



**Wyandot County
Public Health**
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



2025

Annual Food Program Compliance Review

Prepared by

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Directors Message



Molly Owens, MBA, MPH, REHS
Director of Environmental Health

In an effort to bring greater awareness and provide ongoing support, we are launching the Annual Food Program Compliance Review for 2024. This report highlights the most common violations and complaints from the past year, aiming to help you identify potential areas for improvement. Our goal is to offer guidance and resources that will empower you to strengthen compliance and minimize future violations. We hope this report serves as a valuable tool in enhancing your operations and ensuring ongoing success.

Thank you for your commitment to maintaining the highest standards of regulatory compliance.



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+375%

In 2024, complaints against **Wyandot County** food establishments saw a significant rise, increasing by 375%, from approximately 4 complaints per year to 19 complaints in 2024. This notable jump highlights a growing need for attention to compliance efforts.

+24.5%

“The Food for Thought 2025 report shows a total of 1,392 Americans in 2024 became ill after consuming a contaminated food item, up from 1,118 in 2023. What's more, the number of hospitalizations more than doubled, rising from 230 to 487, and deaths climbed from 8 to 19.” (Dall, 2025)



Compliance Overview

Overall there were no linked food borne illness outbreaks in Wyandot County for 2024. However there were patterns in the number of violations and complaints. The top ten violations are outlined below:



Manager Certification

Each Risk Level III and Risk level IV FSO or RFE must have at least one employee obtain the ODH approved certification.

Food Labeling

Except for foods that are unmistakably recognized and removed from original packaging must be labelled with common name.

Mops

Mops need to be hung up to dry properly. Leaving them in the bucket or sitting in the mop sink does not allow it to dry fully and can allow contaminants to grow that will be spread when mop is used again.

Food Holding Temperatures

Cold foods must be held at 41 degrees Fahrenheit or below. Hot foods must be kept at 135 degrees Fahrenheit.

Ingredient Label

Labels must include all ingredients including sub ingredients and clearly list all allergens. *****Sesame was added as a new major allergen***

Frequency

Nonfood contact surfaces of equipment are to be cleaned at a frequency necessary to ensure no accumulation of residue.

Food Storage

All foods must be stored at least 6 inches off the ground to prevent contamination.

Outer Openings

All doors and windows must have tight fitting seals to prevent pests from entering the facility.

Smooth Surfaces

All surfaces (floors, walls, ceilings) must be kept in good repair and must be smooth and easily cleanable.

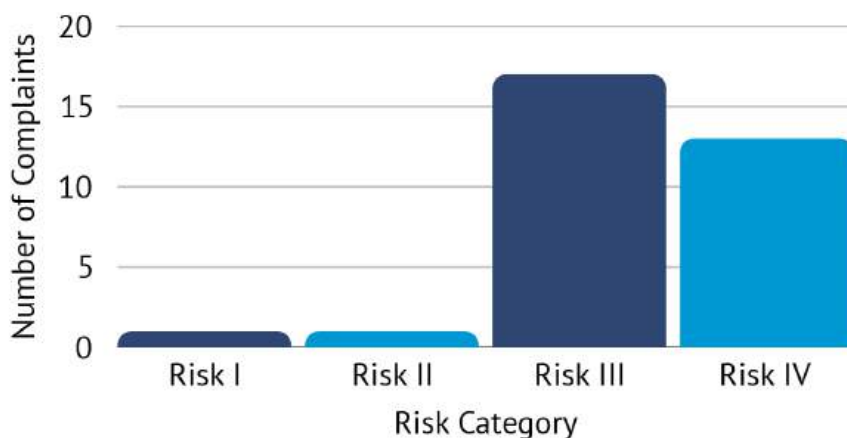
Surfaces

All food contact and non food contact surfaces must be kept clean to prevent contamination and protect consumers from illness.

Complaint Highlights



For the time period of 2020-2024, there was a consistent pattern of risk level 3 and risk level 4 establishments being more prone to complaints for Wyandot County. 53% of complaints attributed to risk level 3 facilities and 41% to risk level 4 facilities. In comparison, only 6% of complaints were related to risk level 1 and risk level 2 establishments. This trend may be attributed to the higher volume of food handling conducted at risk level 3 and risk level 4 facilities, which typically involve more complex food safety processes compared to those at-risk level 1 and risk level 2 establishments.



2020-2024

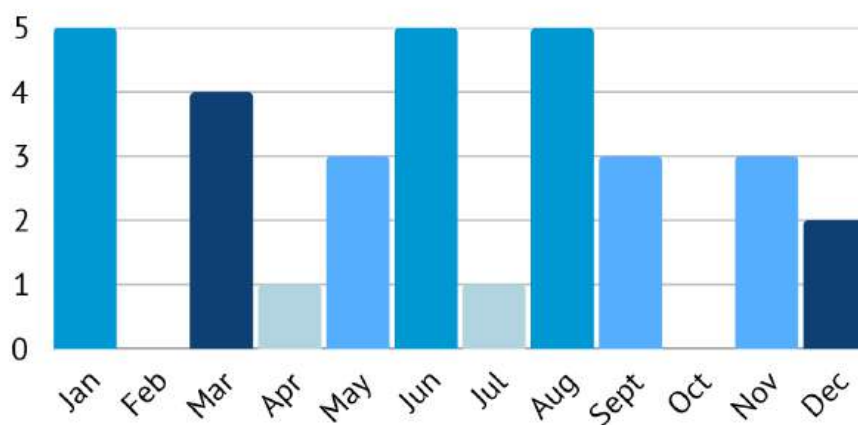
Risk Level I - 1 complaint

Risk Level II - 1 complaint

Risk Level III - 17 complaints

Risk Level IV - 13 complaints

**2024 had a total of 19 complaints as compared to 4 in 2023*



Complaints by Month (2020-2024)

Summer months accounted for 34% of total complaints (11 complaints reported in June, July, and August.) The spring months—March, April, and May—followed closely with 25% of complaints, totaling 8 complaints. Complaints during the winter and fall months were somewhat lower, with 22% (7 complaints) in winter and 19% (6 complaints) in fall.



Reoccurring Violations/Complaints

Cold Holding Issues

Cold holding violations appear frequently and often occur in conjunction with other violations (e.g., cold holding with date marking). There is a correlation between reported illnesses and cold holding issues (e.g., "ill from food, cold holding"). Temperature Controlled for Safety (TCS) cold foods must be kept at **41 Degrees F or BELOW** to limit pathogen growth that could lead to foodborne illnesses.

Date Marking and Food Storage

Date marking violations appear multiple times throughout the 2020-2024 period, and they often overlap with other violations such as cold holding and sanitary conditions. The failure to properly mark food with the appropriate date appeared multiple times, likely contributing to improper food handling and potential contamination (e.g., "expired rotten food" and "garbage") which can lead to foodborne illness.

Handling Ready-to-Eat (RTE) Foods

The violation of handling ready-to-eat (RTE) foods without gloves indicates a lack of proper food handling practices. Improper food handling is often linked to general sanitation and personal hygiene concerns (e.g., "hair restraint/gloves," "no handwashing," "gloves") which can lead to contamination and lower the overall food safety of an establishment.

Sanitation Issues

Complaints often involved the sanitary conditions of the facility. Frequent complaints noted unclean restrooms, trash and food debris accumulation which can lead to pest harborage. Other sanitation concerns, such as ice buildup (potential mechanical failure and contamination source) and bad seals (allows cold air out of unit and makes equipment work harder also offers route of entry for pests) further highlight the need to emphasize a clean environment to prevent such conditions.

Employee Practices

Personal hygiene violations, such as the lack of hair restraints, improper glove use, and no handwashing, appear frequently. These violations may correlate with sanitation and food handling issues, as improper hygiene can lead to contamination. Vaping also appears, which could indicate broader concerns regarding employee behavior that impacts food safety. Vaping is prohibited in all places where smoking is banned.





Reoccurring Violations/Complaints

Water Supply and Facility Issues

There are recurring violations related to lack of running water and no hot water in facilities, which are essential for maintaining proper hygiene standards (e.g., handwashing, dishwashing). Issues such as a bad seal (allows cold air out of unit and makes equipment work harder also offers route of entry for pests) or no water are linked to sanitation and overall facility maintenance.

Pest Issues

Pests (cockroaches, mouse droppings) are noted multiple times within complaints, which indicates a persistent issue with pest control in some establishments. This correlates with sanitation violations (e.g., unclean areas, improper food storage) and the overall maintenance of a safe food environment. Even though some complaints weren't true, this is still a concern.

Expired or Rotten Food

Expired or rotten food is another violation that appears multiple times. This issue relates to date marking, cold holding, and general food storage. The presence of expired food often correlates with other violations, such as improper cold holding and date marking, which could indicate a systemic issue with inventory management and food safety practices.

Fire and Safety Hazards

Fire safety issues (e.g., fire coming from fryer) were noted, although less frequently. This suggests that while not a common violation, fire hazards are still an important concern, particularly in facilities with poor maintenance practices or faulty equipment.

From the 2020-2024 analysis, the following correlations and patterns can be inferred:

Temperature control issues, such as cold holding, are a common violation that often correlates with potential foodborne illness complaints. **Date marking** and **improper food storage** practices appear frequently, suggesting ongoing challenges with food handling procedures. **Sanitation issues** (unclean restrooms, garbage, pests) are a significant concern, often intertwined with other violations like improper food handling and inadequate hygiene.

Employee hygiene violations (lack of gloves, no handwashing, hair restraints) appear regularly and are closely linked to food safety violations. Issues with **water supply and facility maintenance** (e.g., bad seals, lack of hot water) contribute to the overall pattern of non-compliance in food safety and cleanliness.



Food Safety

Reheating, Cooling, Thawing, Cooking: Why Does it Matter?



As a food service operator, you understand that food safety is essential for the well-being of your customers and the reputation of your business. One of the most crucial factors in maintaining food safety is managing proper cooking, cooling, and reheating temperatures. Ensuring these procedures are followed not only protects public health but also supports your business by preventing costly foodborne illnesses and preserving the quality of your food.

Proper temperature management prevents harmful bacteria such as Salmonella, E. coli, and Listeria from thriving. The danger zone for bacterial growth is between 41°F and 135°F (5°C and ~57°C), so it's essential to keep food out of this range at every stage—whether cooking, cooling, or reheating.

Key Temperature Guidelines:

- **Cooking:** Always cook meat, poultry, eggs, and seafood to the recommended internal temperatures see figure below
- **Cooling:** Cool hot foods to 70°F (21°C) within 2 hours, and then refrigerate them to below 41°F (5°C) within 4 hours. This prevents bacterial growth.
- **Reheating:** Reheat food to 165°F (73.9°C) to ensure any bacteria present are eliminated.

You can't tell just by looking!

Use a food thermometer to check for safe minimum INTERNAL temperature

Red Meat*

145 F



Fish

145 F



Ground Meat**

160 F



Egg Dishes

160 F



Poultry

165 F



*Beef, Pork, Veal & Lamb (Steaks, Roasts & Chops)

** Beef, Pork, Veal & Lamb (Ground)

Business Impact



- **Customer Safety & Satisfaction:** Serving safe food builds trust and enhances reputation. A single case of foodborne illness can lead to customer complaints, and potential lawsuits.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Consistently following temperature guidelines helps ensure compliance with local, state and federal regulations, avoiding violations, penalties or shutdowns.
- **Food Waste Prevention:** Proper temperature control not only prevents bacterial growth but also preserves the flavor and texture of your food, reducing waste and improving profitability.
- **Employee Training & Efficiency:** Training staff on temperature procedures boosts efficiency and fosters a culture of safety, helping to prevent mistakes that could harm your business.

Adhering to the correct temperatures and cooling/reheating procedures protects your customers and the bottom line. Foodborne illnesses can be costly for both the business and the individuals affected, but having the right practices in place can significantly reduce these risks.

Thank you for your commitment to food safety. By ensuring the proper handling of temperatures in the food facility, not only helps to comply with regulations but also creates a safer, more reliable experience for customers.

Market Analysis

■ CDC estimates that roughly 1 in 6 Americans (or 48 million people) get sick, 128,000 are hospitalized, and 3,000 die of foodborne diseases each year.

■ The National Institute of Health (NIH) estimates that the cost of foodborne illness in the United States during 2023 to be \$75 Billion (Hoffmann, et al., 2024).



The cost of a foodborne illness outbreak in a restaurant was estimated to range from \$3,968 to \$1.9 million for fast-food establishments, \$6,330 to \$2.1 million for fast-casual restaurants, \$8,030 to \$2.2 million for casual-dining restaurants, and \$8,273 to \$2.6 million for fine-dining restaurants. This variation depends on the size of the outbreak, ranging from a small, 5-person incident with no lost revenue, lawsuits, legal fees, or fines, to a larger, 250-person outbreak, which results in significant lost revenue (100 meals per illness), along with costly lawsuits, legal fees (up to \$1,656,569), and fines (as high as \$100,000). The primary factors driving these costs include the size of the outbreak, lawsuits, legal fees, and lost revenue. (Bartsch, et al., 2018).

Resources



Approved Food Safety Classes

For a list of approved Food Manager Certification classes please [click here](#).



Food Safety in an Emergency

For resource guides on proper procedures during an emergency please [click here](#).



Food Code Reference Guides

For food code reference guides please [click here](#).



Other references or guides

If you would like to see a specific reference guide or any other handouts please reach out to your food inspector or email envhealth@co.wyandot.oh.us



Recalls and Alerts

For an active recall and alert list please [click here](#).



Codes

- Ohio Uniform Food Safety Code [Chapter 3717-1](#) of the Ohio Administrative Code.
- [Chapter 3717](#) of the Ohio Revised Code related to food service operations.
- [Chapter 3701-21](#) of the Ohio Administrative Code related to food service operations.



Environmental Health Team



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Thank You



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