

Bag of Tricks for New Inspectors

FOCUS ON FOOD INSPECTIONS

Emily Whittaker-Smith, MPH

Public Health Training Manager

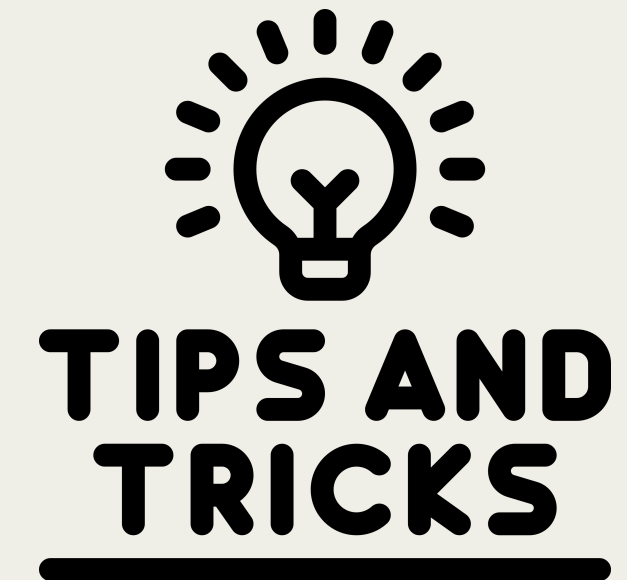
Central Massachusetts Public Health Training Hub



November 6, 2025

AGENDA

- What is a food inspection?
- Inspection Report Form
- The Food Code
- When can I inspect an establishment?
- What inspectional supplies do I need?
- How to conduct the inspection
- Tips
- Your role as the inspector
- Additional Resources





What is a food inspection?

Please provide your first thought

WHAT IS A FOOD INSPECTION?

- A systematic review of food establishments to ensure compliance with health and safety standards
- Protects the public's health by identifying and correcting food safety risks
- Conducted using the Massachusetts Food Code, based on the FDA Food Code Model



FOOD INSPECTION REPORT

I recommend adding good comments to the report too!

- The report depicts what is observed during a food inspection, including violations.
- The report can be in the form of paper or a virtual software
 - Upon completion of the inspection and final discussion with the PIC, a copy of the report must be provided to the establishment.
 - Paper → Carbon copy
 - Virtual → Email

- Are you comfortable with writing an inspection report?

Food Establishment Inspection Report – City/Town of _____

Establishment:		Date: _____ Page 1 of _____	
Address:		Time in: _____ Time out: _____	
Telephone:	Permit No.:	Number of Violated Provisions Related to Foodborne Illness Risk Factors and Interventions (Items 1 through 29):	
Owner:			
Person-in-charge:		Number of Repeat Violations Related to Foodborne Illness Risk Factors and Interventions (Items 1 through 29):	
Inspector:			
FOODBORNE ILLNESS RISK FACTORS AND PUBLIC HEALTH INTERVENTIONS			
IN = in compliance OUT = out of compliance N/O = not observed N/A = not applicable COS = corrected on-site during inspection R = repeat violation			

Compliance Status		IN	OUT	NA	NO	COS	R
Supervision							
1	Person-in-charge present, demonstrates knowledge, and performs duties						
2	Certified Food Protection Manager						
Employee Health							
3	Management, food employee and conditional employee; knowledge, responsibilities and reporting						
4	Proper use of restriction and exclusion						
5	Procedures for responding to vomiting and diarrheal events						
Good Hygienic Practices							
6	Proper eating, tasting, drinking, or tobacco use						
7	No discharge from eyes, nose, and mouth						
Preventing Contamination by Hands							
8	Hands clean & properly washed						
9	No bare hand contact with ready-to-eat food						
10	Adequate handwashing sinks properly supplied and accessible						
Approved Source							
11	Food obtained from approved source						
12	Food received at proper temperature						
13	Food received in good condition, safe, & unadulterated						
14	Required records available: shellstock tags, parasite destruction						

Compliance Status		IN	OUT	NA	NO	COS	R
Protection from Contamination							
15	Food separated and protected						
16	Food-contact surfaces; cleaned & sanitized						
17	Proper disposition of returned, previously served, reconditioned & unsafe food						
Time/Temperature Control for Safety							
18	Proper cooking time & temperatures						
19	Proper reheating procedures for hot holding						
20	Proper cooling time and temperature						
21	Proper hot holding temperature						
22	Proper cold holding temperature						
23	Proper date marking and disposition						
24	Time as a Public Health Control						
Consumer Advisory							
25	Consumer advisory provided for raw / undercooked food						
Highly Susceptible Populations							
26	Pasteurized foods used; prohibited foods not offered						
Food/Color Additives and Toxic Substances							
27	Food additives: approved & properly used						
28	Toxic substances properly identified, stored & used						
Conformance with Approved Procedures							
29	Compliance with variance / specialized process / HACCP Plan						

Official Order for Correction: Based on an inspection today, the items marked "OUT" indicated violations of 105 CMR 590.000 and applicable sections of the 2013 FDA Food Code. This report, when signed below by a Board of Health member or its agent constitutes an order of the Board of Health. Failure to correct violations cited in this report may result in suspension or revocation of the food establishment permit and cessation of food establishment operations. If you are subject to a notice of suspension, revocation, or non-renewal pursuant to 105 CMR 590.000 you may request a hearing before the board of health in accordance with 105 CMR 590.015(B).

Date of Reinspection: _____ **Discussion with Person-in-Charge:** _____

Signature of Person-in-Charge:	Date:
Signature of Inspector:	Date:

Food Establishment Inspection Report – City/Town of _____

Establishment: _____	Date: _____	Page 2 of _____
GOOD RETAIL PRACTICES AND MASSACHUSETTS-ONLY SECTIONS		
IN = in compliance OUT = out of compliance N/O = not observed N/A = not applicable COS = corrected on-site during inspection R = repeat violation		

Compliance Status		IN	OUT	N/A	N/O	COS	R
Safe Food and Water							
30	Pasteurized eggs used where required						
31	Water & ice from approved source						
32	Variance obtained for specialized processing methods						
Food Temperature Control							
33	Proper cooling methods used; adequate equipment for temperature control						
34	Plant food properly cooked for hot holding						
35	Approved thawing methods used						
36	Thermometers provided & accurate						
Food Identification							
37	Food properly labeled; original container						
Prevention of Food Contamination							
38	Insects, rodents, & animals not present						
39	Contamination prevented during food preparation, storage and display						
40	Personal cleanliness						
41	Wiping cloths: properly used & stored						
42	Washing fruits & vegetables						
Proper Use of Utensils							
43	In-use utensils properly stored						
44	Utensils, equipment & linens: properly stored, dried, & handled						
45	Single-use / single-service articles: properly stored & used						
46	Gloves used properly						
Utensils, Equipment and Vending							
47	Food & non-food contact surfaces cleanable, properly designed, constructed & used						

Compliance Status		IN	OUT	N/A	N/O	COS	R
48	Warewashing facilities: installed, maintained, & used; test strips						
49	Non-food contact surfaces clean						
Physical Facilities							
50	Hot & cold water available; adequate pressure						
51	Plumbing installed; proper backflow devices						
52	Sewage & waste water properly disposed						
53	Toilet features: properly constructed, supplied, & cleaned						
54	Garbage & refuse properly disposed; facilities maintained						
55	Physical facilities installed, maintained, & clean						
56	Adequate ventilation & lighting; designated areas used						
Additional Requirements listed in 105 CMR 590.011							
M1	Anti-choking procedures in food service establishment						
M2	Food allergy awareness						
Review of Retail Operations listed in 105 CMR 590.010							
M3	Caterer						
M4	Mobile Food Operation						
M5	Temporary Food Establishment						
M6	Public Market; Farmers Market						
M7	Residential Kitchen; Bed-and-Breakfast Operation						
M8	Residential Kitchen: Cottage Food Operation						
M9	School Kitchen; USDA Nutrition Program						
M10	Leased Commercial Kitchen						
M11	Innovative Operation						
Local Requirements							
L1	Local law or regulation						
L2	Other						

Type of Operation(s): ☐ Food Service Establishment ☐ Retail Food Store ☐ Residential: Cottage Foods ☐ Residential; Bed & Breakfast ☐ Mobile/Pushcart ☐ Temporary Food Estab. ☐ Other _____	Type of Inspection: ☐ Routine ☐ Re-inspection ☐ Pre-operational ☐ Illness investigation ☐ General complaint ☐ HACCP ☐ Other _____	Other Information:
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Signature of Person-in-Charge: _____	Date: _____
Signature of Inspector: _____	Date: _____

Food Establishment Inspection Report – City/Town of _____

Establishment:	Date:	Page ____ of ____
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Temperature Observations					
Item / Location	Temp (°F)	Item / Location	Temp (°F)	Item / Location	Temp (°F)

[illegible]

Signature of Person-in-Charge:	Date:
Signature of Inspector:	Date:

WHAT IS THE FOOD CODE?

- A set of regulations that govern food safety practices
- Ensures food is prepared, stored, and served safely
- Provides the legal foundation for inspections and enforcement



MERGED FOOD CODE

The Massachusetts Food Code aligns with the FDA Food Code Model. Massachusetts follows the 2013 FDA Food Code Model. In 2018, MA merged the codes and this is what we, as inspectors, adhere by.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR A FOOD INSPECTION

- If an establishment is new to you, reviewing the initial plan review can be beneficial to have a greater understanding of the layout, equipment, menu, etc.
- Review prior inspection reports
 - Any common violations?
 - Foodborne illness?
 - Complaints?
- Ensure you have the proper inspection equipment

When Can I
Inspect an
Establishment?

8-401 FREQUENCY

8-401.10 Establishing Inspection Interval.

[590.008(H)]

(A) Except as specified in ¶¶ (B) and (C) of this section, the REGULATORY AUTHORITY shall inspect a FOOD ESTABLISHMENT at least once every 6 months.

(B) *The REGULATORY AUTHORITY may increase the interval between inspections beyond 6 months if:*

(1) The FOOD ESTABLISHMENT is fully operating under an APPROVED and validated HACCP PLAN as specified under § 8-201.14 and ¶¶ 8-103.12(A) and (B);

(2) The food establishment is assigned a less frequent inspection frequency based on a written risk-based inspection schedule approved by the Department that is being uniformly applied throughout the jurisdiction and at least once every six months the establishment is contacted by telephone or other means by the FC-regulatory authority to ensure that the establishment manager and the nature of food operation are not changed; provided, however, that the FC-regulatory authority may not increase the interval between inspections beyond six months for any school kitchen; or

(3) The establishment's operation involves only coffee service and other unPACKAGED or prePACKAGED FOOD that is not TIME/TEMPERATURE CONTROL FOR

SAFETY FOOD such as carbonated BEVERAGES and snack FOOD such as chips, nuts, popcorn, and pretzels.

(C) The REGULATORY AUTHORITY shall periodically inspect throughout its PERMIT period a TEMPORARY FOOD ESTABLISHMENT that prepares, sells, or serves unpackaged TIME/TEMPERATURE CONTROL FOR SAFETY FOOD and that:

(1) Has improvised rather than permanent facilities or EQUIPMENT for accomplishing functions such as handwashing, FOOD preparation and protection, FOOD temperature control, WAREWASHING, providing DRINKING WATER, waste retention and disposal, and insect and rodent control; or
(2) Has inexperienced FOOD EMPLOYEES.

8-401 FREQUENCY

8-402.11 Allowed at Reasonable Times after Due Notice. [590.008(J)]

No prior notice of an inspection is required so long as the FC-regulatory authority presents official credentials and provides notice of the purpose of, and an intent to conduct, an inspection, the person in charge shall allow the FC-regulatory authority to determine if the food establishment is in compliance with 105 CMR 590.000 by allowing access to the establishment, allowing inspection, and providing information and records specified in 105 CMR 590.000 and to which the FC-regulatory authority is entitled according to law, during the food establishments hours of operation and other reasonable times.

WHAT IF YOU'RE DENIED ACCESS?

8-402.20 Refusal, Notification of Right to Access, and Final Request for Access.

If a PERSON denies access to the REGULATORY AUTHORITY, the REGULATORY AUTHORITY shall:

(A) Inform the PERSON that:

(1) The PERMIT HOLDER is required to allow access to the REGULATORY AUTHORITY as specified under § 8-402.11 of this Code,

(2) Access is a condition of the acceptance and retention of a FOOD ESTABLISHMENT PERMIT to operate as specified under ¶ 8-304.11(F), and

(3) If access is denied, an order issued by the appropriate authority allowing access, hereinafter referred to as an inspection order, may be obtained according to LAW; and

(B) Make a final request for access.

8-402.30 Refusal, Reporting.

If after the REGULATORY AUTHORITY presents credentials and provides notice as specified under § 8-402.11, explains the authority upon which access is requested, and makes a final request for access as specified in § 8-402.20, the PERSON IN CHARGE continues to REFUSE access, the REGULATORY AUTHORITY shall provide details of the denial of access on an inspection report form.

8-402.40 Inspection Order to Gain Access.

If denied access to a FOOD ESTABLISHMENT for an authorized purpose and after complying with § 8-402.20, the REGULATORY AUTHORITY may issue, or apply for the issuance of, an inspection order to gain access as provided in LAW.

What Inspectional
Supplies Do I
Need?

INSPECTION DOCUMENTS

- Inspection report form – can be paper or virtual
 - Plus camera/tablet to document
- A copy of the Food Code!
- Reference documents
- Past inspection reports
- Identification (Business card/valid ID)



PROPER ATTIRE AND SHOES

- Professional attire (PH, SSA, town logo)
- Safe and clean attire!
 - Avoid clothes that can get caught on items
- Head cover
 - Hat
 - Hair net
- Closed toe shoes



THERMOMETERS

Probe



Infrared

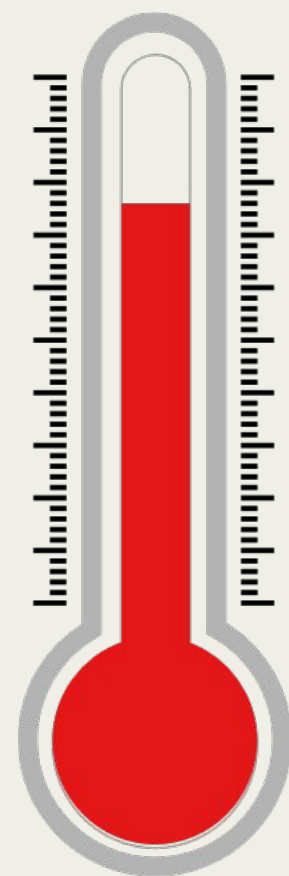


Probe &
Infrared

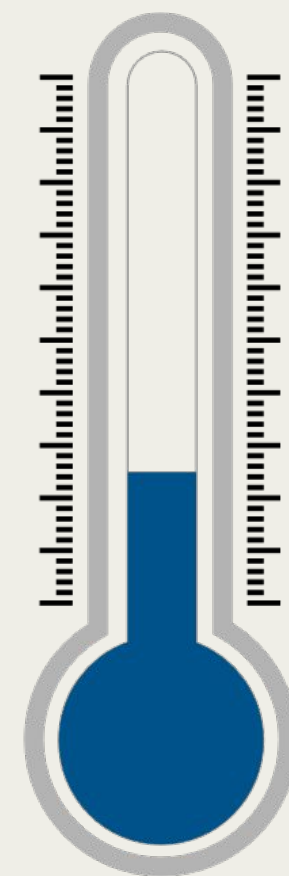
★ Don't forget alcohol swabs!

IMPORTANT TEMPERATURES TO REMEMBER

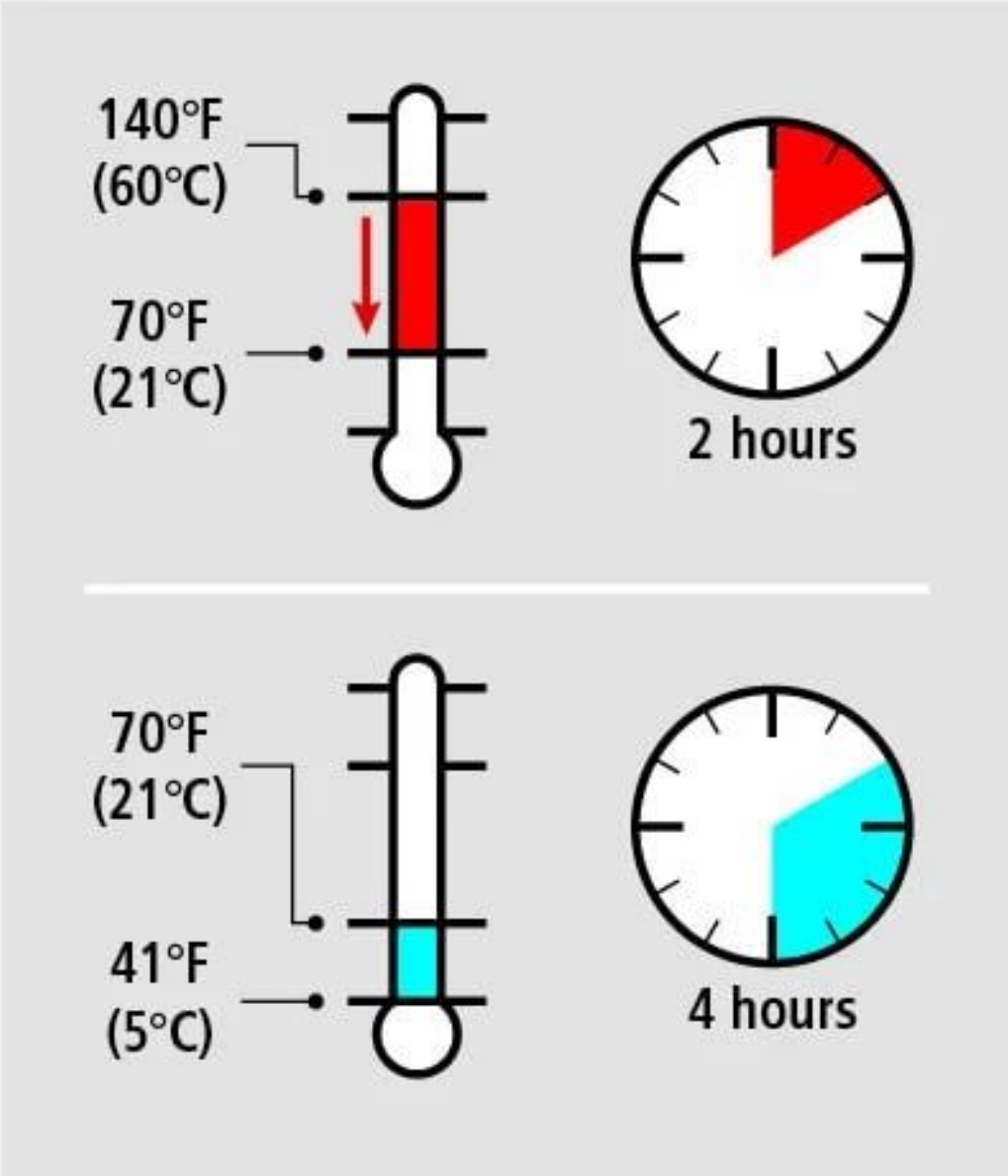
Hot
Holding
135°F



Cold
Holding
41°F



Cooling



SANITIZER TEST KITS

Chlorine



Iodophor



Quaternary Ammonia



FLASHLIGHT



BLACK LIGHT



Observe urine from pests

DISH TEMP



TEMPERATURE SENSITIVE TAPES

PaperThermometer
Founded 1953

1-TEMP THERMOLABEL®

160°F/71°C

TEMPERATURE-SENSITIVE TAPE

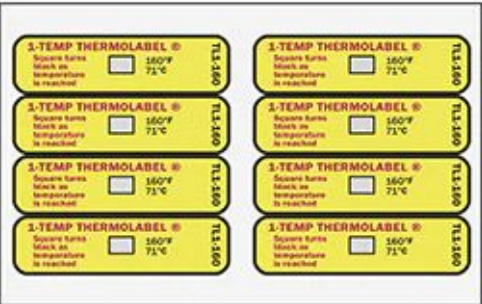
ITEM: TL1-160 24 Labels

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info@paperthermometer.com

Made in the USA

TEMPERATURE-INDICATING DEVICES

(603) 547-2034
62 Colin Dr Manchester, NH 03103 USA



PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (AS NEEDED)

Gloves



Mask



Eyewear



HOW TO CONDUCT THE INSPECTION

- Introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the visit
- Review posted establishment permits and documentation
 - Also done prior to inspection
- Observe food handling, storage, and preparation
- Check temperatures of food and equipment
- Assess employee hygiene practices
- Ask open ended questions throughout the inspection
- Document violations and provide guidance for correction
- Conclude with a closing discussion and next steps

TIPS

- Be observant and thorough – every detail matters
- Use your inspection tools
- Build a rapport with the food operators – education is key
- Stay current with updates
 - Example: food recalls
- Always prioritize public health and safety



YOUR ROLE AS THE INSPECTOR

- Every inspection helps prevent a foodborne illness
- Approach each inspection as an opportunity to educate



- Remember: A good inspector is consistent, fair, and professional

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- DPH Food Code Crosswalk Sheet
- Massachusetts Division of Food Protection Retail Food Website
- 2013 FDA Food Code Annexes
 - 1 Compliance and Enforcement
 - 2 References
 - 3 Public Health Reasons/Administrative Guidelines
 - 4 Management of Food Safety Practices – Achieving Active Managerial Control of Foodborne Illness Risk Factors
 - 5 Conducting Risk-Based Inspections
 - 6 Food Processing Criteria
 - 7 Model Forms, Guides, and Other Aids

Thank you!

Emily Whittaker-Smith, MPH

Public Health Training Manager

Central Massachusetts Public Health Training Hub

Ewhittakersmith@cmrpc.org

(508) 459-3346

