

Reducing Foodborne Illness Risk Factors

The following risk factors are major causes of foodborne illness (FBI). The Washoe County Health District's food regulations mirror the FDA Food Code, focusing on the control of FBI risk factors in permitted food establishments in Washoe County. The five major risk factors include:

1. Poor Personal Hygiene

- * Improper hand washing and/or not washing hands when necessary
- * Bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods
- * Food service employees working while ill with symptoms, such as vomiting, diarrhea, sore throat with fever, jaundice, or infected cuts or burns on hands and wrists.

2. Food from Unsafe Sources

- * Food received from unapproved food sources and/or prepared in unpermitted locations
- * Receipt of adulterated food

3. Improper Cooking Temperatures/Methods

- * Cooking
- * Reheating
- * Freezing (kill step to eliminate parasites in fish)

4. Improper Holding, Time and Temperature

- * Improper hot and cold holding of potentially hazardous food (PHF)
- * Lack of date/time marking for ready-to-eat PHF/ improper use of time as a control
- * Improper cooling of PHF

5. Food Contamination

- * Use of contaminated/improperly constructed equipment
- * Poor employee practices
- * Improper food storage/preparation
- * Exposure to chemicals

Regulators and food service operators must work together to prevent foodborne illness in our community.

- * The role of the health district is to provide for proper regulation, operator guidance and operator compliance evaluation.
- * The role of operators is to provide for safe procedures, staff training, monitoring and corrective action in their facilities.

For documents illustrating how to control these risk factors in your food establishment, visit:

<https://www.washoecounty.us/health/programs-and-services/food-protection-services/Food-Safety-Resources.php>

Additional Resources

<https://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/RetailFoodProtection/FoodCode/ucm374275.htm>

