



City of Rochester, New Hampshire

Department of Building, Zoning & Licensing Services

Dear Facility Owner/Manager:

As the City of Rochester Health Department conducts its annual Food Service Establishment permit renewal process and inspections. The system of permitting and inspections is designed to ensure that food service establishments in Rochester adhere to safe food handling practices in order to protect the public health and reduce or eliminate the incidence of foodborne illness. To facilitate this process, the following information should help to clarify ahead of time what the Health Department will be looking for during inspections. The list also contains some of the more common violations we have been seeing, as well as some of the practices, such as testing sanitizer for proper concentrations, that are the responsibility of the permittee (and not that of a contracted service). It is the intention of the Rochester Health Department to help: ensure that relevant codes and guidelines are being followed, confirm that your equipment (coolers, freezers, sanitizing equipment etc.) is working properly, and ensure that your food handling procedures are safe. Inspections are intended to be an interactive exchange with you, and the inspectors are there to help you understand and adhere to the guidelines designed to protect the public health. Included in this packet are several fact sheets for your reference and posting. We can also provide safe food handling instruction in various languages. If you feel that may be of help, please do not hesitate to contact us for this information.

The items on the following list are your responsibility, please make certain you and your staff are well informed about these items and understand them. Although inspections cannot be scheduled, this information is provided in the spirit of a partnership in health. We want you to succeed while keeping your patrons safe and free of foodborne illness. We will be looking for the items on the included list during inspections. If you have questions about any of the items, or need assistance with others, please feel free to contact the Health Department; we would be happy to discuss matters with you and are a resource for you.

Sincerely,

The Rochester Health Department

The following list constitutes a few of the more common inspection violations, and other items that are the responsibility of the food/restaurant management and staff:

- Testing sanitizer concentrations including: (for information on proper concentrations of various sanitizers, see enclosure)
 - 3-Bay (sanitizing bay)
 - Dishwasher (unless it is a hot water sanitizer)
 - Sanitizer Pails for wiping cloths
- It is your responsibility (not that of a contracted service) to test your sanitizers to ensure you are actually sanitizing. Many things can happen to your equipment and your sanitizer in between visits from the contracted service. Please continually test your sanitizers!
- Taking temps of food (hot and cold). It is your responsibility to ensure that temps of food are within the safety zone (see enclosure for correct hot and cold holding and cooking temperatures for foods). Digital thermometers are highly recommended as they do not have to be calibrated and are very easy to read.
- Ensure that your coolers (walk-in and reach-in) have conspicuous and readable internal thermometers at all times
- Make certain each of your employees knows when the use of gloves is required (and times when they are not needed) and the proper use of them (see enclosure)
- Duct tape should never be used in the kitchen environment – it is not a sanitizable surface
- Wiping cloths are not allowed on top of shellfish (it can suffocate them and an environment in which bacteria can flourish)
- Wiping cloths (unless in active use) must be in the sanitizer pail (keeping them out of the pails creates a breeding ground for bacteria)
- Keep your shellfish stock tags for at least 90 days. Mark the date on the tag when the last from the lot is sold/served.
- Any food for employees must be kept in its own cooler, in a break room, or at the very least, on a separate labelled shelf in the kitchen coolers
- Employees cannot eat in the kitchen; a separate area should be designated for this purpose
- The Food Service Facility permit from the Health Department should be posted in a public place
- Nothing should ever be stored in the food prep or hand wash sinks (the exception is a strainer in a hand wash sink in the bar)
- Handwash sinks must always be stocked with soap, paper towel (or means of sanitary drying).
- Hand wash sinks must always be fully accessible (nothing blocking the sink)
- Personal items (such as cell phones, purse, hats, keys, gloves, coats, etc.) can never be on food contact surfaces, or in contact with food
- If you produce Sushi rice, are using Sous Vide or vacuum packing, smoking to preserve foods, you must have a HACCP plan.
- If your dishwasher is a hot water sanitizer, it will soon become a requirement to test your dishwasher with heat strips to ensure that it is sanitizing at the proper temperature. You can start now!

There are 76 million cases of foodborne illnesses nationally, 325,000 hospitalizations and 5,000 preventable deaths from foodborne illness. Together, we can work to ensure that Portsmouth is a City that is food friendly, and food safe.

These are just some of the violations found. We currently enforce the 2009 Food Code. It is the permit holders' responsibility to ensure food safety practices are followed.