

## Brookline Public Health Department



### Food Safety and Inspection Report Information

Thank you for visiting the Brookline Public Health Department's Food Safety and Inspection Report Information webpage.

To assist viewers in understanding the terminology and procedures that the Brookline Public Health Department follows for food inspections, we are providing an overview of the program and explanation of the terminology used in the Food Safety inspection process. After this review you can proceed to the search engine for specific food establishment information. You may also go directly to the search engine by clicking the link below.

[\(Food Establishment Inspection Reports\)](#)

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## Introduction

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The Environmental Health Division at the Brookline Public Health Department ensures food safety at Brookline food establishments through unannounced inspections of more than 400 licensed food establishments 1-4 times a year. The exact number of inspections is based on the perceived risk at an establishment and whether violations have been previously found. During the inspection, health inspectors check for compliance with the [Town by-laws](#), [State Sanitary Code](#), and [1999 Federal Food Code](#). Areas of focus include management and employee health, personnel and hand washing facilities, food and water safety, time and temperature controls, protection from chemicals, equipment and utensils use, sewage and disposal practices, plumbing and toilet facilities, pest control, and overall state of the physical facility.

This website is designed to provide information on restaurants, grocery stores, bakeries and other types of food establishments, and to increase awareness of food safety.

## A. Information for the Public and Industry:

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### An overview of the inspection process:

Health inspectors visit food establishments unannounced 1-4 times a year depending on the perceived risk of the establishment and whether or not violations have been previously found at that location. The types of inspections include routine inspections, follow-up inspections, pre-operation, suspect illness, or general complaint inspections.

### Food Establishment Categories:

Bed and Breakfast Establishment: a private owner-occupied house where four or more rooms are let and a breakfast is included in the rent.

Caterer: Any person who prepares food intended for individual portion service, transports the food and serves it at another location or who prepares and serves food at a food establishment, other than one for which he holds a permit, for service at a single meal, party or similar gathering. A food service establishment must obtain a permit to be a caterer.

Food Service: i.e. handling of unpackaged or exposed food in-tended for individual service such as sit-down and take-out operations in restaurants, sandwich operations in retail markets and convenience stores, coffee and pastry shops, institutional kitchens

Mobile: Non-stationary vendors, ex: food trucks

Nursing Home: Establishment that provides housing and food for the elderly population. This is a high risk location due to susceptibility of the elderly population to illness.

Residential Kitchen: Kitchen in a private home; these are restricted establishments that obtain a permit approval to sell limited foods such as cookies to the public.

Retail Food: i.e. handling of prepackaged foods or the handling of unpackaged or exposed food not intended for individual service such as retail grocery and convenience stores which sell pre-packaged foods, seafood and meat markets, bakeries and bulk deli operations.

Temporary food establishment: A food establishment that operates for a period of no more than 14 consecutive days in conjunction with a single event or celebration.

## Risk Categories:

*Using a guideline from the Federal Food Code, each establishment is categorized based on their perceived risk. Risk is ranked between 1-4, with 1 being a low risk establishment, and 4 being a high risk establishment. In Brookline, the number of inspections performed each year is based on risk category and the history of inspections at an establishment.*

**1:** Convenience stores, hot dog carts and coffee shops. Establishments serve or sell only pre-packaged, non-time/temperature control foods. These establishments are usually inspected once a year.

**2:** Retail food and food service establishments. Most products are prepared and cooked and served immediately. Food may involve hot or cold holding after preparation or cooking. These establishments are usually inspected twice a year.

**3:** Full service restaurants. This category includes establishments with an extensive menu and handling of raw ingredients, and complex preparation of foods including cooking, cooling and reheating for hot holding. These establishments are usually inspected three times a year.

**4:** Hospital cafeterias, nursing home cafeterias, some sushi restaurants and daycares, and other establishments with special processes. Because these establishments serve highly susceptible populations (populations who are more likely to get sick due to a weaker immune system, such as babies, elderly, and patients at a hospital), they are usually inspected four times a year.

## Violations

*Upon arrival, the inspector walks through the establishment, reviewing a checklist of specific criteria that are required for operation. If specific criteria are not met, then violations are assigned to each criterion. Violations fall into three categories:*

Food-borne illness risk factors and interventions (Critical Red Items): This is a critical violation, and is defined by the CDC as improper practices that have a high potential to negatively affect the public's health. This item requires either immediate corrective action or action within 24 hours as determined by the Brookline Public Health Department. Examples include food from non-approved sources, improper hand washing, food contact surfaces not clean and sanitized, and improper cooking and holding temperatures.

Other critical violations (Critical Blue Items): A violation related to good retail practices that, if not corrected, may lead to serious health impacts and a critical violation. This type of violation must be corrected immediately or within 10 days as determined by the Brookline Public Health Department. Examples include improper storage of medicines and first aid kits; improper sewage and waste water disposal; and insect, rodents and animal control problems.

Non-critical violations: A violation that may not directly impact consumer health, but is a preventive measure to minimize health risks. This violation relates to good retail practices and must be corrected immediately, or within 90 days as determined by the Brookline Public Health Department. Examples include dirty floors, and inadequate condition of physical facilities (such as lighting, ventilation).

## Inspection Status:

*Once the walk-through of the establishment is complete, the inspector reviews the checklist and any violations cited. Based on the severity and number of violations, the results of the restaurant inspection fall into one of five categories:*

Full Comply Status: Inspector found no violation (critical or non-critical) at time of inspection; or a follow-up inspection found that all previous violations have been corrected. The establishment passes the inspection.

Partial Comply-Pass: Inspector found either critical/non-critical violations which are corrected on-site or non-critical violations that will be corrected by the operator voluntarily. No follow-up inspection is necessary.

Partial Comply: Violations (critical or non-critical) observed at time of inspection which will be corrected by the operator. A follow-up inspection is usually required. Critical red violations are addressed during that inspection or within 24 hours as determined by the Brookline Public Health Department.

Suspended: The food establishment permit is temporarily suspended as a result of one or more imminent health hazards found at inspection. The establishment must close immediately and can reopen only with approval from the Brookline Public Health Department.

Revoked: Brookline Public Health Department may issue an order to revoke a permit or refuse to renew a permit to operate a food establishment due to serious or repeated violations.

## Education for Food Operators/Staff:

### *Education is important for the inspection process:*

Ensuring food safety is a process that requires cooperation and communication between food establishments and the Brookline Public Health Department. Education of food operators and staff is an important component of the inspection process. When violations are found, health inspectors meet with food establishment management staff to educate and recommend ways to mitigate violations. If food-borne illness violations and/or critical violations are found, a re-inspection is scheduled to allow the restaurant a specified timeframe (usually two weeks) to correct the problem. Providing feedback allows management staff to learn better practices for ensuring food safety for their consumers.

Additionally, most Food Service Establishments are also required to have a certified food protection manager who can demonstrate knowledge in food safety requirements.

## B. Information for the Industry/Operators

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The Brookline Public Health Department provides information and guidelines on important and safe food practices to all Brookline food establishment operators. The following is a partial list of commonly observed violations and practices, and is not meant to be exhaustive.

### Opening a New Food Service Establishment in Brookline

Please click [here](#) for more information about opening a new food service establishment in Brookline, or visit the town webpage at [www.brooklinema.gov](http://www.brooklinema.gov).

### Food Operations and Safety (General Guidelines)

#### *Food Safety Practices and Procedures:*

#### **1. Receiving:**

- i. Food and water from approved sources:
  - USDA, FDA, State, Local
  - No home prepared or canned foods
  - No Raw or Unpasteurized Milk
  - No Privately Caught Fish
- ii. Inspect deliveries to check for:
  - Temperature, freshness, and packaging, recognizes when to accept and when to reject food products.

#### **2. Storing:**

An establishment is required to store food at a proper temperature in order to prevent bacterial growth. Types of storage include:

- Cold Storage: Store cold foods at a temperature of 41°F or below.
- Frozen Storage: Frozen foods must be stored at a temperature of 0°F or below.
- Dry Storage: Food must be stored in a clean, dry location which is not exposed to splash, dust, or other contamination, and is at least 6 inches above the floor. Humidity levels must be below 50-60%.
- First In, First Out (FIFO): Food products that are received first must be sold or used first.

- Shelf Life: Potentially hazardous foods must be stored at 41°F in a refrigerator and used within 7 days. Other dry products must be sold before the sell by date noted on the product.

### **3. Thawing:**

- i. Remove food from the freezer and place in the refrigerator at 41°F or below one or two days before use.
- ii. Under cold running potable (drinkable) water at a temperature of 70°F or below for no more than two hours.
- iii. As part of the cooking process.
- iv. In a microwave with the food then moved immediately to other cooking equipment.

### **4. Preparing:**

- Do not prepare food when ill.
- Use clean and sanitized equipment to prepare foods.
- Avoid cross contamination from raw and Ready-to-Eat (RTE) foods by using different knives and cutting boards for raw and RTE foods.

### **5. Cooking:**

- Heat all potentially hazardous foods (ex: fish, seafood, veal, lamb, and shell eggs) to an internal temperature of 140°F (60°C) for at least 15 seconds.
- Heat hamburgers, game animal meats to an internal temperature of 155°F (63 C) for at least 15 seconds.
- Heat poultry, stuffing, stuffed meat to an internal temperature of 165°F (73.9°C) for at least 15 seconds.

### **6. Cooling:**

Cooked potentially hazardous food must be cooled down from 140°F to 70°F (57°C to 21°C) within 2 hours and then from 70°F to 41°F (21°C to 5°C) or lower for an additional 4 hours. Examples of cooling methods:

- Ice bath
- Small portion using shallow pan
- Blast chiller

## 7. Reheating

### i. For Hot Holding:

- Potentially hazardous food that is cooked, cooled, and reheated for hot holding needs to be reheated so that all parts of food reach an internal temperature of 165°F for at least 15 seconds.
- RTE food taken from commercially processed, hermetically sealed container, or from intact package from food processing plant that has jurisdiction over the plant, must be reheated to an internal temperature of 60°C or 140°F for hot holding.
- Reheating for hot holding must be done rapidly and the time the food is between 5°F and 165°F cannot exceed 2 hours.

### ii. For Immediate Service:

- Cooked and refrigerated food that is prepared for immediate service in response to individual consumer order may be served at any temperature.

## 8. Holding

### Hot Holding:

- Use only hot holding equipment that can keep foods at 140°F (60°C) or higher.
- Never use hot-holding equipment to cook or reheat food, only use to keep food hot.

### Cold Holding:

- Use only cold-holding equipment or refrigeration that can keep foods at 41°F (5°C) or lower.
- Hold ready-to-eat foods in metal pans or containers.

## 9. Serving

- Ensure proper handwashing.
- Ensure appropriate use of gloves and dispensing utensils.
- No bare contact with RTE foods.
- No re-service of potentially hazardous foods.
- Ensure compliance with allergen awareness requirements.

## 10. Cleaning and Sanitizing Equipment:

### Warewashing:

1. Flush, scrape, or soak items before washing.
2. Wash items in hot water at least 110°F (48.9°C) with an approved detergent in the first sink.
3. Rinse off the detergent and any remaining food residue in clean, clear water in the second sink.
4. Sanitize the items with an approved sanitizer in water at least 75°F (23.9°C) in the third sink.
5. Stack items on a clean drain board and air dry.

### Dishwashing:

1. Flush, scrape, or soak items.
2. Use either:
  - a. High temperature machine: Wash >150°F and Rinse > 180°F
  - b. Chemical sanitizers:
    - i. Chlorine 50-200 ppm or
    - ii. Quaternary ammonia 200-400 ppm
3. Air dry all items. Do not towel dry.

### Recommended Sanitizing Solution Concentrations:

- Chlorine = 50 - 200 ppm at minimum water temperature of 75°F for at least one half (1/2) minute.
- Iodine = 12.5 - 25 ppm at minimum water temperature of 75°F for at least one (1) minute.
- Quaternary Ammonia = 200 ppm or manufacturer's instructions at minimum water temperature of 75°F for at least one (1) minute.

## 11. Cross Contamination Prevention

- Separate raw and ready-to-eat-foods during storage, preparation, holding, and display.
- Clean and sanitize equipment and utensils.
- Protect food from contamination and cross-contamination by covering and separating cooked and non-cooked, prepared foods (ex: raw chicken and bread).

## *Employee Health*

*Employees and Persons-In-Charge (PICs) are required to report illness to prevent its spread through employee contact with food. PIC must determine what action is taken when an illness is reported.*

### **Employee Hygiene and Food Handling:**

1. No Bare Hand Contact with Ready-To-Eat (RTE) foods.
2. Utilize a dress code. Be sure to wear clean clothes and hair coverings such as hats, nets, bandanas.
3. No smoking, eating or drinking when serving food (covered bottle with straw is acceptable).
4. Wash hands after touching any food to prevent cross-contamination:
  - Use warm water to moisten hands. Apply soap, rub hands together for a minimum of 20 seconds, rinse thoroughly, and dry with paper towel or hot air blowers.
  - Hand washing should be done at the following times: when employees arrive at work; after eating, drinking, smoking; after using the toilet or urinal; after handling raw meat, poultry, shell eggs, fish products, or anything soiled.
5. Wear single-use gloves.
6. Do not serve food if sick.
7. Enforce employee's illness policy.

## *Safety:*

**Owners should ensure safe environments for workers by:**

### **1. Training**

- Ensure workers know how to use equipment, and do their job safely.
- Educate workers on proper dress code, including hair nets, gloves, and use of an apron.
- Provide contact information for questions about equipment use and work-related injuries.
- Train workers about the allergen awareness requirements.

## **2. Taking precautions**

- a. Preparing for emergency situations:
  - Prepare emergency first-aid kit for injuries such as burns, cuts.
  - Train employees in basic first-aid .
  - Keep emergency numbers posted.

## **3. Maintaining a safe working environment;**

- a. Place anti-slip floor mats in high-traffic areas.
- b. Frequent checking and monitoring of restaurant environment:
  - Ensuring floors are cleaned and cleared of debris.
  - Managing and ensuring clean-up of spills directly after they occur.
  - Ensuring clean cooking areas:
    - ✓ Cooking appliances should be free of any obstructions (such as a towel, oil, grease build-up) that can cause a fire.
  - Check high hazard areas such as grinders, mixers, slicers and blenders frequently to ensure proper use and safety measures are being followed.

### **Some common ways workers can ensure their own safety:**

#### Kitchen Practices:

##### Knives:

- Keep knives sharp, as sharp knives are safer to use than dull knives.
- Use knives safely and properly.
- Store properly after use (ex: in a wooden block, and NOT a drawer).

##### Equipment:

- Keep hands and fingers away from high hazard equipment such as grinders and slicers.
- Keep cooking equipment free from obstruction and materials to minimize fire hazard.

Cooking:

- Never handle hot oil as it can severely burn skin. Always cool oil before handling.
- Use potholders/oven mitts when carrying hot items.
- Keep your face and hands away from steam. Steam can severely burn skin.

General Safety Practices:

- Wear shoes with traction (slip-resistant), as kitchen floor can get wet at times.
- Be responsible and clean up after yourself. Clean spills even if they are not yours and pick up items on the floor. Leaving spills or dropped items on the floor is a hazard to everyone.
- Practice good hygiene. Washing your hands with warm water and soap is the best practice to reduce contamination.
- Always lift heavy items by bending from your knees. Avoid twisting or any type of sudden movement. If the item is heavy, ask co-workers for help lifting to alleviate stress on your back and to avoid possible back injuries.

## C. Glossary of food-inspection related terminology

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Biological: Bacteria, Viruses, Parasites, Fungi

Certified Food Protection Manager: A full time employee who is at least 18 years of age and who has shown proficiency of required information by passing a test that is part of an accredited program recognized by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

Chemical: Pesticides, Food Additives, Preservatives, Cleaning Supplies.

Consumer Advisory: When serving raw or undercooked animal foods, the food establishment must advise the consumer in writing of the increased risk of contracting a food-borne illness.

Equipment: An article that is used in the operation of a food establishment such as a freezer, grinder, meat block, sink, slicer, stoves, etc.

Food Adulteration: Addition of unsafe, poisonous or deleterious additives into food that can cause adverse health outcomes. Examples include heavy metals (ex: arsenic, lead, mercury), filth and extraneous materials (ex: rodents and insects contamination), and chemical contaminants (ex: ethyl carbamate, furan, melamine, and pesticides).

Food employee: An individual working with unpackaged food, food equipment or utensils, or food-contact surfaces.

Food Establishment: An operation that stores, prepares, packages, serves, vends, or otherwise provides food for human consumption including: food service, retail food, caterer, mobile food, temporary food and residential kitchen.

Food-borne illness: An illness resulting from the consumption of foods or beverages contaminated with disease-causing microorganisms, chemicals, or other harmful substances.

Food-borne outbreak: Occurrence of two or more cases of a similar illness resulting from the ingestion of a food in common.

Food-contact surface: A surface with equipment or utensils that food normally comes into contact with; or a surface of equipment or utensil from which food may drip, drain or splash onto food.

Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP): A prevention-based food safety system that identifies and monitors specific food safety hazards that can adversely affect the safety of food products.

HACCP plan: A written document that is based on the principles of HACCP and that describes the procedures to be followed to ensure the control of a specific process or procedure.

Hazard: A biological, chemical, or physical property that may cause a food to be unsafe for human consumption.

Highly Susceptible Population (HSP): Persons who are more likely than other populations to experience food-borne disease because they are either immune-compromised, preschool age children (infants or toddlers), or older adults.

Nontime/temperature control foods: Foods that are not potentially hazardous, and do not require storage at a specific temperature. These items are generally non-perishable and have a long shelf life. Examples include bags of chips and candy bars.

Person in charge (PIC): An individual present at a food establishment who is responsible for the operation. The PIC must be knowledgeable and responsible to prevent the transmission of a food-borne disease by a food employee who has a disease or medical condition that may cause a food-borne disease.

Pests: Insects, rodents and other pests found in food establishment must be controlled by using methods such as trapping devices or other means of pest control. Use of a tracking powder pesticide is prohibited.

Physical – Foreign Objects (Hair, Dirt, Metal, Glass).

Potentially hazardous food: Food that is raw or requires temperature control because it is capable of supporting microorganisms, growth of *Clostridium botulinum*, or salmonella, all of which can cause illness. Examples include dairy, fish, poultry, beef, cream-filled pastries.

Ready-to-Eat Food (RTE): Food that is in a form that is edible without washing, cooking, or additional preparation by the food establishment or the consumer, and that is reasonably expected to be consumed in that form.

Reduced oxygen packaging (ROP): A reduction of the amount of oxygen in a package by removing oxygen; displacing oxygen and replacing it with another gas or combination of gases; or otherwise controlling the oxygen content to a level below that normally found in the surrounding 21% oxygen atmosphere. Three types of ROPs are: Vacuum packaging, modified atmosphere packaging, and controlled atmosphere packaging.

Risk Factors: Improper practices or procedures, which have been identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), through epidemiological data as the most prevalent contributing factors of food-borne illness or injury. Risk factors include: (a) Poor personal hygiene; (b) Food from unsafe source; (c) Inadequate Cooking; (d) Improper holding temperatures; and (e) Contaminated equipment.

Sanitization: The application of cumulative heat or chemicals on cleaned food-contact surfaces that, when evaluated for efficacy, are sufficient to yield a reduction of 5 logs, which is equal to a 99.999% reduction, of representative disease microorganisms of public health importance.

Sanitizing: The reduction of microorganisms to a safe level by properly using approved sanitizers. Equipment food contact surfaces and utensils must be sanitized before and after use.

Time as a Public Health Control (TPHC): In order to store potentially hazardous foods such as pizzas, and sandwiches at ambient temperature for immediate consumption, a variance must be obtained from the Brookline Public Health Department.

Warewashing: The process of cleaning and sanitizing food-contact surfaces of equipment and utensils. Warewashing machines are equipped with a temperature measuring device to indicate the temperature of the water, and contain three sinks: one for soaking, one for rinsing, and one for sanitizing.

Variance: A written document issued by the Brookline Public Health Department that authorizes a modification or waiver of one or more requirements of the Food Code if, in the opinion of the Brookline Public Health Department, a health hazard or nuisance will not result from the modification or waiver.

*Further descriptions and terminology are provided in the information for operators/industry section of this document.*

**Food establishments are required to follow federal, state and local mandated sanitary codes including:**

Allergen Awareness (105 CMR 590.009 (G)): All food establishments must display a food allergy poster in staff area of establishments, place a notice on menus for consumers with food allergies, and provide food allergy training for certified food protection managers. This act helps minimize health risks of illness and death from accidental ingestion by consumers of allergen.

Anti-choking (105 CMR 590.009 (E)): All food establishments having a seating capacity of 25 persons or more must have an employee trained in the manual procedures to remove food lodged in a person's throat. This is a preventive measure to ensure safety of customers should the need arise.

Tobacco (105 CMR 590.009 (F) and Town-by-law): A food establishment cannot sell cigarettes, tobacco or these products in any other form to anyone under the age of 18, M.G.L. c. 270, § 22. Establishments are required to obtain a permit from the Brookline Public Health Department to sell tobacco.

Trans-fat (8.28-Town-by-law): No foods with artificial trans-fat can be stored, distributed, held for service, used in preparation, or served in any food service establishment or mobile food unit, except food that is being served directly to customers in a manufacturer's original sealed package.

Additionally, the Town of Brookline adopted a resolution to recommend that food establishments carry/serve only non-crated veal.

## **Additional Information**

*For additional information on rules and regulations for food establishments, please visit:*

Federal Food Code:

<http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/RetailFoodProtection/FoodCode/FoodCode1999/default.htm>

State Food Code: [www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/regs/105cmr590.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/regs/105cmr590.pdf)

Town by-laws: [http://www.brooklinema.gov/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=303&Itemid=128](http://www.brooklinema.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=303&Itemid=128)