

LOSS CONTROL

Policyholder Training Series

Policy Training Series (PTS) Important Points:

- Health inspections communicate how well the establishment is doing.
- A point system is used to assign a specific grade.
- There are three common inspection grade systems used.
- Information on recent inspections is widely available to the general public.
- Type of grade received can have a positive or negative impact on a business.

For information about any of FirstComp's Loss Control Services, please call (888) 500-3344 or email losscontrol@firstcomp.com.

General Health Inspection Grading

If it feels like grade school all over again, you are not far from the truth. Health inspection grading systems follow time honored methods that communicate to managers and the public how good a job your establishment is doing.

The Points

Each violation on the inspector's checklist correlates with a certain number of points. Critical violations are worth more points than non-critical, as they represent areas of the restaurant that are potentially more hazardous to the customers. At the end of the inspection, violation points are tallied and used to assign a specific grade to the restaurant.

The Grade

The actual grading display system can vary greatly between counties and states, but each method is designed to easily inform the owner and public of a restaurant's most recent inspection results. Listed are some of the most common inspection grade systems:

- **ABCs** - These are just like grade school. Violation points are subtracted from the total possible, and a percentage is given that falls into an ABC (sometimes D and F) grading scale. Grades A and B signify few or no violations, and C, D or F grades represent restaurants that have enough violations to cause worry and might be shut down.
- **Colored Tags** - Green, yellow, red and white tags are used to show most recent inspection results. Green shows very few or no violations. Yellow means a restaurant had some critical violations. A red tag means there have been several critical violations and the restaurant is probably closed until further notice. The white tag signifies that a restaurant is on probation after previously being closed for critical violations.
- **Risk Index** - This type of system is similar to the ABC method and rates restaurants on a scale of potential risk for causing foodborne illness. Violation points are tallied and the restaurant will fall into categories ranging from Excellent (little risk) to Inadequate (high risk).

Public Information:

With recent food recalls there is a growing anxiety over food safety. In response to this concern, many health departments are requiring restaurants to post their most recent inspection on the front door. Counties and dedicated websites are also compiling results for easy online access.

Receiving a high grade is important from both a business and public health standpoint. Lower grades can drive customers away to the point that a business has to shut down due to lack of sales. If too many violations are found, the inspector can order a restaurant to close as it poses a public health threat.

Note: This article is a generalization of the health inspection process. Please reference your local Food Code or health department for specific governing rules and procedures.

(12/2013)