

Food Service Establishments

Please read the enclosed bill carefully.

In January of 2008, the Benton-Franklin Health District Board of Health approved a risk-based coding system and fee structure for food establishments in Benton and Franklin Counties.

Previously, restaurants in the district were charged based on the amount of customer seating: a coffee kiosk with zero seats paid the same annual fee as a restaurant with a full menu and up to twenty seats.

Following the adoption by the Board of Health, fees will now also be based on Risk Level Categories: Facilities that serve foods or conduct processes with increased levels of food safety hazards will be assigned a higher risk level and will pay a higher annual permit fee.

Risk Level foods and processes that increase risk include: preparing raw produce or meat, cooling hot foods, vacuum-packaging foods, and offering foods that require a Consumer Advisory. *(All examples are included for guidance and are not necessarily all-inclusive.)*

Risk Category 1 Limited food pReparation



- serve commercially-prepared baked goods
- sell or serve commercially-packaged foods, including PHF (such as intact containers of milk)
- use commercially-prepared produce (such as washed and bagged lettuce)

Examples Include: most coffee shops, ice cream shops, convenience stores

Risk Category 2 Raw food pReparation



- prepare raw meats
- wash or slice fresh fruits and vegetables
- do not cool *cooked* PHF

Examples Include: most delis, quick service, mobile units, sandwich shops (and medium-sized grocery stores)

Risk Category 3 Advanced food pReparation



- cool *cooked* PHF, such as pasta salads, leftovers; or
- conduct specialized processes: smoking, curing, vacuum packing; or
- need a Consumer Advisory on the menu

Examples Include: most full-service restaurants, buffets (and large grocery stores)

Note: Potentially Hazardous Foods (PHF) include foods able to support the rapid growth of bacteria, such as dairy products, meats, poultry, fish, cooked starches (potatoes, pasta, beans, etc.), soy products, cooked vegetables, and sliced melons.

FAQs

Why implement a risk-based food inspection program?

Our goal is to minimize foodborne illness by spending the most time in the establishments that pose the greatest risk and helping them reduce risks through education and enforcement. The risk-based system will better reflect the time dedicated to each facility.

How will I know what category my food establishment is?

All risk categories are based on the menu at the establishment. Comparing your menu to the risk categories will help you identify your risk level. Establishments with a Risk Category of Two or Three are printed on the billing statement.

If I expand or reduce my menu, will my establishment be given a different risk category?

Yes. Please notify us before 12/31/08 of any changes to your menu or operation so that we may make needed changes to your risk category *before* you pay your bill. (Although Risk Levels can be increased throughout the year, Risk Level decreases are only available when the permit is renewed.)

Did all food establishments permit fees increase in 2008?

No. Approximately, 28% of our permitted food establishments will remain the same permit fee or be lowered. Twenty-five percent of our establishments are increased to a Risk Level Two; about 47% of our establishments are a Risk Level Three.

What about grocery stores?

Grocery stores and markets also have a new Risk Level. Grocery Store risk levels are based on the anticipated amount of food served (determined by number of registers in the grocery area). Small grocers with 1-4 registers are a Risk Level One; Medium sized grocers with 5-9 registers are Risk Level Two; Large establishments with 10+ registers are Level Three. The risk level will affect the grocery permit and each production department (Bakery, Deli, Meat, etc.).

What if I have more questions?

Information is available online www.bfhd.wa.gov/eh/ehfs.php, through the October issue of the newsletter, from your inspector, or from the program manager (Susan Shelton 460-4323).