

February 3, 2015

Establishments that prepare and serve food or offer lodging to the public are required to have a license to operate from the Health Department.

Responsibilities

The Health Department's Food & Lodging Program is responsible for licensing, inspecting, and providing technical consultation to food and lodging establishments that serve the public. Inspection activities include preliminary inspection of new businesses and changes of ownership, routine annual inspection, and response to emergencies (flooding, power outage, fire). The program also responds to all complaints received from the public, investigates foodborne disease outbreaks, and conducts trace-back of recalled products.

Types of Establishment Inspections	
Restaurants, commercial caterers	School lunch programs
Mobile units, push carts	Seafood vending
Manufactured food	Shellfish sanitation
Temporary food stands (fairs, farmer's markets)	Children's camps
Home bakers, home caterers	Lodging sanitation

Resources

The *Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards* recommend a staffing level of one full-time equivalent (FTE) devoted to food for every 280 to 320 inspections performed. Using this standard applied to overall licensed establishment activities, the standards would recommend that the Health Department have 18 to 20 inspectors.

Current personnel and licenses are:

Public Health Inspectors	Approx. # Licenses	Ratio
9	6,000	1 FTE to 674

Since 2010, the program has seen an increase of 700 licenses during the timeframe of increased support for local food production. This has included an increase in prepared food vendors for farmer's markets and festivals and new food processing businesses requiring consultation and inspection.

2014 Inspection Data

The Health Department's Performance Dashboard – Environmental Health & Safety – presents current food service inspection data: <http://healthvermont.gov/hv2020/dashboard/environmental.aspx>

- 82% of food service establishments had routine inspections
- 44% of food service inspections found at least one critical item violation

Critical item violations have a higher risk of contributing to foodborne illness or injury and require immediate correction by the establishment or closure if the item cannot be addressed at the time of inspection.

Examples of critical items for evaluation include food from approved sources, employee hygiene, proper hand washing and restriction from working while ill, proper food storage/cooking/serving temperatures, clean equipment and utensils, potable water and appropriate waste disposal, plumbing, pests/animals, and storage of toxic chemicals. Immediate correction of critical items reduces risk factors for possible foodborne illness – such as *Norovirus*, *Campylobacter*, and *Salmonella*.