



Food Protection Program Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What do I do when the health inspector (Sanitarian) arrives?

A: It is the duty of the owner or operator to allow the Sanitarian to conduct an inspection of their food establishment. Greet the Sanitarian and allow them entry. When the Sanitarian arrives, he/she will:

1. Identify themselves and present their City of Chicago Identification and Badge; if these items are not presented the person is not a Sanitarian. If this happens, inform the person to leave and immediately report the incident to 311.
2. Ask for the person in charge.
3. Explain the reason for the inspection (e.g., routine/canvass inspection, complaint inspection, re-inspection).

Q: Can I follow along with the Sanitarian during the inspection?

A: Yes, you are encouraged to accompany the Sanitarian during the inspection. This will allow you to observe any violations that the Sanitarian observes. One recommendation is to take notes for a quick reference on the violations noted. The notes will help you to take corrective actions. Also, the Sanitarian will answer any questions you may have and provide you with feedback.

Q: Is my establishment required to have a certified food manager?

A: For food establishments that are categorized as a risk 1 or risk 2, the Person in Charge must have a valid City of Chicago Certified Food Service Sanitation Manager (FSSM) on premises any time that time temperature control for safety (TCS) food is being prepared, held for service or served, and the original FSSM certificate needs to be posted and visible to the public.

For food establishments that are categorized as risk 3 (those that only have pre-packaged food items), no FSSM is required to be on premises.

Q: What are the consequences of receiving one or more violations?

A: Violations are divided into 3 categories Priority, Priority Foundation, and Core.

One or more priority violations that cannot be corrected during the inspection result in suspension of the license and closure of the food establishment. If this happens, the Sanitarian will provide specific instructions for having your license re-instated.

One or more priority foundation violations that cannot be corrected during the inspection, must be corrected in the time frame given by the Sanitarian. Failure to do so upgrades the priority foundation violation to a priority violation.

One or more core violations must be corrected in the time frame given by the Sanitarian. Failure to do so upgrades the core violation to a priority foundation violation.

Priority and priority foundation violations result in the issuance of a citation for each violation \$500 and \$250 respectively, even if violation was corrected during the inspection. Citations are also issued for violations of the Chicago Clean Indoor Air Ordinance.

Q: What are my options when I receive a citation?

A: If you do not wish to contest a citation, you may pay the citation within 7 days of receiving it. Refer to back of the citation for instructions on paying. If you wish to contest a citation, you will be required to appear at Administrative Hearings on the date and time listed on your citation. If you receive a citation for a violation of the Chicago Clean Indoor Air Ordinance, you must appear at Administrative Hearings.

Q: Will I get written documentation of the inspection?

A: The Sanitarian will leave an inspection report with a list of any violations and correct-by-dates. The Sanitarian will also leave a Summary Report which must be posted and visible to the public.

Q: How are inspections scored?

A: Inspections are scored as follows:

“Pass” means there were no priority or priority foundation violations noted during the inspection.

“Pass with Conditions” means one or more priority or priority foundation violations were identified, but all of them were corrected onsite (COS).

“Fail” means one or more priority or priority foundation violations were identified that could not be corrected during the inspection.

Q: Is the inspection information available online?

A: The inspection results are available to the public at the following website:

<https://data.cityofchicago.org/>. Results are usually posted within 2-3 weeks of the inspection.

Q: How can I provide feedback on the service or inspection I received?

A: Feedback can be provided by:

Calling (312)746-8030

Calling 311

Completing an on-line survey at: <https://www.chicagohan.org/surveys>

Q: What should I do before the Sanitarian leaves my establishment?

A: You should ensure that you have received your inspection and summary report and that you understand any corrective actions that need to be taken to come into compliance with the City of Chicago Municipal Code and the Rules of the Department of Public Health.

Q: How can I obtain a copy of the City of Chicago Municipal Code?

A: City of Chicago Municipal Code relevant to food establishment inspection requirements, along with other information, are available at:

https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/cdph/provdrs/healthy_restaurants/svcs/food-protection-services.html