

# 2020 Food Safety News

## Policy Updates and Reminders



GRANT COUNTY HEALTH DISTRICT

### New Risk-Based Permit Categories and Inspection Schedule

In your renewal packet was a memo that described the process of and reasoning for creating a new permit category system for food establishments along with a modified inspection frequency policy.

Under the new system, most food establishments are now assigned a “risk level”—either 1, 2 or 3—based on the number of risk factors occurring within the food establishment. Staff conducted a risk-factor assessment of each of the over 640 permanent food establishments in Grant County in order to categorize them into their appropriate risk levels.

An inspection frequency plan was also created in conjunction with the new risk levels and designed so that inspectors will be able to focus more time on food establishments that pose the greatest

potential risk to the public, in order to prevent foodborne illness. Risk Level 3 establishments, which have the most risk factors, will be inspected more frequently than level 2 establishments, and level 1 establishments will be inspected the least frequent because they have the fewest risk factors.

Risk factors used to determine risk level include: Exposed Food, Cold-Holding, Hot-holding, Cooking, Cooling, Reheating for Hot-holding, Raw Meat Prep, Raw Produce Prep, Time as a Public Health Control, Serves a Highly Susceptible Population, Consumer Advisory, Specialized Processing, and Mobile Food Unit.

For more information about these changes, go to: <http://granthealth.org/2020-food-permits/>

### Top Violations in 2019

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

### Food Code Revision—Effective September 2020

Earlier this year we announced via email, that our state food code, WAC 246-215, was in the process of a rule revision. Our current code is based on the 2009 FDA Food Code. Since then, FDA has published a 2013 and 2017 version of the food code, so in order to reflect the newest standards, the food code needed to be revised. **A summary of some of the biggest changes is on pg. 2.** The new food code, set to become

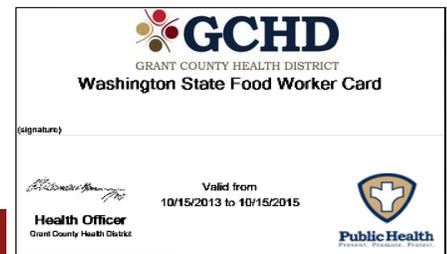
effective in September 2020, is in its final stages of completion, with the final draft being submitted to the state board of health before the end of 2019. For more information, to provide comment, to view timelines, or to be added to email distribution, please email [food.safety@doh.wa.gov](mailto:food.safety@doh.wa.gov) or see [www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/Food/FoodWorkerandIndustry/FoodSafetyRules/FoodCodeRuleRevision](http://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/Food/FoodWorkerandIndustry/FoodSafetyRules/FoodCodeRuleRevision)

Food Worker Cards 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 need a valid FWC.



### Meet Your Inspector—Office# 509-766-7960 (ext. and email below)



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## Food Code Rule Revision: Summary of Changes

There will be many changes/additions to the new food code and the full summary and current draft of the food code is available online here for you to read. However, listed below are the changes GCHD staff think will effect Grant County food establishments the most:

- √ **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 for the establishment.
- √ **Date-Marking for 7-day Shelf Life**—Most ready-to-eat, perishable food in open packages will need to be marked with a date and used within seven days. 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 diarrhea and vomit in the food establishment to prevent spread of germs like norovirus.
- √ **Dogs in Outdoor Areas**—Food establishments may start allowing dogs in outdoor areas under an approved, written plan as long as certain procedures are followed.
- √ **Hamburger Cook Temp**—The required minimum cooking temperature for hamburger and other ground/comminuted meats will be changing to 158°F instantaneous (current rule is 155°F for 15 seconds).

### Food Protection Manager Certification

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 to comply with. Because of that, this provision is planned to have a delayed implementation date of September 1, 2021—a 1-year grace period after rule adoption.

## Norovirus Outbreak Traced to Bartender at Tri Cities Restaurant

**Norovirus** is a highly contagious virus that is persistent in the environment and spreads easily through food. It is most common during winter months and is often referred to as “stomach flu” or “24-hour flu” but is not the same as the “flu” (influenza).

It causes severe vomiting and diarrhea, often at the same time. Some people also get fever, chills and headache. Symptoms last 1-3 days.

**Norovirus is the leading cause of foodborne illness outbreaks.**



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In early 2019, our friends at the Benton-Franklin Health District (BFHD) investigated an outbreak of norovirus in one of their restaurants that sickened at least 26 patrons. Their investigation revealed that a bartender, who later tested positive for the virus, had worked while infectious and handled drink garnishes with bare hands. This outbreak highlighted the fact that even minimal bare-hand contact can lead to spread of the virus due to the very low “infectious dose” of norovirus— less than 20 virus particles is enough to make a person sick. Even bartenders must use barriers such as gloves or tongs to handle ready-to-eat food. This was also a stark reminder of the importance of having a solid “ill worker policy” that employees are trained on and is actively enforced, which includes that **employees must be symptom-free for at least 24 hours prior to returning from work.** The full outbreak investigation report, is available on the BFHD website: [www.BFHD.wa.gov](http://www.BFHD.wa.gov)

#### 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 vomiting events

## Vaping and Marijuana Prevention Window Clings

GCHD’s Healthy Communities Division is currently distributing vaping and marijuana prevention window clings to expand our substance use prevention efforts. Local businesses can play an important role in reducing vaping and marijuana use in the public eye by displaying these window clings on front doors/windows, and/or drive-through windows. By simply displaying these window clings, fewer customers will be exposed to secondhand smoke and a healthier environment will be encouraged. The window clings available include a no vaping/smoking window label that states, “Thank you for not smoking or vaping” and a no marijuana window label that states, “It is illegal to use marijuana in view of the general public.”

The window clings are also available as a printable PDF version which can be accessed on the Washington State Department of Health website under “smoke-free housing” in various languages. [www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/Tobacco/Resources](http://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/Tobacco/Resources)

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

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