

Food and Health Laws

Foodborne Illness Reporting

All food and drink establishments must report all outbreaks or suspected outbreaks of foodborne illness in its customers or employees and all suspected cases of foodborne disease or foodborne condition in food handlers at the establishment by telephone to the local health department within 24 hours of discovering the illness or disease. For additional assistance on how to handle and report incidents of foodborne illnesses, including filing written reports, contact your local health department or the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.

To contact your local health department: <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/public-health/county-health-departments>

NC Food Code Manual & Annexes

North Carolina adopted the FDA Food Code in 2017 and began the enforcement of the code in October 2021. The food code, which promotes consistency in rules and interpretations across the country and across county lines in NC, applies to every food service establishment in the state. NCRLA members were instrumental in helping to adopt and implement the FDA version of the food code.

The NCRLA website provides helpful information on Food Code rules regarding restaurants and lodging as well as ServSafe Food Protection Manager classes and online exams. ServSafe also provides a training course for line-level staff, ServSafe Food Handlers Certification, which is a shortened, economical answer to training your entire kitchen staff on the basics of food safety. To be in compliance with the Food Code, be sure you have one person in charge on every shift certified with the ServSafe Food Protection Manager certification.

Access the North Carolina Food Code Manual here:

<http://ehs.ncpublichealth.com/faf/docs/foodprot/NC-FoodCodeManual-2009-FINAL.pdf>

Access the North Carolina Food Code Annexes here:

<http://ehs.ncpublichealth.com/faf/food/foodcodeannex.htm>

Food Establishment Inspections

Whenever an inspection of a food establishment is made, a grade card is issued. The owner or operator is responsible for keeping the grade card posted and readily visible.

The sanitation grading of all food establishments is based on the following scoring system: all establishments receiving a score of at least 90 percent are awarded Grade A; all establishments receiving a score of at least 80 percent and less than 90 percent are awarded Grade B; all establishments receiving a score of at least 70 percent and less than 80 percent are awarded Grade C. No establishment receiving a score of less than 70 percent, or Grade C, may operate.

Forms, Permit Applications, and Required Signage Documents

Several inspection forms, checklists, and signs are available online under North Carolina's Environmental Health Section:

- Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program
- Food Protection and Facilities Branch (food establishment inspection report, lodging establishment inspection report, swimming pool inspection report, etc.)
- OSWP Sample Forms, Letters, and Publications (construction permits, etc.)

View forms here: <http://ehs.ncpublichealth.com/forms.htm>

Plan Unit Review

For any establishment building a food or lodging establishment from the ground up, planning structural renovations, or in the process of buying an establishment from another owner, you need to contact your local health department and work with the State Plan Review Unit.

To contact your local health department: <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/public-health/county-health-departments>

For the State Plan Review Unit: <https://ehs.ncpublichealth.com/faf/food/planreview/app.htm>

Federal Health Care Reform Legislation

Major changes are underway in how health insurance is bought, sold, and provided by employers in the United States. The 2010 health care law, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), as amended, reorganizes the commercial health insurance market. Among other major changes, the law requires many employers to provide employment-based health insurance coverage or pay a potentially substantial penalty.

Up-to-date information on health care reform is available as follows:

- [Health Care Information from National Restaurant Association](#)
- [Health Care Information from American Hotel & Lodging Association](#)