# Food Service Establishment Inspection Data

# Overview

New York State Department of Health Center for Environmental Health Bureau of Community Environmental Health and Food Protection

**OPEN Data NY** 

#### **Food Service Establishment Inspection Data Overview**

### **General Description**

#### The New York State Department of Health Food Protection Program Mission Statement:

To protect the public health by assuring that food service establishments are operated in a manner that eliminates hazards through design and management, resulting in a decreased incidence of foodborne illness in our communities.

The Food Protection Program of the NYS Department of Health establishes the regulations pertaining to food service establishments, temporary food service establishments, mobile food service establishments and food and beverage vending machines in New York State within Part 14 of the New York State Sanitary Code. The Food Protection Program provides technical and procedural guidance and assistance to county and city health departments which in turn permit and inspect food service operations. The New York State Department of Health also maintains nine District Offices which permit and inspect food service establishments in twenty-one counties that do not have environmental health programs. There are over 90,000 food service establishments in New York State and the Food Protection Program serves all 19.3 million residents of the State as well as countless visitors.

This data set contains violations found at food service establishments that hold a Food Service Establishment permit. Food service establishments include facilities such as restaurants, schools, bars, snack bars, fraternal organizations and soup kitchens. Temporary food service establishments, mobile food service establishments, vending machines and food service at health care facilities that are regulated under Article 28 of New York State Public Health Law are excluded from this data set.

Food service establishments are divided into three different categories: high, medium and low risk. High risk food service establishments are those that conduct complex cooking processes such as advance preparation, cooling and reheating. Typical high risk food service establishments include table-service restaurants, diners and school kitchens which prepare foods. Medium risk food service establishments generally prepare foods to order such as pizza, hamburgers and sandwiches, or receive, hold and serve food from other food service establishments. Low risk food service establishments serve foods that require minimal preparation and include facilities such as bars and coffee shops.

#### **Data Collection Methodology**

Sanitarians conduct risk based inspections at a frequency based on the risk category of the facility. Generally, high risk facilities are inspected twice per year, medium risk facilities are inspected once per year and low risk facilities are inspected every other year. Local health departments may also prioritize inspections by facilities' history of compliance so inspection frequencies may vary.

Data is collected using standardized forms completed by trained sanitarians at local health departments and New York State Department of Health district offices. Sanitarians document violation details in writing as they are observed during an inspection and each violation receives a violation item number. Each violation item number has a corresponding general description of the violation.

Red "critical" violations (violation items 1A – 7H) relate directly to factors that could lead to foodborne illness. These violations generally involve the food source and condition, food cooking and storage temperatures, sanitary practices of food workers, water and sewage, pest contamination of food and the use of toxic materials. Blue "non-critical" violations (violation item numbers 8A-16) do not directly cause food-borne illness but could negatively affect the operation of the restaurant. They relate to the design and maintenance of the establishment as well as cleanliness.

The completed form is faxed to NYSDOH and violation item numbers are electronically scanned and saved to a database. During the scanning process, data fields are automatically checked for completeness and valid values. NYSDOH staff manually verify and correct typographical errors.

## **Statistical and Analytic Issues**

The database is updated on a routine basis as described on the open data webpage and recent inspection data or violation remediation made may not be immediately reflected.

The data does not include violations from inspections conducted in New York City, Suffolk County, Orange County and Erie County.

#### **Limitations of Data Use**

Although violation details are collected on inspection reports (i.e., the actual food item, quantity and temperature of food found out of temperature control) as well as corrective actions for critical violations, this data set is limited to the violation number and the corresponding general violation description. Requests for more detailed information or actual copies of inspection reports should be directed to the local health department or State District Office which conducted the inspections in question.

Public access to this inspection data is intended solely to allow the public convenient and immediate access to public information. Inspections are conducted by local health departments and State District Offices and are not audited by the NYSDOH. While all attempts are made to provide accurate, current and reliable information, the Department of Health recognizes the possibility of human and/or mechanical error and that information captured at a point in time often becomes obsolete. Therefore, the New York State Department of Health, its employees, officers and agents make no representation, warranty or guarantee as to the accuracy, completeness, currency or suitability of the information provided here.