



Pima County Health Department

PUBLIC HEALTH NOTICE

To: Food Establishment Permit Holders
 Date: August 9, 2019
 From: Pima County Health Department Consumer Health and Food Safety Program

Subject: Improvements to Inspection Ratings System for Food Establishments

The Pima County Health Department is dedicated to partnering with food service operators in our community to ensure public health and safety. To that end, after listening to your feedback, we are introducing a new Food Safety Inspection rating system that will focus on controlling risk factors for foodborne illness but use a more balanced approach for assessing violations. Greater emphasis is placed on Risk Factors and Interventions, the contributing factors in foodborne illness outbreaks (items 1-29 on the food inspection form), while less emphasis is placed on Good Retail Practices, the systems controlling contributing factors to foodborne illness (items 30-56 on the food inspection form). This new rating system is designed to lessen the number of lower inspection ratings previously based on total violations assessed, ensure better control of risks while keeping our shared commitment to food safety at the forefront.

The structure of the rating system remains mostly the same with the addition of a Satisfactory rating. The ratings are now Excellent (E), Good (G), Satisfactory (S), Needs Improvement (NI), Probation (P). Each Priority (P) or Priority Foundation (Pf) violation in the Risk Factor section is counted once; Priority or Priority Foundation violations in the Good Retail Practices section are assessed in groups of three; in the rating system it now takes three Good Retail Practices (GRP) violations to reduce a rating by one category. The ratings are explained below;

Current Rating System

	Priority & Priority (P/Pf) Foundation Violation Totals			
Violation Counts	0	1-4	1-4 Not Corrected During Inspection	5 or More
	Excellent (E)	Good (G)	Needs Improvement (NI)	Probation (P)

Based on total count of Priority and Priority Foundations items 1-56.

New Rating System

	Priority & Priority (P/Pf) Foundation Violation Totals				
Violation Counts	0	1-2	3-4	1-4 Not Corrected During Inspection	5 or More
	Excellent (E)	Good (G)	Satisfactory (S)	Needs Improvement (NI)	Probation (P)

Based on total count of Priority and Priority Foundation Risk Factor violations items 1-29.

**3 P/Pf violations of Good Retail Practices will drop rating one level. Ex. Excellent to Good.
Good Retail Practices do not have to be corrected during inspection and do not lead to a Needs Improvement rating.**

Core violations will be assessed the same way as the previous rating system.

A pattern of non-compliance is documented repeat violations during an inspection. Pattern of non-compliance is defined by:

- 1. In a Needs Improvement Status (NI), three violations of a priority or priority foundation item in the same risk factor or intervention within five re-inspections will result in a probation**
- 2. Four Violations of the same Good Retail Practices within six routine or re-inspections will result in a Probation.**

The following examples show changes in the rating using the new rating system:

So, for example, if a cook accidentally takes home a thermometer from the kitchen, and inspector shows up the next day, if food is still kept at proper holding temperatures and cooked/cooled to proper temperatures, the lack of a thermometer is still noted as a violation, but will not result in a lower rating. Instead, this scenario would result in an Excellent rating.

Another example, if a facility has violations of handwashing(1), food contact equipment not clean and sanitized(2), and cold holding temperatures out of compliance(3) in the risk factor items and violations of no thermometer(4) and no sanitizer test strips(5) in the good retail practices items, the rating would not result in a Probation rating. Instead, this scenario would result in a Satisfactory rating.

The violations noted would be 3 Risk Factor violations and 2 P/PF Good Retail Practice violations.

We know the food industry in Pima County has many dedicated professionals who want the best experience for their customers. At the time of your next inspection, your inspector will walk you through the new system and answer any questions you may have. More information on food establishment ratings and examples of the new rating system being applied are available at www.pima.gov/foodratings. If you have immediate questions, please contact us at (520) 724-7908.

On behalf of our entire food safety staff, we appreciate your partnership and look forward to working with you to achieve our shared goals of quality, safety, and professionalism.