

## Policy Updates and Reminders

### Risk-Based Permit Categories

We are continuing with our risk-based permitting system in 2022. This means, for most places, the permit category and fee are determined by the number of risk factors involved in your operation. We encourage you to evaluate your risk factors annually, or any time you make a significant change to your

processes. The risk factors and a description of all the permits and fees in the food safety program are listed in the “fee schedule” document on the food safety page of our website. If you calculate your risk factors differently than we have, please contact us so we can be sure your permit risk level is correct.

### Food Code Revision

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the food code revision discussed in our 2020 newsletter was delayed, but is now complete with a new final effective date of March 1, 2022. A summary of some of the biggest changes is on pg. 2. **For more info on the rule revision and to see the new food code, scan the QR code to the right.**



### Meet Our Inspectors!

Did you know, our food safety inspectors have a combined total of almost 55 years of experience conducting food safety inspections?! The inspectors, along with their supervisor, Stephanie, make up the Environmental Health (EH) division of GCHD. Five of our EH staff are also Registered Sanitarians, as recognized by the Washington State Board of Registered Sanitarians. They work not just in Food Safety, but a variety of EH programs including On-Site Sewage Disposal, Drinking Water, Recreational Water, Solid Waste, and Food-/Water-borne illness and Zoonotic Disease. The inspectors also jumped in to help during the COVID-19 pandemic and have played an essential role in the response to the historic public health emergency.

To reach your inspector, call the office at 509-766-7960 and dial the ext. number listed by their name, or email. The EH division manager, Stephanie, can be reached at Ext. 41 or email: [sshopbell@granthealth.org](mailto:sshopbell@granthealth.org).



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### Top Violations in 2020 & 2021

1. Valid Food Worker Cards (FWC)
2. Adequate Hand-washing Facilities
3. Proper Cold Holding Temps ( $\leq 41^{\circ}\text{F}$ )
4. Proper Sanitizer
5. Adequate Probe Thermometer
6. Proper Hot Holding Temps ( $\geq 135^{\circ}\text{F}$ )
7. Proper Cooling Methods



Food Worker Cards (FWC) can be obtained online at:

[www.foodworkercard.wa.gov](http://www.foodworkercard.wa.gov)

Or in person at: 1038 W Ivy, Moses Lake

Thursdays: 9 a.m. (English)  
10 a.m. (Spanish)

Each food worker must have a **valid** FWC issued by a county in WA, with a Health Officer signature, and it should look like the one pictured above. Even food workers with ServSafe® certification (or equivalent) need a valid FWC.

## Food Code Rule Revision: Summary of Changes

The process of revising the WA State Retail Food Code (WAC 246-215) began in 2018, but because of the pandemic, finalization of the new rule was delayed and it's becoming effective in two stages. The first set of changes took effect Jan. 1, 2021, and included mostly updates to some terminology and definitions, as well as some changes around cross jurisdictional mobile unit operations due to new legislation. The remainder and majority of the changes to the rule will take effect March 1st, 2022. Below is a summary of the most notable items:

- ✓ **Certified Food Protection Manager (CFPM)**—Food establishments will be required to have at least one person on staff who has passed an ANSI accredited Food Protection Manager course to be the CFPM, and that person will be responsible for implementing a food safety program and training within the facility. Low-risk establishments will be exempt from this requirement (more details to the upper right).
- ✓ **Date-Marking for 7-day Shelf Life**—Most ready-to-eat, refrigerated food in open packages, that will not be used within 24 hours, will need to be marked with the date and used within seven days. This includes food prepared onsite (i.e. deli salads), as well as

commercially prepared foods once the package is opened (i.e. jug of milk). A list of exempt foods will be available.

- ✓ **Clean-up Plan for Vomiting & Diarrheal Events**—Operators will need to have a written plan in place for how to properly clean up after vomiting and diarrheal events in the food establishment to prevent spread of germs like norovirus.
- ✓ **Pet Dogs in Outdoor Areas**—Under an approved plan, food establishments may start allowing dogs in outdoor areas as long as certain procedures are followed. Currently, only trained service animals are allowed on food establishment premises.
- ✓ **Ground Meat Cook Temp**—The required minimum cooking temperature for hamburger and other ground/comminuted meats (pork and lamb; not poultry) will change to 158°F instantaneous (current rule is 155°F for 15 seconds).
- ✓ **Refilling Reusable Customer-Owned Containers**—In an effort to reduce waste, establishments will now have the option to allow customers, under an approved plan, to bring their own clean container to fill or reuse for things like bulk food items and coffee drinks.

### Certified Food Protection Manager

The requirement for all food establishments to have a “Certified Food Protection Manager” has been in the FDA Food Code since 2013, yet it will likely be one of the more challenging new rules we are adopting here in WA. To allow food establishments more time to get staff designated and certified, this provision has been given a delayed implementation date of March 1, 2023—a 1-year grace period after rule adoption.



**Norovirus** is still the leading cause of Food-borne illness outbreaks. To Prevent the Spread of Norovirus...

- ✓ Wash hands often
- ✓ Don't work while sick
- ✓ Don't touch ready-to-eat food with bare hands
- ✓ Have a clean-up plan for vomit & diarrhea

## Terminology Change: “TCS” is the New “PHF”

If you have ever been inspected, chances are you've heard us use the term “potentially hazardous food”, or “PHF” for short, to refer to foods that foodborne illness-causing bacteria can easily grow in if not stored at safe temperatures, such as meat/poultry/dairy, cooked starches/veggies, etc. Well, the fact is, even food that bacteria doesn't easily grow in, like

bread or apples for example, can be “potentially hazardous” if it is contaminated with germs like norovirus. For this reason, the FDA coined the term “Temperature Control for Safety Food” or “TCS” to replace “PHF”. We adopted use of the new term here in WA with the food code changes that took affect in January 2021.

## Admin Shout Out! — Meet Amie



The food safety program consists of much more than just inspections. On the admin side of things, Amie works behind the scenes providing the program with specialized admin support, working with new and existing food establishment applicants, and processing all the food program applications and permits, including our annual permit renewals—nearly 700 permits! She also helps the inspectors stay organized and informed of all things “food” happening in Grant County, and being bilingual, she is a huge help communicating with our Spanish-Speaking customers. If you ever have questions about permitting, plan review, change of ownership, temporary food events, etc., Amie is the one to call: (509) 766-7960 ext.20, or email: apruneda@granthealth.org.

For urgent matters after hours, call:  
509-398-2083

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