

Columbus Public Health Food Protection Program

Enforcement Procedures

Enforcement Actions

If a restaurant is found to be noncompliant for a critical violation during a routine inspection, enforcement actions are likely to be taken. The severity of the specific violation is determined and one of the following actions may occur.

Follow-up Inspection: Conducted if critical violations are present and not corrected or are corrected but the establishment is noted as a repeat violator. Violations that warrant this are not an immediate danger to public health.

Pre-Hearing Conference: Held when a repeated critical violation or multiple critical violations occur and enforcement procedures must be used to gain compliance. This conference is a meeting between an establishment owner, or a designate representative of the establishment, and the Health Department for the purpose of explaining the severity of observed violations, the need for correction, education about the violations, and the consequences of allowing it to continue.

Formal Hearing: A hearing officer hears and reviews the case and makes recommendations to the Board of Health for a future Board Hearing.

Order to Cease and Desist: Food service establishment is closed due to violations that are a imminent health danger and cannot be remedied at time of inspection. Before the revocation, an opportunity for a pre-hearing conference must be given to the restaurant operator. This action would also be taken on an illegal operation and a business who is operating without a proper license.

Enforcement Penalties

Along with the above enforcement actions, a business may have their food license limited or taken for a period of time if the violations are found to be hazardous to the health of the public. Below are the penalties that a business may face if a critical violation is found:

Restriction: Restrictions can be placed on the menu or hours of the business, limiting the activity of the facility.

Probation: The business is placed under "special alert" by the Health Department and is inspected frequently and monitored often during a six month period. This occurs whenever a case is seen by the Board of Health.

Suspension: The business' license is removed until violations are eliminated. Typically education for the business' employees is conducted during this time.

Revocation: The business is closed by the Health Department due to repeated critical violations.

Who Is The Program For?

The Food Safety Program provides its services to all people who live or work in the City of Columbus and Worthington.

If you are interested in using any of the Food Protection Program services please link to the sites available on our web site (www.publichealth.columbus.gov) or contact the Food Protection Program at 645-7538.