

It's Bigger; It's Clearer; It's Easier to Read

Beginning August 1, 2004, there will be a new Sanitation Score Card showing up in all food service establishments in North Carolina.

The most prominent change will be the showing of the letter grade and the number score in the same size type, side by side. This is being done so the customer can easily determine not only that the restaurant received an A or B, but also where on the 100-point scale it placed.

The old grade card has the letter grade on top with the number score down in the text of the card in much smaller type. The new score card has both the letter grade and the number score in type that is 1-1/2 inches tall placed at the top of the card.

The Inspection Process

Food service establishments are inspected quarterly by local health department Environmental Health Specialists (EHS). The EHS and the restaurant manager work together to make sure the food is safe.

All restaurants must comply with the "Rules Governing the Sanitation of Restaurants and Other Foodhandling Establishments." These rules are available for you to read online at www.deh.enr.state.nc.us/ehs/rules.htm.



Major Areas of Concern During Inspections

There are several areas of concern that are listed on the restaurant inspection sheet. They include:

✓ **Food sources** – Food must be from safe sources.

✓ **Food protection** – Food must be safely stored and handled. This includes cooking, holding and reheating to the proper temperature.

✓ **Employees** – All employees must wash their hands well with soap and warm water and follow other good hygienic practices. People with infectious diseases spread through food cannot handle food or utensils.

✓ **Equipment and utensils** – Food contact surfaces, like countertops and slicers, must be cleaned and sanitized (treated to kill germs).

✓ **Water supply** -Water must be from a safe source and the plumbing installed according to the building code.

✓ **Handwashing and toilet facilities** - These facilities must be clean and functional.

Other areas of concern are proper waste disposal, cleanliness of the premises, lighting ventilation, storage spaces with separate areas for toxic substances such as bleach, cleaning powders and pesticides.

Keep Your Food Safe At Home Too

Always be sure to practice these four simple steps to food safety:

CLEAN: Wash hands and surfaces often. Wash your hands, cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops with hot, soapy water before, during, and after preparing food.

SEPARATE: Don't cross-contaminate. Always keep raw meat, poultry, seafood and their juices away from other foods.



COOK: Cook to proper temperatures.
Use a food thermometer to make sure foods are cooked to a safe internal temperature.

CHILL: Refrigerate promptly.
Be sure to refrigerate foods within two hours.
Set your refrigerator no higher than 40°F and the freezer at 0°F.