
Food Safety Program

What Is My Risk Level?

License fees are established and food facilities are licensed according to risk level. Risk levels reflect the potential risk that a facility poses to Public Health and is based on the highest risk level activity of the food service operation/food establishment in accordance with the following criteria:

Risk level I: poses potential risk to the public in terms of sanitation, food labeling, and sources of food, storage practices, or expiration dates.

Examples of risk level I activities include, but are not limited to, an operation that offers for sale or sells:

- (1) Coffee, self-service fountain drinks, prepackaged nonpotentially hazardous beverages;
- (2) Prepackaged, refrigerated or frozen potentially hazardous foods;
- (3) Prepackaged nonpotentially hazardous foods;
- (4) Baby food or formula

Risk level II: poses a higher potential risk to the public than risk level I because of hand contact or employee health concerns but minimal possibility of pathogenic growth exists.

Examples of risk level II activities include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Handling, heat treating, or preparing nonpotentially hazardous food;
- (2) Holding for sale or serving potentially hazardous food at the same temperature at which it was received;
- (3) Heating individually packaged commercially processed potentially hazardous foods for immediate service;

Risk level III: poses a higher potential risk to the public than risk level II because of the following concerns: proper cooking temperatures, proper cooling procedures, proper holding temperatures, contamination issues or improper heat treatment in association with longer holding times before consumption, or processing a raw food product requiring bacterial load reduction procedures in order to sell it as ready-to-eat.

Examples of risk level III activities include but are not limited to:

- (1) Handling, cutting, or grinding raw meat products;
- (2) Cutting or slicing ready-to-eat meats and cheeses;
- (3) Assembling or cooking potentially hazardous food that is immediately served, held hot or cold, or cooled;
- (4) Operating a heat treatment dispensing freezer;
- (5) Reheating in individual portions only; or
- (6) Heating of a product, from an intact, hermetically sealed package and holding it hot;

Risk level IV: poses a higher potential risk to the public than risk level III because of concerns associated with: handling or preparing food using a procedure with several preparation steps that includes reheating of a product or ingredient of a product where multiple temperature controls are needed to preclude bacterial growth; offering as ready-to-eat a raw potentially hazardous meat, poultry product, fish, or shellfish or a food with these raw potentially hazardous items as ingredients; using freezing as a means to achieve parasite destruction; serving a primarily high risk clientele including immunocompromised or elderly individuals in a facility that provides either health care or assisted living; or using time in lieu of temperature as a public health control for potentially hazardous food.

Examples of risk level IV activities include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Reheating bulk quantities of leftover potentially hazardous food more than once every seven days; or
- (2) Caterers or other similar food service operations that transport potentially hazardous food;