, respectful, and professional service during health inspections, hearings, or investigations.
- A clear explanation of health and safety requirements, and alternatives and possible solutions to solve any problems or concerns.
- A response to your question or request within three business days.
- Fair and careful consideration of any concerns or issues that may come up.
- A clear explanation of EH decisions during a health inspection, hearing, or investigation.
- An open dialogue if EH decisions are questioned.
- Clear guidance on how you can elevate your concerns to the next level of authority, if needed.

### **Food Facility Operators Have the Right to:**

- Request additional information or clarification regarding decisions made by one of the Environmental Health Specialists (health inspectors).
- Elevate concerns to the next level of authority if you disagree with a decision, without fear of retaliation.
- Refuse a health inspector's entry if he or she does not provide a Los Angeles County-issued identification card.

### **Food Facility Operators Have a Responsibility to:**

- Ensure compliance with food, health, and safety laws.
- Display the same level of professionalism expected from EH health inspectors.
- Understand that the outcome of any inquiry or investigation regarding the food facility is based on food safety and sanitation requirements.

For any questions or additional information, please contact the **Quality Assurance Program** at (626) 430-5300.



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**NOTE:** Each of these documents can be found on our website at  
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/>

# Warning: Health Inspector Imposters

May 2025

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health is warning food facility owners and operators against scam artists who pose as health inspectors and target restaurants, unlawfully taking money by manipulating food facility owners. To protect yourself and your business, please note the following.

Our Environmental Health Specialists (also known as Health Inspectors), pride themselves on considerate, respectful, and professional service in the field.



## An Environmental Health Specialists Should Always:

- Introduce him or herself to the food facility owner, operator, or manager.
- Present a Los Angeles County-issued photo identification card.
- Provide a Los Angeles County-issued business card upon request.
- Direct the food facility owner, operator, or manager to pay any fees to the local Environmental Health (EH) District Office, EH Headquarters, or the Los Angeles County Treasurer Tax Collector (for health permits).

## An Environmental Health Specialists Should Not:

- Call to schedule appointments for routine inspections — routine inspections are always unannounced.
- Accept any payment for services during an inspection.
- Charge money or fees for *A, B, C Letter Grades*, signs, or equipment.
- Sell or endorse products.
- Ask owners to call phone numbers and enter numeric codes or tell the owner to give out a code when called to schedule an inspection.

## What Should I do if I Receive a Visit or a Call from Someone Claiming to be a Health Inspector?

- If the individual claiming to be a health inspector is unable to provide a valid, LA County-issued photo ID, and/or an LA County-issued business card, contact your local EH District Office to confirm that he or she is a current Environmental Health employee. If the EH District Office is unable to confirm the health inspector's identity, contact your local law enforcement agency.
- If the person requests you pay them directly for a service, contact your local EH District Office and your local law enforcement agency.
- Do not give the person money, pay any "fees," or permit the individual to "inspect" the food facility.
- Do not provide any personal, financial, or security information.
- If possible, get the person's name and contact information.

**The impersonation of a public officer is a criminal offense.** Any person who is found impersonating a health inspector or other government employee may be found guilty of a misdemeanor. [Penal Code, Section 538(d)].

To report fraudulent activity or request more information, contact the Department of Public Health, **Environmental Health Call Center at (888) 700-9995**.

# California Food Handler Card

May 2025

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



Starting January 1, 2012, food facility employees became required to obtain a California Food Handler Card (SB 602 and SB 603). Each state has different food safety training courses. Food service workers employed in California will need to obtain a state or county-specific Food Handler Card.

## Who is Required to Have a California Food Handler (CFH) Card?

All food employees who prepare, store, or serve food. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Servers
- Chefs, head chefs, cooks, and head cooks
- Bartenders
- Hosts and hostesses who handle food

Bussers and General Managers or other supervisors may also need to have a CFH Card. Managers who already have a Food Protection Manager Certification do not need to obtain a separate CFH card.

## How do You get a CFH Card?

You will need to take a basic food safety training course and pass an exam with a score of 70 percent or higher. Training courses are available through any American National Standards Institute (**ANSI**) accredited training provider. A list of accredited food handler programs can be found by visiting the ANSI website at: [www.ansi.org](http://www.ansi.org).

## Who is Exempt from the CFH Card Law?

- Certified Farmers' Markets
- Commissaries
- Convenience Stores
- Grocery Stores
- Licensed Health Care Facilities
- Mobile Support Units
- Public and Private School Cafeterias
- Restricted Food Service Facilities
- Retail Stores where most sales are from a pharmacy
- Temporary Food Facilities
- Cottage Food Operators

## Where are CFH Cards Accepted?

CFH Cards are accepted everywhere in California except Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego Counties; these counties have their own CFH Card Programs.

## Who Pays for the Food Handler Training?

The law requires employers to reimburse an employee's time and expenses for taking the training and exam. The CFH Card is the property of the employee who can use it for another employer as long as the card has not expired.

## How Long is the Card Valid?

CFH Cards are valid for three (3) years from the date of issuance. Employers **must** keep a copy of each employee's card on file.

For a complete list of exemptions or for further information on the California Food Handler Card, please visit: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/business/certified-food-handler-manager.htm>, or contact your local Environmental Health District Office.

To locate your local Environmental Health District Office, please visit:

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/EH/about/district-offices.htm>

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### Environmental Health Division

5050 Commerce Drive, Baldwin Park, CA 91706

[www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh](http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh)

[05/2025]

# Proper Hand Washing

May 2025

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



The lack of proper hand washing by food handlers has the potential to contaminate food and cause food-related illnesses. Pathogenic (disease causing) bacteria on hands may be transferred to foods if proper hand washing practices are not followed.

## Basic Hand Washing Requirements

A food facility employee is required to wash their hands:

- Immediately before engaging in food preparation, as well as handling clean equipment and utensils.
- Before initially putting on nonlatex gloves to begin food preparation.
- Before dispensing or serving food or handling clean utensils.
- After any activity that may contaminate hands, such as:
  - Visiting the toilet
  - Eating
  - Smoking
  - Sneezing, coughing, or using a tissue
  - Handling raw animal products
  - After handling soiled equipment and utensils
  - After touching face, eyes, nose, or hair
  - Emptying the trash
  - Other janitorial tasks



## Single Use Nonlatex Gloves

Employees are required to wear single use nonlatex gloves to cover:

- An impermeable cover (bandage) on a cut, burn, or rash.
- False fingernails or un-cleanable fingernails.
- Rings other than a plain ring or wedding band.
- An orthopedic support device, such as a cast, brace, or ace bandage.



A food facility employee is required to change gloves if it is worn out and whenever hand washing is required. Do not wash single use nonlatex gloves. Use single use nonlatex gloves for only one task, and no other purpose. Throw away gloves when damaged, soiled, or when interruptions in the food handling occur.

## Ready-to-Eat Foods

Generally, avoid bare hand contact with ready-to-eat food. All food facility employees who work with ready-to-eat food should minimize bare hand contact by using suitable utensils such as tongs, single-use nonlatex gloves, spatulas or dispensing equipment.

For any questions or additional information, you may visit [www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh), contact your local Environmental Health District Office, or call **(888) 700-9995**.

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[05/2025]

# CONSUMER ADVISORY REQUIREMENTS

The purpose of a consumer advisory is to inform consumers, especially those of **highly susceptible populations (elderly, children, pregnant women, and immunocompromised individuals)**, about the increased risk of foodborne illness from eating raw or uncooked animal foods. Consumer advisories must consist of two (2) parts: a **disclosure** and a **reminder**.

The statement shall be displayed on brochures, deli cases, electronic display menus, online menus, stickers, table tents, placards, or other written means.

However, the following foods may not be served or offered for sale in a food establishment that only serves a highly susceptible population:

1. Raw animal food, such as raw fish, raw-marinated fish, raw molluscan shellfish, and steak tartare.
2. Partially cooked animal food, such as lightly cooked fish, rare meat, soft-cooked eggs that are made from raw shell eggs, and meringue.
3. Raw seed sprouts.



# REQUIREMENTS

## **Disclosure shall include either:**

- a. The food item description must state that it is raw or undercooked (e.g., raw oysters or medium-rare hamburger).  
---OR---
- b. Add an asterisk (\*) next to the food item with the footnote at the bottom of the menu stating that it is served raw or undercooked or contains/may contain raw or undercooked ingredients.

## **Reminder shall include either:**

a. Add an asterisk (\*) to the food item with a footnote in the menu or other listings to include written information regarding the safety of these foods are available upon request.

---OR---

b. Add an asterisk (\*) to the food item with a footnote in the menu or other listings to include a statement that indicates:  
**“Consuming raw or undercooked meats, poultry, seafood, shellfish, or eggs may increase your risk for food-borne illness, especially if you have a medical condition.”**

### **Example A Disclosure (a) and Reminder (a)**

The food items below are raw or undercooked, and the asterisk (\*) denotes a footnote that written food safety information is available upon request:

Caesar Salad  
(house dressing  
contains **raw**  
eggs)\*



**Raw** Fish Poke  
Salaq\*  
Huevos  
Rancheros (eggs  
cooked **sunny-**  
**side up**)\*

\*Written information regarding  
the safety of these foods is  
available upon request.

### **Example B Disclosure (a) and Reminder (b)**

The food items below are marked raw or undercooked, and the asterisk (\*) denotes a footnote that consuming them increases risk of foodborne illness.

Carpaccio  
(**raw** beef)\*  
New York  
Steak (**cooked**  
**to order**)\*  
**Rare** Steak  
Phở\*



**\*Consuming raw or  
undercooked meats, poultry,  
seafood, shellfish, or eggs may  
increase your risk for  
foodborne illness, especially if  
you have a medical condition.**

### **Example C Disclosure (b) and Reminder (a)**

An asterisk (\*) is used both to indicate the menu item contains raw/undercooked items and denote a footnote that written food safety information is available upon request:

Hamburger\*  
Veggie Burger  
Poached  
Salmon\*



**\*These are cooked to order  
(e.g., rare, medium, well done.  
Upon request, we will cook to  
your specifications.)**

**Written information regarding  
the safety of these foods are  
available upon request.**

### **Example D Disclosure (b) and Reminder (b)**

An asterisk (\*) is used both to indicate the menu item contains raw/undercooked ingredients and denote a footnote that the risk of foodborne illness is increased.

Tuna Nigiri \*  
Lion King Roll\*  
Eggs  
Benedict\*



**\*This food item may contain  
undercooked/raw ingredients  
or may be served  
undercooked/raw.**

**Consuming raw or undercooked  
meats, poultry, seafood,  
shellfish, or eggs may increase  
your risk for foodborne illness,  
especially if you have a medical  
condition.**

# Cooking Temperatures and Required Disclosures

March 2025

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



**Background:** According to the Centers for Disease Control (**CDC**), cooking food to the correct temperatures is a critical step in preventing foodborne illness.<sup>1</sup>

**Required Cooking Temperatures:** The tables below provide a summary of foods and the required internal food cooking temperatures that should be achieved before serving. A calibrated food thermometer is to be used to ensure the food has reached a safe minimum internal temperature to kill harmful microorganisms that may cause foodborne illness.

Internal Food Temperature & Time	Potentially Hazardous Food (PHF)
135°F	Vegetables and Fruits when cooked and held hot before serving
145°F for 15 seconds	Raw Shell Eggs that are broken and prepared in response to a consumer's order; Pork, Fish and Meat including commercially raised Game Animals
155°F for 15 seconds	Comminuted Fish and Meat including commercially raised Game Animals; Injected Meats; and Ratites (Ostrich, Emu, and Rhea)
165°F for 15 seconds	Poultry; Stuffed Fish, Meat, Poultry and Ratites; Stuffing containing fish, meat, poultry, or ratites; Pasta stuffed with fish, meat, poultry; Game Animals not commercially raised for food; Balut.
<b>Raw eggs not prepared in response to a consumer order for immediate service (e.g., scrambled eggs)</b>	
Minimum Cooking Temperature	Minimum Cooking Time
145°F	3 minutes
150°F	1 minute
158°F	<1 second

**Disclosures and Reminders:** Although it is important to cook food to the required temperature to prevent foodborne illness, there are foods that may be served raw or undercooked. The California Retail Food Code requires both a "disclosure" and "reminder" be provided to consumers for raw or undercooked food.

- A "disclosure" is a written statement that clearly includes a description of the food item or identification of food items by an asterisk and a footnote stating items or ingredients are served raw or undercooked or may contain ingredients that are raw or undercooked.
- A "reminder" is a written statement that displays an asterisk in the footnote stating either written information regarding the safety of these food items is available upon request, or consuming raw or undercooked meats, poultry, seafood, shellfish, and eggs may increase your risk of foodborne illness, especially with certain medical conditions.

Disclosures and reminder statements can be provided on brochures, deli case postings, menu advisories, label statements, table tents, and placards.

For any questions, concerns, or to file a complaint, call **(888) 700-9995**.

To file a complaint online visit, <https://ehservices.publichealth.lacounty.gov/servlet/guest?service=0&formId=4>.

<sup>1</sup> CDC: [About Four Steps to Food Safety | Food Safety | CDC](#) April 29, 2024.

# Temperature Control

May 2025

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



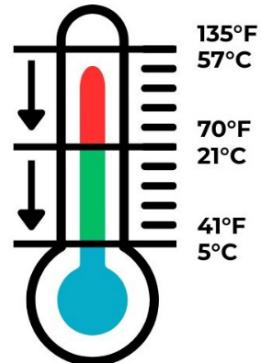
## Keep Foods Away from the Danger Zone

After cooking or heating perishable food that is not for immediate consumption must be cooled quickly. **Rapid cooling** will prevent microbial growth by limiting the time food is in the temperature danger zone.

**Rapid cooling** is achieved by bringing the temperature of the cooked food from **135°F to 70°F within two (2) hours**, and from **70°F to 41°F within four (4) hours**.

### Cooling Hot Food Methods

- Place hot food in shallow containers and in an ice bath, stirring constantly.
- Use rapid cooling equipment.
- Use containers that facilitate heat transfer.
- Add ice as an ingredient to hot foods.
- Cut hot foods into smaller portions.



### Defrost Frozen Food Methods

- In refrigeration that maintains the temperature of the food at 41°F or below.
- For two (2) hours or less, completely submerge frozen foods under potable, cold, running water (temperature 70°F or below).
- In a microwave oven.
- As part of a cooking process.

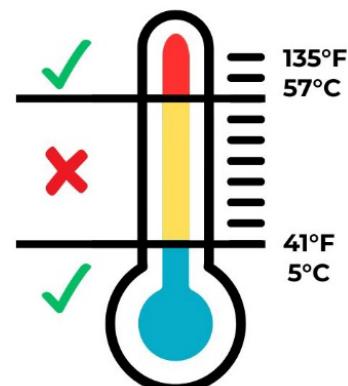
## Storing Foods at the Correct Temperature

- Keep hot foods hot at **135°F or above 135°F**.
- Keep *cold* foods *cold* at **41°F or below 41°F**.



**Danger Zone:** Bacteria can grow in the danger zone. Keep potentially hazardous foods out of the danger zone.

- **Danger Zone is between 42°F and 134°F.**



### Temperature Requirements for Storing Common Foods

PRODUCT	STORAGE TEMPERATURE
Pasteurized Milk and Pasteurized Milk Products	45°F or below
Shell Eggs	45°F or below
Molluscan Shellfish	45°F or below
Fresh Fish	41°F or below
Fresh Meat	41°F or below
Fresh Poultry	41°F or below

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#### Environmental Health Division

5050 Commerce Drive, Baldwin Park, CA 91706  
[www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh)

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## Cooking and Reheating Requirements

To ensure that your foods are cooked safely, always use a food thermometer to measure internal temperatures. Check the temperature in several places to ensure that the food is cooked all the way through. Cook food items to the recommended minimum internal temperature shown below.



### Ground, Chopped, and Flaked Meats (Beef, Veal, Lamb, and Pork):

All raw ground, chopped, flaked, and formed meats must be heated to a *minimum internal temperature of at least 158°F, or held at 155°F for 15 seconds*. For safety, most ground meat products should be cooked until it is brown in the middle; temperatures should be taken in the thickest part of the food. If cooking appears uneven, the temperature of any uncooked area should also be taken.



### Eggs and Foods Containing Raw Eggs:

All foods made with raw eggs must be heated to a *minimum internal temperature of at least 145°F*. Temperatures should be taken at the center of the egg-containing food. Cooked egg whites and yolks should be firm after cooking, not “runny.” After cooking, eggs must be held at or **above 135°F**. Pooled raw shell eggs must be kept refrigerated at **41°F or below until cooked** to prevent the growth of bacteria.



### Pork and Pork Products:

All pork or foods made with pork must be heated (cooked) to a *minimum internal temperature of at least 145°F for 15 seconds*. Some pork may contain parasitic worms and harmful bacteria. Thorough cooking is an effective way to make pork and pork products safe for consumption.



### Poultry, Chopped or Ground Poultry, and Foods Stuffed with Meat or Poultry:

All poultry (chicken, turkey, duck, goose, etc.) and foods stuffed with meat or poultry must be heated to *minimum internal temperature of at least 165°F*. Whole turkey breast should have a temperature of **at least 165°F**.



### Microwave Raw Meats, Eggs, and Poultry:

When foods containing raw ground meat, eggs, pork, or poultry are cooked in a microwave oven, they must be heated to a *minimum internal temperature of at least 165°F*. These foods must be heated in a covered microwaveable container and stirred or rotated frequently to ensure even heating. After microwaving, let the food stand in its covered container for at least two minutes prior to serving.



### Reheating Certain Foods:

When cooked foods are being reheated, a *minimum internal temperature of at least 165°F for 15 seconds* is necessary to kill bacteria that can grow as the food cools.

## Time as a Public Health Control

Time is usually used in combination with temperature to control the growth of bacteria and ensure that food is safe to consume. However, under specific conditions, food may be removed from temperature controls for a short period of time, less than four (4) hours, and rely only on *Time as a Public Health Control (TPHC)*. Used correctly, time can be an effective control; on the other hand, if time is not closely monitored, food-related illnesses may result.

### Which Foods May be Used with Time as a Public Health Control?

- Potentially hazardous foods (PHF) held before cooking.
- Ready-to-eat (RTE) foods that are displayed or held for service for immediate consumption.

### What Conditions Must be met When Using TPHC?

- Inform your local Environmental Health District Office (enforcement agency) of the intention to use TPHC.
- Label food containers to indicate four hours past the time food was removed from temperature control— e.g. if food was removed from temperature control at 12:00 p.m., mark 4:00 p.m. on the food container to indicate when the food must be discarded.
- Cook and serve potentially hazardous foods within the four-hour timeframe or throw the food away if it is past four hours.
- Serve ready-to-eat foods within the four-hour time frame or throw the food away if it is past four hours.
- Throw away any food that has exceeded the four-hour time frame or food that is in unmarked food containers.
- For compliance keep written procedures for TPHC and rapid cooling method for food that is prepared, cooked, and refrigerated **before** time is used as a public health control; these procedures must be available for review upon request.

#### Note:

Once time has been used as a Public Health Control, food **cannot** be placed back under temperature control to be used at a later time. **Foods that have exceeded the four (4) hour time frame must be thrown away.**

Please contact your local Environmental Health District Office if you have any questions.

Visit <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/EH/about/district-offices.htm> to locate on office near you.

# MAJOR FOOD ALLERGENS

Food allergies occur when the immune system reacts to certain foods. Someone with food allergies may experience **adverse (mild, severe, or life threatening) reactions** to food or products that have food allergens. While many foods can cause allergic reactions, there are **nine foods** that are considered **major allergens**.

With proper labeling, individuals with food allergies can identify the foods and ingredients they should not eat.



## SYMPTOMS OF FOOD ALLERGIES

While most symptoms from food allergies are mild and limited to skin or digestive discomfort, some may progress to a severe, **life-threatening** allergic reaction called **anaphylaxis**. Symptoms of an allergic reaction can occur within minutes to a few hours after a person has ingested a food item.

**Symptoms of food allergies (allergic reactions), can include:**

- Hives
- Abdominal cramps
- Difficulty breathing
- Flushed skin or rash
- Coughing or wheezing
- Tingling or itchy sensation in the mouth
- Face, tongue, or lip swelling
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Dizziness and/or lightheadedness
- Swelling of the throat and vocal cords
- Loss of consciousness
- Constricted airways in the lungs
- Suffocation by swelling of the throat and larynx
- “**Anaphylactic shock**” (severe lowering of blood pressure and shock)

MILK



EGGS



PEANUTS



FISH

Such as bass, flounder, cod



SESAME



SOYBEANS



WHEAT



TREE NUTS

Such as almonds, walnuts, pecans



CRUSTACEAN SHELLFISH  
Such as crab, lobster, shrimp



# ILLNESS REPORTING

**Reportable illnesses** must be reported to the Department of Public Health. They include:

- *Salmonella typhi*
- *Salmonella spp*
- *Shigella spp*
- *Norovirus*
- *Entamoeba histolytica*
- *Hepatitis A virus*
- Enterohemorrhagic or shiga toxin producing *Escherichia coli*
- Other communicable diseases that are transmissible through food

For a full list of illnesses, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/ReportableDiseaseList> or scan the QR code →



## FOR PERSON-IN-CHARGE OF A FOOD FACILITY

**Ask these two questions to decide if an employee's duties should be modified due to illness.**

1

Does the employee have vomiting, diarrhea, or other stomach illness symptoms?

YES

NO



2

Does the employee have a cough, sore throat, fever, or runny nose?

YES

NO

### PERSON-IN-CHARGE (PIC) SHOULD RESTRICT ACTIVITIES:

- Restrict the employee from working with exposed food, clean equipment, utensils, linens, unwrapped single service or use articles if they have diarrhea and/or vomiting.
- Reinforce proper handwashing.
- Restrict the employee from bare-hand contact with ready-to-eat foods or clean dishes.
- Discuss with employee about illness reporting requirements, ways that food employees can spread illness through food, and prevention strategies.

### EXCLUDE FROM WORK

- If the employee has a doctor **diagnosed** illness listed above, report to the **Outbreak Investigation & Evaluation Unit**.

If **2 or more employees** are experiencing diarrhea and/or vomiting, the PIC is required to report illnesses to the **Outbreak Investigation & Evaluation Unit**.

Employees that have flu-like symptoms such as cough, fever, sore throat, runny nose, or has been **diagnosed** with any type of flu and the symptoms cannot be controlled by medication should not work with exposed food, clean equipment, linens, or utensils. **CHSC Section 113974**

### EMPLOYEE DOES NOT NEED TO BE EXCLUDED OR RESTRICTED FROM REGULAR WORK DUTIES

- If there are concerns about contagious illnesses, restrictions may be needed, contact the Outbreak Investigation & Evaluation Unit for specific concerns.

For more information, visit [www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh) or contact the **Outbreak Investigation & Evaluation Unit** at (626) 430-5400 or [DPH-EHOutbreak@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:DPH-EHOutbreak@ph.lacounty.gov).



# Foodborne Illness Investigations

## How to Submit a Foodborne Illness Report

March 2025

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



**Background:** There are more than 1,300 documented deaths a year in the United States directly attributed to the consumption of food and drink. Additionally, there are 56,000 hospitalizations and over nine million illnesses due to foodborne illnesses.<sup>1</sup> The food industry and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health share the crucial responsibility of ensuring that food and beverages provided to consumers is safe and free from contaminants to reduce foodborne illness outbreaks or the transmission of communicable diseases. The Environmental Health Division works in collaboration with Acute Communicable Disease Control (ACDC) and the Public Health Laboratory to screen complaints and conduct investigations of reported foodborne illnesses.

**Definition of an Outbreak:** According to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), the definition of a foodborne outbreak is when two or more people get sick from eating the same contaminated food.

**Preventing Outbreaks:** According to the California Retail Food Code (CRFC), a food facility is required to notify the local health department when an employee is diagnosed with any of the seven communicable foodborne diseases<sup>2</sup>. If a food facility is aware of a food employee who has acute gastrointestinal illness, CRFC section 113949.1 states that the person in charge shall restrict the employee from working with open food or exclude the employee from working if diagnosed by a doctor.

**Reporting a Foodborne Illness:** If you or a member of your family believe that you were sickened by eating or drinking something from a permitted food facility within Los Angeles County, you can report a foodborne illness with the Acute Communicable Disease Control Morbidity Unit by calling (213) 240-7821 or reporting it online at <https://iris.ph.lacounty.gov/WorldCarePublicPortal/pages/foodborneillness/reportincident.aspx>. When reporting a foodborne illness, be prepared to describe the food you consumed in the last 72 hours, illness symptoms/time started, and the permitted food facilities' name, address, date, and time of meals.

You will be contacted by phone for clarification and information about additional meals you consumed. Documenting the food and drink purchased or made at home seven days before your illness will be useful. Be prepared to share the phone numbers of those who ate with you and did or did not get sick. Providing as much information as possible will greatly increase the chances of finding the cause of the foodborne illness. At any time or if symptoms warrant, visit your physician, who may request laboratory analysis of a stool or blood sample to confirm a specific pathogen.

**Contact Us:** For additional questions or information, please contact Los Angeles County Environmental Health Outbreak Investigation and Evaluation Unit at **(626) 430-5400**.

<sup>1</sup>CDC: [Foodborne Illness Source Attribution Estimates – United States, 2022 | Interagency Food Safety Analytics Collaboration | CDC](#)

<sup>2</sup> California Retail Food Code, section 113949.2 - The seven communicable disease agents are *Salmonella typhi*, *Salmonella* spp., *Shigella* spp., *Entamoeba histolytica*, *Enterohemorrhagic toxin-Escherichia coli*, Hepatitis A virus, and Norovirus.

# Guidelines for Safe Food Donation

May 2025

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



Donating surplus food from hotels, restaurants, other food facilities, and catered events can be a great way to help local missions and other charitable organizations that serve those in need. A public health permit is not required for donating or receiving surplus foods, but it must be done in a way that minimizes food safety risks. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Division has prepared the following food safety guidelines to help facilitate safe food donations.

## Approved Source of Donated Foods:

An approved source of food comes from a producer, manufacturer, distributor, transporter, or food facility that is permitted by a local or state agency.

- Approved Sources include prepared foods and meals donated **only** by permitted restaurants, hotels, food processing facilities, food distributors, or catered events.
  - Donated foods are limited to foods or portions which have not been previously served to a consumer.
  - Individuals who wish to donate food should only provide uncooked, pre-packaged food that can be prepared on site by approved food handlers.



## Facilities Receiving Donated Food:

Most missions or charitable organizations receiving donated foods operate under a public health permit, so they are familiar with food handling requirements. If an organized event or charitable organization does not operate under a public health permit, the donated foods are to be served and eaten **immediately**.

## Temperature Control:

Before transporting, keep donated foods that require temperature control at the correct temperature:

- Cold foods at 41°F or below.
- Hot foods at 135°F or above.



When transporting donated food:

- If refrigerated transport is available, keep food at or below 41°F.
- If refrigerated transport is not available, the food should be labeled **"Process Immediately"**.
- Do not keep food out of temperature controls for **more than 2 hours**.
- Donations of whole produce, canned goods, dry foods and other similar products can be delivered anytime with no requirement for temperature controls or delivery times.

Those who donate must check the temperatures of the food when it is delivered to the receiving facility or food transporter. The person-in-charge at the receiving venue should also check the temperature of the food when they receive it and note the time that the food is received. Review the sample **Food Donation Delivery Form** on the last page

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of this document following the **State and Federal Food Donation Statutes** for an outline of helpful information that should be captured upon delivering, transporting or receiving foods.

**Protection from Contamination:**

Always protect food from potential contamination by using sanitary, food-grade containers, and ensuring that transport vehicles are clean and free of vermin.

Please contact your local Environmental Health District Office if you have any questions.

Visit <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/EH/about/district-offices.htm> to locate an office near you.

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## State and Federal Food Donation Statutes

**California Health and Safety Code, Section 114432:**

Any food facility may donate food to a food bank or to any other nonprofit charitable organization for distribution to people free of charge.

**California Health and Safety Code, Section 114433:**

Food facilities that donate food as permitted by Section 114432 will not be subject to civil or criminal liability or penalty for violation of any laws, regulations, or ordinances that regulate the labeling or packaging of the donated product or for a violation that occurs after the time of donation.

**California Civil Code, Section 1714.25(a):**

Food facilities that donate food that is fit for human consumption, to a nonprofit charitable organization or a food bank will not be liable for any damage or injury that is a result of eating the donated food unless the injuries come from negligence or a willful act in the preparation or handling of donated food. The immunity from civil liability applies regardless of compliance with any laws, regulations, or ordinances that regulate the packaging or labeling of food, and regardless of compliance with any laws, regulations, or ordinances that regulate the storage or handling of the food by the owner after the food had been donated.

**United States Code, Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act, Title 42, Chapter 13A, Section 1791:**

**(c)(1)** A person or gleaner who donates food for individuals in good faith to a nonprofit organization will not be subject to civil or criminal liability that occurs from the nature, age, packaging, or condition of apparently wholesome food or grocery products.

**(f)** This section shall not be construed to create any liability. Nothing in this section shall be construed to supersede State or local health regulations.

## Food Donation Delivery Form:

Perishable Food Item(s) (Continue Items on Back of This Page if Needed)	Ibs.	DONOR Temperature at Holding	Time Taken	RECEIVER Temperature at Receipt	Time Taken	Accepted
						YES or NO
						YES or NO
						YES or NO
						YES or NO
						YES or NO

## Donated Form:

Name of Facility or Event:	Public Health Permit #:
Address:	Phone #:
Delivered by (Print Name):	

## Transported by (If Other Than Donor or Recipient):

Name of Facility or Event:	Public Health Permit #:
Address:	Phone #:
Delivered by (Print Name):	

## Donated To:

Name of Facility or Organization:	Public Health Permit # (if applicable):
Address:	Phone #:
Received by (Print Name):	

I acknowledge that the food item(s) listed above meet the temperature holding requirements for potentially hazardous foods, as defined in Section 113871 of the California Retail Food Code.

Donor Signature:	Date:
Recipient Signature:	Date:

For any questions or additional information, please contact Environmental Health at **(888) 700-9995** during business hours, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday; or e-mail [ehmail@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:ehmail@ph.lacounty.gov).

# Vietnamese Rice Cake Senate Bill 969

May 2025

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
**Public Health**

## Vietnamese Rice Cake (Bánh Tét or Bánh Chung)

Vietnamese rice cake also known as **Banh Tet** or **Banh Chung**, is defined as a confection that contains a combination of rice, beans, and meat or fruit wrapped tightly in banana leaves for cooking. Banh Tet is a rice cake in cylindrical shape, and Banh Chung is a rice cake in a square shape. SB 969 which became effective on January 1, 2017, requires that manufacturers of Vietnamese rice cakes adhere to the following requirements:



### Cooking Method:

- Vietnamese rice cakes are prepared using a traditional Vietnamese method that includes cooking by boiling in water for at least 10 hours.
- Handle, prepare, and store under clean and sanitary conditions.
- Cool to 70°F after cooking.
- Refrigerate unwrapped banana leaves if they have been cooked.

### Labeling:

All manufacturers of Vietnamese rice cakes shall place a label designed by the Vietnamese Rice Cake Association, Inc., on the Vietnamese rice cakes that indicates the following:



- The date and time the cooking process was completed.
- A statement printed on the label that states that the “rice cake must be consumed within 24 hours of the date and time the cooking process was completed”.

### Holding:

- Store at 70°F or below, for no more than 24 hours.
- Throw away if they are stored above 70°F **or** have been stored past the 24 hours on the label.

Please contact your local Environmental Health District Office if you have any questions.

Visit <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/EH/about/district-offices.htm> to locate on office near you.

# Seafood Mislabeling

May 2025

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



## Why You Should Avoid Buying or Selling Mislabeled Seafood:

**It's illegal.** Mislabeling or substituting seafood is a violation of California Health and Safety Code, Section 114087. Environmental Health conducts special inspections to protect consumers from the sale of adulterated, misrepresented and/or mislabeled seafood.

Deliberate violations of the law will be addressed during inspections. Violations include failure to disclose accurate information about a seafood species, country of origin, weight portions, and/or size.

## Mislabeling or Substituting Seafood May Pose a Health Risk to Some Customers

Escarol, is sometimes mislabeled and sold as, “**white tuna**”. *White tuna* is not a real species.

Escarol can cause gastrointestinal illness or other health problems for some customers. It is important to sell and offer honestly presented seafood to protect customer’s health.



**Escarol**

## Tips for Buying or Selling Safe Seafood:

Compare the label on the food container or packaging with the invoice or receipt to make sure it matches what you ordered.

Remember, **white tuna does not exist**. If your invoice says **white tuna** or it is missing information such as species or country of origin, do not accept delivery. Return the product to the supplier or distributor and ask for more information or contact your Health Inspector for advice.

Seafood Offered	Actual Species or Less Expensive Substitutes
• White Tuna – <b>does not exist</b>	• Escarol
• Snapper	• Rockfish
• Red Snapper	• Tai Seabream
• Orange Roughy	• Swai
• Halibut	• Striped Bass      • Turbot      • Flounder • Fluke                • Ocean Perch      • Cod
• Wild – Caught Salmon	• Farm-Raised Salmon

## Examples of properly labelled Fish



## Questions? We're Here to Help

If you suspect seafood mislabeling or substitution, contact Environmental Health at **(888) 700-9995** during business hours, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday; or e-mail [ehmail@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:ehmail@ph.lacounty.gov).

# Pet Dogs in Outdoor Dining Areas

May 2025

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



There is an interest by some restaurant owners and members of the community to allow pet dogs in outdoor dining or patio areas, therefore, Environmental Health (EH) meticulously reviewed and assessed the risk factors involved in this practice. EH has determined that food facility owners and operators may allow pet dogs in the outdoor dining or patio area at their **discretion**. Please note that this only applies to pet dogs; other animals such as cats, birds, or reptiles are not permitted. Service animals or dogs under the control of a uniformed law enforcement officer or uniformed employees of private patrol operations are exempt from these requirements. (California Civil Service Code, Section 54.1, 54.25)

## The Following Requirements Must be Met in Order to Allow Pet Dogs in the Outdoor Dining or Patio Area of a Food Facility:

- A separate entrance is used for pets, so they do not enter through the food establishment to reach the outdoor dining or patio area.
- No food preparation shall be allowed in the outdoor dining or patio area, including mixing of drinks.
- Multi-use or reusable utensils, such as plates, silverware, glasses, and bowls, shall not be stored, displayed, or pre-set in the out-door dining area.
- Food and water served and/or provided to pet dogs shall only be in single-use, disposable containers.
- Employees shall be prohibited from having direct contact with pets while on duty.
- Pets shall not be allowed on chairs, seats, benches, and/or tables.
- The outdoor dining or patio area shall be kept clean.
- In cases where excrement or other bodily fluids (urine, saliva, vomit) are released, an employee shall immediately clean and sanitize the affected areas.
- The outdoor dining area shall not be fully enclosed – a fully enclosed dining area shall be considered as part of the interior of the facility.
- Business operators must still follow local ordinances related to sidewalk, public nuisance, and sanitation issues.



Please contact your local Environmental Health District Office if you have any questions.

Visit <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/EH/about/district-offices.htm> to locate an office near you.

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# Service Animals in Food Facilities

May 2025

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



Service animals are permitted by the California Health and Safety code to be in all areas of the food facility where the public is normally allowed to go, such as dining and sales areas, if a health or safety hazard will not result from the presence or activities of the service animal.

## Service Animal

Service animals are dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. They are working animals, not pets.



## Work or Tasks Performed by a Service Animal

The work or task a service dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability. Dogs whose only job is to provide comfort, emotional support, well-being, companionship or as a crime deterrent do not qualify as service animals under the ADA. Examples of work or task of service animals are as follows:

- Guide people who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks.
- Alert individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds.
- Provide nonviolent protection or rescue work.
- Pulling a wheelchair.
- Assist a person during a seizure.
- Alert a person to the presence of allergens.
- Retrieve items such as medicine or the telephone.
- Provide physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities.
- Calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack.
- Help a person with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors.
- Reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications.



## Other Dogs Allowed in a Food Facility

Dogs under the control of:

- Uniformed law enforcement officer.
- Uniformed employees of private patrol operators of a private patrol service who are licensed pursuant to Chapter 11.5 of Division 3 of the Business and Professional Code.
  - Employees are acting within the course and scope of their employment as private patrol persons.

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#### **Additional Information**

- Food employees shall not care for or handle patrol dogs, service animals, or pets.
- Food employees with service animals may handle or care for their service animals if they wash their hands before preparing food and handling food, utensils, and food related equipment.
- Service dogs and patrol dogs under the control of uniformed law enforcement officers, uniformed employees of private patrol operators, or dogs accompanied by persons licensed to train guide dogs for the blind are not allowed in the food preparation and utensil wash areas at temporary food facilities or farmers markets.

For more information about the **ADA**, please visit their website at [www.ADA.gov](http://www.ADA.gov) or call the ADA toll-free number at **(800) 514-0301** (Voice) and **(833) 610-1264** (TTY).

# Food Official Inspection Report (FOIR) Point Deduction Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

May 2025

## ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



The Food Official Inspection Report (FOIR) includes additional point deductions that have been identified as probable causes of foodborne illnesses, with multiple Major Critical Risk violations and specific closure violations.

### What is a Major Critical Risk Violation?

A Major Critical Risk Violation poses an imminent health hazard that requires immediate correction and may require a food facility's permit to be suspended. Major Critical Violations are those listed on the left (red-shaded) side of the inspection report and identified by the "4" or "11" under the "Major" column.

### What are Some Examples of a Major Critical Risk Violation?

- Food employee hands are not clean/properly washed.
- Improper hot and cold holding food temperatures.
- Food not from an approved source.
- Food-contact surfaces not clean and sanitized.
- Improper cooking temperature.

RETAIL FOOD OFFICIAL INSPECTION REPORT COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES • DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH 6550 COMMERCE DRIVE, BALDWIN PARK, CA 91706 INSPECTION DATE: _____						Facility Status
Family Name:			Inspection Date: N/A			
Owner/Responsible Person:			Re-inspection Date: N/A			
Family Address:			City/Zip: _____			Phone #:
Email Address:			Corporate Email Address:			
Date:	Time In: N/A	Time Out: N/A				
Ext Office Number:	Program Identifier: N/A					
Certified Food Protection Manager:	Program Identifier: N/A					
Expiration Date:	Batcher: N/A					
PA: N/A	PR: N/A	SR: N/A	PE: N/A			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN = in compliance <input type="checkbox"/> NO = Not applicable <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MAJ = Major Violation						
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OUT = Not observed <input type="checkbox"/> AD COR = Corrected on-site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MIN = Minor Violation						
CRITICAL RISK FACTORS						
The following page(s) contains a detailed description of each violation and the required correction immediately.						
Category	Major	Minor	Out	Ad Cor	Min	
1a. EMPLOYEE HEALTH, HYGIENE & KNOWLEDGE	IN / N/A	NO COR / MIN	MAJ	OUT		
1b. Food safety certification	2	2				
1c. Proper hand washing, reporting, restrictions & exclusions	4	2				
1d. No discharge from eyes, nose and mouth	2	2				
1e. Proper eating, drinking, or tobacco use	2	2				
1f. Adequate hand washing facilities, supplies and accessible	4	2				
1g. Proper food handling procedures	2	2				
1h. Proper hot and cold holding temperatures	4	2				
1i. Proper as a public health control, procedures & records	4	2				
1j. Proper cooling methods	4	2				
1k. Proper hot and cold holding temperatures	4	2				
1l. Proper reheating procedures for hot holding	4	2				
PROTECTION FROM CONTAMINATION						
12. Handwashing facilities installed, used, and maintained	2	2				
13. Food in good condition, safe and uncontaminated	4	2				
14. Food contact surface, clean and sanitized	4	2				
15. Proper food handling procedures	2	2				
16. Food obtained from approved source	4	2				
17. Compliance with sheet stock tags, conditions, safety	2	2				
ADDITIONAL CRITICAL RISK FACTORS						
18. Compliance with vermin, specialized practices & HACCP	2	2				
19. Consumer advocacy provided for nonresidential food	2	2				
20. Proper food handling procedures for schools, preschools, food not offered	4	2				
21. Proper food handling procedures for schools, preschools, food not offered	11	2				
22. Sewage and wastewater properly disposed	11	2				
23. No insect, rodent, bird or animals present	11	2				
COMPLIANCE & ENFORCEMENT						
48. Plan Review	OUT					OUT
49. Samples Collection						51. Permit Suspension 52. Multiple Major Critical Violations / Increased Risk to Public Health 53. Permits Available

FOIR Owner Signature  
Help us serve you better by completing a short survey. Visit our website at [www.publichealth.lacounty.gov](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov).

EHS Signature  
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### How are the FOIR Additional Points Deducted?

When a Major Critical Risk Violation is marked on the FOIR, **four points** are deducted from the inspection score. With the point deduction modification, in addition to the four-point deduction, additional points will be deducted (a) for two or more Major Critical Risk Violations and/or (b) for specific closure violations.

#### a) Two or More Major Critical Risk Violations:

If two or more Major Critical Risk violations are marked on the FOIR, an additional **three points** will be deducted from the inspection score.

#### Example 1: Two Major Critical Risk violations.

MAJOR CRITICAL RISK VIOLATION MARKED	POINT DEDUCTION
Hands clean and properly washed; proper glove use	4 points
Proper hot and cold holding temperatures	4 points
<i>Additional point deduction for multiple critical violations</i>	3 points
<b>Total Points Deducted</b>	<b>11 points</b>

#### b) Specific Closure Violations – No Water Available, Sewage, and/or Vermin Infestation:

If a restaurant or market's permit is suspended due to No Water Available, Sewage and/or Vermin Infestation, an additional **seven-point** deduction will be applied for each of these specific closure violations, in addition to the standard four-point deduction for Major Critical Risk Violations.

The FOIR reflects an 11-point deduction for each of these closure violations.

**Example 2:** Permit suspended for one of the three specified closure violations marked.

MAJOR CRITICAL RISK VIOLATION MARKED	POINT DEDUCTION
Water available	4 points
<i>Additional point deduction for specified permit suspension violations</i>	7 points
<b>Total Points Deducted</b>	<b>11 points</b>

**Example 3:** Permit suspended for all three specified closure violations.

MAJOR CRITICAL RISK VIOLATION MARKED	POINT DEDUCTION
Water available	4 points
<i>Additional point deduction for specified permit suspension violations</i>	7 points
Sewage and wastewater properly disposed	4 points
<i>Additional point deduction for specified permit suspension violations</i>	7 points
No insects, rodent, birds, or animals present	4 points
<i>Additional point deduction for specified permit suspension violations</i>	7 points
<b>Total Points Deducted</b>	<b>33 points</b>

If a food facility's permit is suspended for No Water Available, Sewage, and/or Vermin Infestation **AND** two or more additional Major Critical Risk Violations are marked, an additional seven (7) points will be deducted for each of the three specified closure types marked. The 3- point deduction for the two or more Major Critical Risk Violations will not be marked.

**Example 4:** Permit suspended for two of the three specified closure types and two Major Critical Risk violations.

MAJOR CRITICAL RISK VIOLATION MARKED	POINT DEDUCTION
Proper cooking time and temperature	4 points
Food in good condition, safe and unadulterated	4 points
Water available	4 points
<i>Additional point deduction for specified permit suspension violations</i>	7 points
No insects, rodents, birds, or animals present	4 points
<i>Additional point deduction for specified permit suspension violations</i>	7 points
<b>Total Points Deducted</b>	<b>33 points</b>

For additional information, please visit the Environmental Health website at:

[www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh), call us at **(888) 700-9995**, or email at [ehmail@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:ehmail@ph.lacounty.gov).

# New Construction, Remodel, or Tenant Improvement of a Food Facility – Plan Check, Frequently Asked Questions

May 2025

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



## When are Plans Required to be Submitted to the Environmental Health Plan Check Program?

Floor plans are required if you fall into one of the following categories:

1. New construction.
2. Conversion of an existing non-food facility into a food facility.
3. An existing food facility that has changed ownership and will undergo modifications.
4. Remodel of an existing food facility due to change of operation or change of menu which will result in:
  - The addition, removal, or change out of food-related equipment and fixtures.
  - Any replacement or significant modification of an integral piece of equipment.
  - Relocation of the existing kitchen, storage room, restroom, bar, or janitorial facilities.
  - Replacement of a water heater.

**\*Note: If applicable, equipment evaluation will be performed if replacing like for like\***

## How many sets of Plans Should I Submit?

New construction, remodels, and/or tenant improvements are required to submit one (1) set of complete plans. Once the plans are approved, three (3) sets will be required and distributed as follows:

1. One (1) set remains on file with the Plan Check Program.
2. One (1) set is to be kept at the jobsite by the food facility operator, architect, and/or contractor.
3. One (1) set must be submitted, by the applicant, to the local Building & Safety Department.

To submit an Electronic Plan on SharePoint, fill out and email an application to the appropriate program. The applications are available at: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/i-want-to/submit-electronic-plan.htm>.



## What Should be Included in the Plans for New Construction or Facility Conversions?

Plans must contain the following information:

- General Site Plan: the location of the food facility, trash area, exterior walls, windows, and doors. Include locations of remote food storage, common use restrooms, and/or janitorial facilities, if applicable.
- Window and door schedules.
- Floor plan illustration that labels all equipment and sinks, an equipment schedule that matches the labeled floor plan, and the manufacturers' specification sheets for all equipment and sinks.
- Plumbing plans— if applicable, must include waste details, hot and cold-water distribution lines from the water heater, grease interceptor/trap detail, locations of floor drains and/or floor sinks, and location and rating of water heater (KW/BTU).
- Mechanical plans— must include mechanical hood and make-up air calculations, manufacturer specification sheets for the hood, and elevations of the hood with the equipment below.
- Electrical plans.
- Lighting schedule.
- Finish schedule— listing the finishes for the floors, cove bases, ceilings, and walls for all spaces. Samples of finish materials and installation details may be required.
- Elevations or installation details of food-related equipment.

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Environmental Health Division

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## **What Other Information or Documents Should be Provided Along with the Plans for New Construction or Tenant Improvement?**

The following information must be provided:

1. Menu(s) for the food facility.
2. On-site management letter for common use restrooms and/or janitorial facilities (if applicable).

## **What Should I Submit When I am Remodeling?**

Remodels include changes to the food facility, changing food facility operations (e.g. from a take-out only facility to an eat-in facility), or changes to the menu(s). Along with one set of complete plans, include the following:

- Floor plans of existing food facility.
- Floor plan illustration of the remodeled area with labeling of all new equipment and/or sinks.
- Equipment schedule that lists existing and new equipment and the manufacturers' specification sheets for all new equipment and or sinks.
- Manufacturer specification sheets for new or additional equipment.
- Plumbing plans— if applicable, must include waste details, hot and cold-water lines, grease interceptor/trap detail, locations of floor drains and/or floor sinks, and location and rating of water heater.
- Mechanical plans— mechanical hood and make-up air calculations, manufacturer specification sheets for the hood, and elevations of the hood with the equipment below.
- Electrical plans— if applicable.
- Finish schedule— listing the finishes for the floors, cove base, ceilings, and walls for all spaces. Samples of finish materials and installation details may be required, if applicable.
- Water heater rating (BTU or KW), if adding new plumbing fixtures or sinks.
- Operational letter if the food facility will remain in operation during the remodel. In addition, the facility will need to ensure the following:
  - Hot and cold water is available (under pressure) at all times.
  - Food is at correct temperatures.
  - Food is handled safely.
  - Compliance with sanitation standards.
- Copy of the valid Public Health Permit.

## **How Long Does It Take for Plans to be Reviewed?**

Plans are reviewed in the order they are received. The initial plan review will be completed within **20 business days** (excluding holidays) from the date the payment is received.

## **I Cannot Wait 20 Business Days for a Review; Can My Plans be Expedited?**

Yes, plan review can be expedited with payment of an additional Plan Check fee. The initial review of your plans will be completed within **10 business days** (excluding holidays) from the date the payment is received. For an example of expedited fees, see the chart on the next page.

## **How do I Submit Plans?**

### **In-Person:**

- Visit your local Environmental Health Plan Check office and submit one (1) set of plans.
- Fill out a Plan Check Application Form.
- Include the applicable payment (see chart for a partial list of fees).

**E-Plan:**

- Fill out a Plan Check Application online and submit to the designated email to submit an Electronic Plan on SharePoint.

A Plan Check number will then be assigned to your plans for tracking purposes.

### **Can I Start New Construction, Remodeling, or Tenant Improvement While Waiting for My Plans to be Approved?**

Construction, remodeling, or tenant improvement **should not begin** until plans have been approved by the Environmental Health Plan Check Program and the local Building & Safety authorities.

### **Can I Start Training Employees, Stocking Food, or Using the Remodeled Areas or Equipment After I Finish the Work and Have Obtained Approval from the Local Building & Safety Inspector?**

Remodeled areas or equipment, or the newly constructed food facility **must not be used**, stocked with food, or used to train employees before receiving field approval from the **Environmental Health Plan Check Program** and **any other agency requiring permits and/or approvals**.

#### **Plan Check Fees for Retail Food Facility:**

FOOD MARKET RETAIL PLAN (Supermarkets – see example below)		
Size in Square Feet	Fee	Expedited Fee
25 – 50	\$858	\$1,287
51 – 1,999	\$1,119	\$1,679
2,000 – 5,999	\$1,232	\$1,848
6,000 – 19,999	\$1,567	\$2,351
20,000 or more	\$1,903	\$2,855

RESTAURANT PLAN		
Size in Square Feet	Fee	Expedited Fee
500 or less	\$1,044	\$1,566
501 – 1,999	\$1,530	\$2,295
2,000 – 3,999	\$1,865	\$2,798
4,000 – 9,999	\$2,276	\$3,414
10,000 or more	\$2,723	\$4,085

FOOD WAREHOUSE PLAN		
Size in Square Feet	Fee	Expedited Fee
301 – 500	\$858	\$1,287
501 – 4,999	\$1,007	\$1,511
5,000 – 9,999	\$1,157	\$1,736
10,000 or more	\$1,268	\$1,902

MINOR REMODELING PLAN (Must provide copy of current Public Health Permit)		
Size in Square Feet	Fee	Expedited Fee
300 or less	\$315	\$473

For a complete list of Plan Check fees or for more information, please visit the Environmental Health website at: [www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh) or [www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/inspection/retail-plan-check.htm](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/inspection/retail-plan-check.htm), or call the Plan Check Program at **(626) 430-5560**.

# Certificate of Excellence

May 2025

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



Retail food establishments that receive three (3) consecutive “A” ratings with **no Major Critical Risk violations** and **no repeated Minor Critical Risk violations**, are eligible to receive a Certificate of Excellence. These consecutive inspections must be conducted under the same Program Record Number (PR #) for the facility.

## Expectations:

- An Owner/Operator of a food establishment **must request** the Certificate of Excellence by contacting their local Environmental Health District Inspection Branch office.
  - Please visit <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/about/district-offices.htm> to locate your local Environmental Health District Office.
- The District Office will request specific information to process your request. The Environmental Health Division will review your request and Retail Food Official Inspection Reports within 45 days. If your food establishment meets the requirements for the Certificate of Excellence, your certificate will be mailed to you. If your food establishment does not qualify, you will be notified by mail to indicate the reason your request was denied.

## Exclusions:

- Food establishments located within cities that have not adopted the grading ordinance do not qualify for the Certificate of Excellence Program.
- An Owner Initiated Inspection does not qualify for the three consecutive “A” ratings.



The Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Division looks forward to acknowledging your food establishment for demonstrating high standards in food safety. Contact your local **Environmental Health District Office** for more information.

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## Environmental Health Division

5050 Commerce Drive, Baldwin Park, CA 91706

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