

PRESS RELEASE

Franklin County Health Department Will Use New Statewide Food Service Establishment Inspection Form July 1

Franklin County, June 26, 2008: The Franklin County Health Department will begin using a new food service inspection form July 1, following a 2007 statewide mandate to focus inspections on those establishments with the highest potential risk and violations more likely to contribute to food-borne illness.

Franklin County Health Director, Eric Ireland said "that the new form completes the risk-based inspection approach to food service establishment inspections."

He added that this form, like the risk-based inspection approach, focuses on critical violation risk factors. This means that more emphasis will be placed on identifying and immediately correcting contributing factors that increase the chance of developing food-borne illnesses.

The new form will contain requirements separated into critical violation risk factors and good retail practices. It was patterned after one used nationally and developed by a committee of state and local health officials and industry representatives.

"It is a matter of public health," Ireland said. "The fact is that items that fall under the 'good retail practices' category do not have the same level of concern related to controlling food-borne illness as compared to the critical violation factors."

Emphasis is again focused on the importance of the critical risk factors by dividing the inspection items into categories of critical violation risk factors and good retail practices, which are preventive measures to control the introduction of pathogens, chemicals and physical objects into foods.

Such critical risk factors include improper cooking or holding temperatures of potentially hazardous food, food handlers not washing hands properly and ill workers preparing food. The form has 18 critical violations and 30 good retail practices.

Under the existing inspection protocol, each food service establishment will be evaluated and

assigned a risk category based on the type of food and amount of food preparation conducted in the facility.

Previously, environmental health specialists were required to conduct a minimum of four inspections per year in each retail food service establishment. Points were deducted for violations and reflected in the final score and grade, but there was no requirement to correct items on-site.

For more information on the new inspection form, please contact Al Peoples, RS, Supervisor of the Franklin County Health Department's, Environmental Health Program, at (919) 641-8100. For more information about the statewide food service inspection program, go to the Food Protection Branch's Web site at: http://www.deh.enr.state.nc.us/ehs/dfp_links.htm.

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