Howard County Health Department

Health Officer: Emily Backer, MD

Proper food safety practices are essential to maintaining the health and trust of customers, staff, and the community.

2024 inspections in Howard County identified recurring areas for improvement, particularly regarding equipment sanitation, food temperature control, cross-contamination prevention, plumbing maintenance, and overall facility cleanliness. This checklist is designed to highlight the most common issues and provide daily reminders to help maintain a safe and compliant food operation. Consistent attention to these practices will support regulatory compliance, reduce foodborne illness risks, and promote excellence in food service.

☑	Checklist
	Maintain good ventilation and system to avoid grease buildup.
	Keep prep areas clean, organized, and well-lit.
	Clean and sanitize all equipment, like prep tables, every 4 hours.
	Store and throw away utensils, takeout containers, and single-use items properly to prevent contamination.
	Always follow complete sanitizing procedures – test sanitizer strength.
	Keep hot foods hot (135°F or higher) and cold foods cold (41°F or lower).
	Label and date all prepared food items.
	Store raw meats below ready-to-eat foods and change gloves often.
	Check plumbing for leaks and keep mop sinks clear.
	Cover all trash bins and keep them away from food prep areas.
	Clean floors, walls, and ceilings every day.

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