



What to Expect During a Wake County Health Inspection

Documents you will need:

- Certified Food Protection Manager Certificate
- Employee Illness Policy
- Documentation that employees are notified that they need to tell a manager if they are sick.
- Written procedure for clean-up of vomit or diarrheal accidents
- Receipts or invoices – All food must come from approved sources.
- Labels on packaged foods sold as customer self-service.
- Parasite destruction letters from suppliers of fish served raw or undercooked. Exempt fish are Yellowfin Tuna, Bluefin Tuna and Bigeye Tuna.
- Shellstock tags must be kept for 90 days from the date of sale, discard, or service.
- HACCP plan and HACCP or Variance Approval letter for specialized processes.
- Updated owner contact information.
- Copies of dine-in and to-go menus.

Documents You Will Not Need:

- Payments for inspection or permits. North Carolina DHHS will bill you for any permit-related fees. Wake County Inspectors do not accept payments.

Grade Cards:

- One or more Grade Cards will be posted following your inspection. Grade Cards must remain posted conspicuously where visible upon entry or at the point of service in a drive-thru.



If you have a Food Establishment Permit in Wake County, you will be inspected by a Wake County Environmental Health Specialist or Environmental Consultant. Most people call these the “Health Inspector.” You may also be visited by other types of inspectors, such as fire and building. Regardless of the inspector, we are all there for the same purpose: Public Health and Safety.

When the Health Inspector arrives, they will:

- Introduce themselves
- Show you their Wake County ID Badge
- Tell you the purpose of their visit
- Ask for the Person in Charge and invite them to accompany on inspection.

There must be a Person in Charge at the food establishment whenever food is being prepared. The Person in Charge must be able to demonstrate food safety knowledge and answer questions asked by the inspector. The Person in Charge should be a Certified Food Protection Manager. **The Person in Charge is not required to walk with the inspector during the inspection, but it is strongly recommended.**

Your establishment is classified as one of the following:

Risk Category 1 – Inspected every 1-2 years. Businesses preparing no Time/Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) Foods, but which may re-use glassware.

Risk Category 2 – Inspected up to 2 times per year. Businesses preparing TCS food with minimal holding between preparation and service. May cool up to two items from hot or room temperature down to refrigeration temperature.

Risk Category 3 – Inspected up to 3 times per year. Businesses which cool up to three items or which do extensive preparation of raw meats (such as breeding or grinding).

Risk Category 4 – Inspected up to 4 times per year. Businesses which cool a wide variety of foods, use specialized processes (such as acidifying rice or cooking sous vide), or which serve highly susceptible populations (such as Elementary Schools or Nursing Homes).

Types of Violations

Violations are classified into 3 types, based on their risk of causing foodborne illness:

- **Priority Violations** – These are violations that could directly result in foodborne illness. Priority Violations are required to be corrected immediately, or at the inspector’s discretion, within 72 hours.
- **Priority Foundation Violations** – These are violations that could contribute to the possibility of foodborne illness. Priority Foundation Violations are required to be corrected immediately, or at the inspector’s discretion, within 10 days.
- **Core Violations** – These are violations that affect general sanitation but are unlikely to directly result in foodborne illness. Core Violations should be corrected in a timely manner.

Food Establishment inspections in Wake County and throughout North Carolina are always unannounced and may take place any time that your staff are working with food.

This document does not cover all possible violations. Inspections are conducted using the [NC .2600 Rules](#) and the [North Carolina Food Code](#), available online.



What to Expect During a Wake County Health Inspection

Your Establishment May Be Temporarily Closed For:

- Sewage backup
- No drinkable hot or cold water under pressure
- Lack of electricity or gas
- Ongoing foodborne illness outbreak caused by the operation of the business
- Insufficient working refrigeration to hold foods at safe temperatures.
- No working handwashing sink
- Any condition that poses an imminent risk of harm to the public health, safety or welfare
- The business does not have a Food Establishment Permit.

You May Be Asked to Voluntarily Discard Foods For:

- Not being held at safe temperatures
- Improper cooling
- Adulteration, such as insects or foreign objects
- Storage in an unsafe location, such as outdoors.
- Being contacted with bare hands.
- Being worked with by an employee with foodborne illness symptoms.
- Any condition that would lead the service of the food to pose a risk of harm to the public.

If You Receive a Grade Lower Than an A:

- Grades from 70 - 89.5 are eligible for a reinspection upon request.
- Review the inspection in detail with your inspector. Ask questions to understand what corrections need to be made.
- When you have made the necessary corrections, contact your inspector to request a reinspection. The reinspection will be performed within 15 days of your request.
- Grades below 70 will result in immediate revocation of your permit.

Handwashing and Personal Hygiene

The Health Inspector will watch for risky food handling behaviors by employees such as:

- Touching ready-to-eat food with bare hands
- Incorrect hand washing
- Improper glove use
- Working with symptoms of foodborne illness
- Employees wearing jewelry
- Employees not wearing hair restraints
- Employees eating or drinking in food preparation areas

Food Temperatures

The Health Inspector will check TCS foods throughout the facility for proper temperatures. In general, TCS foods should be held:

- Hot – at 135° F or higher.
- Cold – at 41° F or below.
- By Time as a Public Health Control – at any temperature for no more than 4 hours with a written procedure and time labels and/or logs.

Storage

All food must be stored in an approved storage area and be at least 6 inches above the floor. Food must be protected from contamination. The Health Inspector will verify:

- Food is covered and stored in the correct stacking order to prevent cross-contamination in coolers
- Air temperature of coolers and freezers

Menu

If you serve raw or undercooked foods, the Health Inspector will review your menu for the correct consumer warning. The Health Inspector will verify your operation and equipment can support your menu and will determine HACCP requirements based on specialized products on your menu.

Physical Facilities

The Health Inspector will assess overall cleanliness of your business. Floors, walls, and ceilings of food preparation areas must be smooth and easy to clean.

All areas need to be free of dust, food debris and other dirt. Areas that are often overlooked are floors under equipment, shelving, and in corners. Food and utensil storage areas, including single serving items, are part of the food operation and must be kept clean.

Equipment

All equipment must be durable, smooth, and easily cleanable. Equipment must be in good repair and functioning according to manufacturer's specification.

Additional information available at www.wakegov.com/food