

2026 FDA Retail Food Protection Seminar

Retail Program Standards: *The Mecklenburg County Story*



AIR MAIL

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MECKLENBURG COUNTY
North Carolina



Acknowledgments

About Our Retail Food Program

Planning
and
Support
Services

Food
and
Facilities

GWS
and
PEHS



**EH Staff for
Retail Food**

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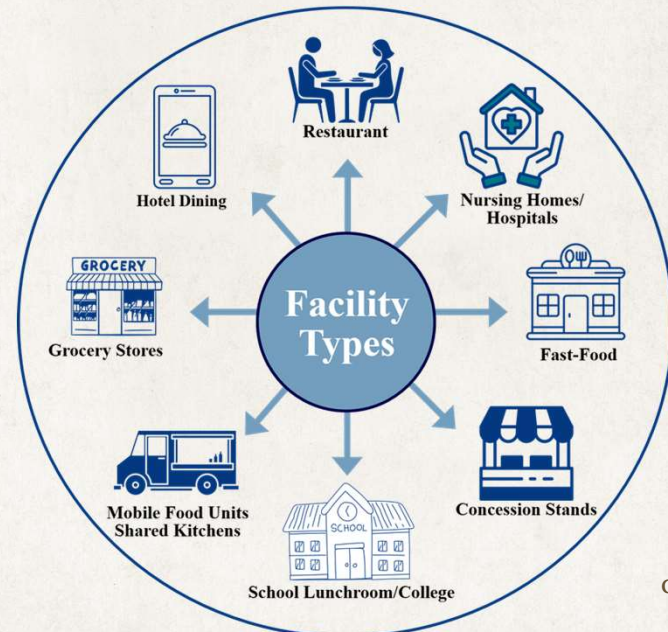
Frontline REHS **32**
Senior REHS **15**
Supervisors **9**
Plans Examiners **4**
Program Managers **2**
Data Analyst **1**

02



1.2 Million Residents

15,000 Annual Inspections



03

Mecklenburg County Standards Met

COMPLETED



Standard One,
Regulatory Foundation

COMPLETED



Standard Two,
Trained Regulatory Staff

COMPLETED



Standard Three,
Inspection Program Based on HACCP Principles

IN PROGRESS



Standard Four,
Uniformed Inspection Program

IN PROGRESS



Standard Five,
FBI and Food Defense Preparedness and Response

IN PROGRESS



Standard Six,
Compliance and Enforcement

COMPLETED



Standard Seven,
Industry and Community Relations

CAUTION



Standard Eight,
Program Support and Resources

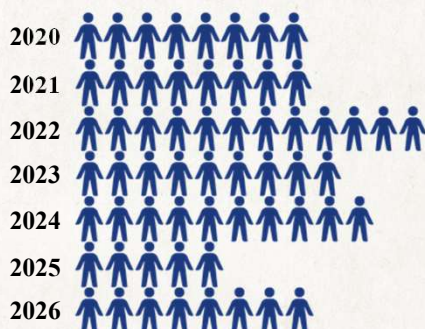
COMPLETED



Standard Nine,
Program Assessment

Standard 2

Staff Trained by Year



Once trained, staff are expected to:

- Conduct risk-based inspections in process 1, 2, and 3 establishments
- Conduct HACCP verification if applicable
- Conduct inspections in highly susceptible establishments
- Conduct inspections of mobile food units, pushcarts, and shared kitchens
- Complete immediate and long-term corrective actions
- When necessary, use enforcement actions



Hired

The expectation for training and standardization is provided to all candidates during the interview.



Training 1.0 - Approximately 6 Months

State and county training completed. EHS becomes an authorized agent of the state to conduct inspections. Completes all pre-coursework and joint inspection logs.



Training 2.0 - Approximately 6 Months

EHS receives a territory and becomes an independent inspector, with additional support. Completes post-coursework and independent inspections.



Shift to Permanent Team

Once staff have met all competencies in the training program, they will move to their permanent team.

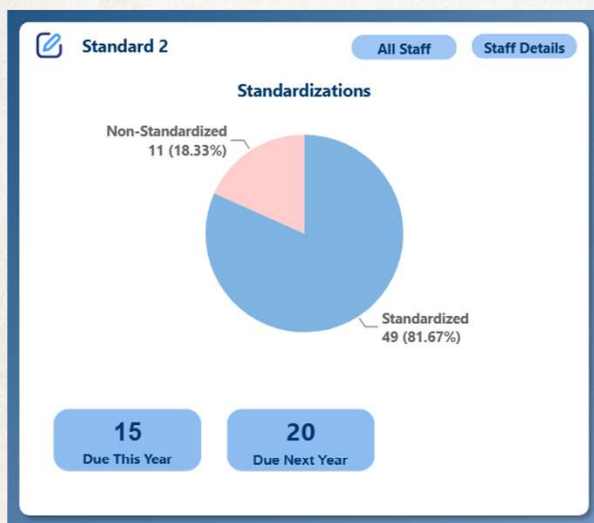


Standardized - Within 18-24 months

EHS is placed on its permanent team. EHS is also preparing for initial standardization and the NCREHS Examination.

Dashboard Innovations

Standard 2



Standard 2 All Staff Staff Details

EHS Name	Hire Date	Assignment Date	First Standardization	Most Recent Standardization	Next Standardization Due
Blackmon Jamil R.	2/20/2017	2/20/2017	12/1/2018	11/1/2024	11/2027
Casper Natalie J.	2/19/2020	2/19/2020	12/1/2021	10/1/2024	10/2027
Ervin-Junious Renada C.	7/24/2013	7/24/2013	3/1/2021	3/1/2024	3/2027
Graham Stephen E.	11/13/2002	11/13/2002	1/1/2015	9/1/2024	9/2027
Greene Everett L.	1/22/2014	1/22/2014	10/1/2017	1/1/2024	1/2027
Hackworth Michael	9/12/2022	9/15/2022	6/1/2024	6/1/2024	6/2027
Johnson Jordan	9/12/2022	9/15/2022	5/1/2024	5/1/2024	5/2027
Kenion Tasharra F.	8/9/2007	8/9/2007	1/1/2016	7/1/2024	7/2027
Lee Aimee A.	2/5/2020	2/5/2020	12/1/2021	11/1/2024	11/2027
Marino Rachel	5/11/2020	5/11/2020	12/1/2021	10/1/2024	10/2027
McDonald Helen	5/5/2025	5/5/2025			5/2027
Morsch Michael	5/5/2025	5/5/2025			5/2027
Phillips Jess	9/12/2022	9/15/2022	6/1/2024	6/1/2024	6/2027
Reynolds Ellen	1/25/2023	9/1/2023	9/1/2021	12/1/2024	12/2027
Rutledge Gracie	5/9/2022	12/10/2025			12/2027
Self Isabel	9/8/2025	9/8/2025			9/2027

Standard 2

Staff Details

7/24/2015

24 Month Date

Continuing Education

Class Date	Class	Event	FDA Hours	Total Hours
10/14/2025		NC Retail Program Standards Network Meeting - October	5.00	5.00
11/04/2025		2025 Plan Review SOP - November	18.25	19.25
			23.25	24.25

Comments:

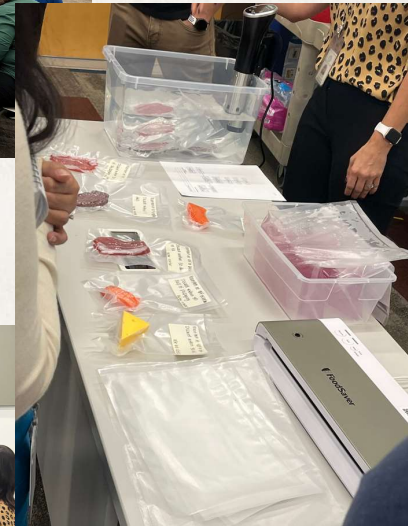
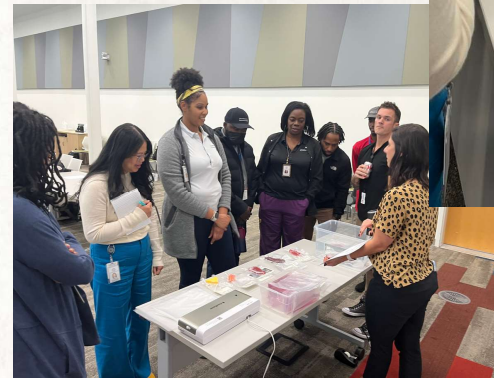
Due to enrollment period and experience staff hired prior to July 1st 2022 did not complete steps 1 ? 4 in a sequential order. Staff that have been standardized have completed Steps 1 ? 3 by completing the most up to date Mecklenburg County Affidavit (Appendix D).

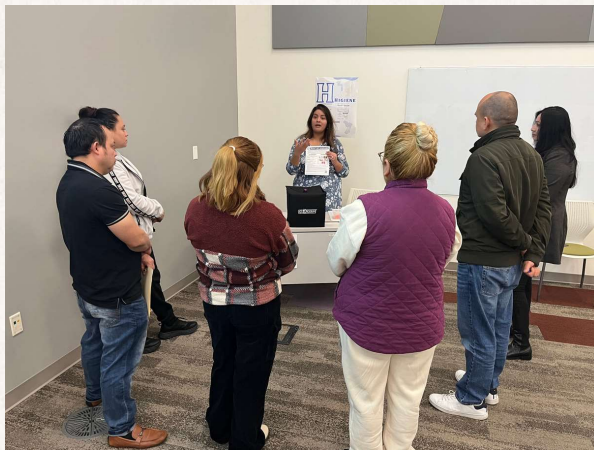
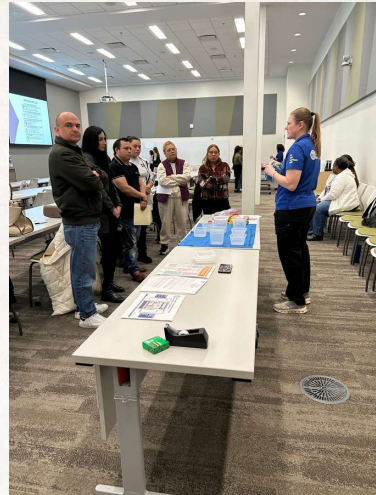
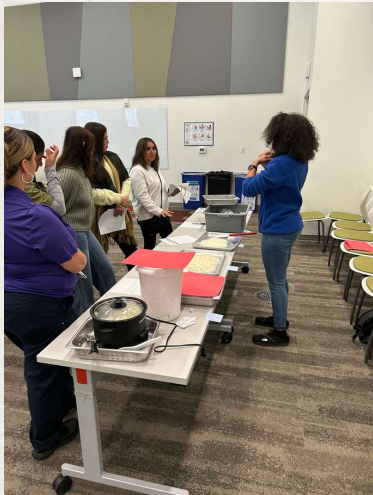
Standard 3

The Specialized Process Committee was established to provide coordinated leadership and ensure a uniform approach across the Division.

Its key functions include:

- Streamlining the process for receiving, reviewing, and approving specialized process requests
- Providing staff education on specialized processes
- Strengthening partnerships and communication between staff and industry
- Coordinating specialized process activities across all levels of staff
- Improving efficiency, consistency, and communication within the division
- Being jointly driven by frontline staff and management
- Ensuring compliance with Standard 3: Inspection Program Based on HACCP Principles (Retail Program Standards)





Standard 7

Mecklenburg County implemented Food Safety Training targeting industry and consumers:

- Four trainings per year located regionally across the county
- One of those trainings is provided in Spanish
- Station-based application on the highest-risk factors based on those geographical areas (Standard 9 Intervention)
- Stations also included topics that were important to that regional area, such as Specialized Processes.

Survey results indicated:

- Appreciation for hands-on activities that mirrored real-world application
- Resources, materials, and “Ask the NCDHHS Regional” table were extremely helpful in asking operation-specific questions
- Request for additional sessions, particularly in Spanish

Standard 5

Over the past year, the NC Retail Program Standard Network Workgroup has developed:

- A consistent framework for food history intake
- Tools to support both enrolled jurisdictions and all NC counties in the field application of foodborne illness investigation
- Categories with associated response activities that allow for meaningful data collection and analysis
- A guidance document

The Guidance Document will:

- Provide policy guidelines for the in-field application of foodborne illness response
- Consolidate all essential information, such as laboratory expectations, into a single resource
- Offer enrolled counties one comprehensive document containing all necessary materials
- Align with established NCDHHS protocols

North Carolina Local Health Department Foodborne Illness Response: Policy Development Guidance

Created in Partnership By:



Version 1: 2026

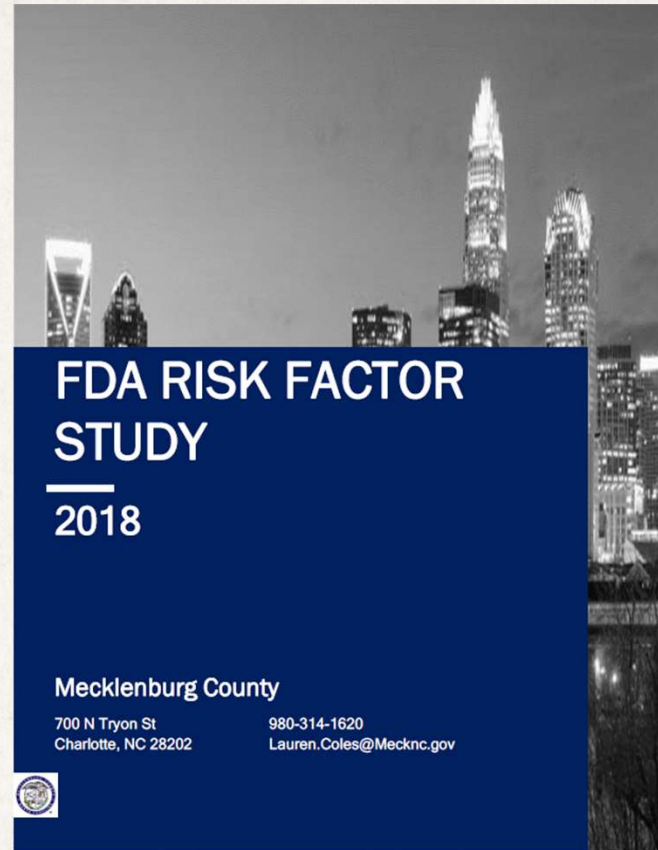
Standard 9

Table 6: Cold Holding Compliance by Industry Segments

Industry Segment	% OUT
Restaurants	94.3
Healthcare	68.9
Retail Food Stores	79.4
Schools	38.3

Table 7: Handwashing Compliance by Industry Segments

Industry Segment	% OUT
Restaurants	64.4
Healthcare	57.8
Retail Food Stores	40.2
Schools	36.7



FDA RISK FACTOR STUDY 2018

Mecklenburg County
 700 N Tryon St
 Charlotte, NC 28202
 980-314-1620
 Lauren.Coles@Mecknc.gov



Standard 9



2023 TECHNICAL REPORT ON THE OCCURRENCE OF FOODBORNE ILLNESS RISK FACTORS

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MECKLENBURG COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

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Contact Info:
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Email: EnvHealth@MeckNC.gov
Website: <https://eh.mecknc.gov/>



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Name ↑ ↓

2023 RFS - Shared Folder

Calibration Content

Data Collection Forms

Quality Assurance

RFS Historical

Risk Factor Study List

Risk Factor Study Pre Work

2018 Mecklenburg County NC Risk Factor Study of Foodborne Illness Risk Factors .pdf

Historical 2012 study.pdf

RFS Data Presentation.pptx

RFS Work Progress.xlsx

Risk Factor Study Agenda.docx

Risk Factor Training Presentation.pptx

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Standard 9

Table 10: Total Number and Percentage of In/Out-of-Compliance Risk Factor Data Items for All Industry Types (Report 1A and #17-Report 1B)

Data Item	Description	IN	IN %	OUT	OUT %
Poor Personal Hygiene					
1	Employees practice proper handwashing.	224	53	199	47
2	Food employees do not contact ready-to-eat foods with bare hands.	414	97.9	9	2.1
Contaminated Equipment/Protection from Contamination					
3	Food is protected from cross-contamination during storage, preparation, and display.	303	71.6	120	28.4
4	Food contact surfaces are properly cleaned and sanitized.	347	82	76	18
Improper Holding Time/Temperature					
5	Foods requiring refrigeration are held at the proper temperature.	267	63.1	156	36.9
6	Foods displayed or stored hot are held at the proper temperature.	210	78.9	56	21.1
7	Foods are cooled properly.	118	63.4	68	36.6
8	Refrigerated, ready-to-eat foods are properly date marked and discarded within 7 days of preparation or opening.	263	65.8	137	34.3
Inadequate Cooking					
9	Raw animal foods are cooked to required temperatures.	134	93.1	10	6.9
10	Cooked foods are reheated to required temperatures.	101	94.4	6	5.6
Food Obtained From Unsafe Sources					
17	Food is received from safe sources.	402	95.0	21	5.0

COMPARISON OF TOP THREE OUT-OF-COMPLIANCE RISK FACTORS

When comparing the top three (3) out-of-compliance data items from 2018 to 2023 there are only subtle changes in priority. Although the rate of non-compliance has decreased in 2023, compliance with cold holding, cooling, and proper handwashing remain top priority in 2023. Proper handwashing has increased in priority from ranking number three (3) to first in priority. Compliance with cooling has decreased in priority from second to third and cold holding has decreased from first priority to second priority.

Table 33: 2018 vs 2023 Top Out-of-Compliance Comparison

2018 Top Three (3) Out-of-Compliance Data Items	2023 Top Three (3) Out-of-Compliance Data Items
Foods requiring refrigeration are held at the proper temperature.	Employees practice proper handwashing.
Foods are properly cooled.	Foods requiring refrigeration are held at the proper temperature.
Employees practice proper handwashing.	Foods are properly cooled.

Standard 9



Training Videos

[Edge Training Method](#)

Sanitizing Solution - [English](#) | [Spanish](#) | [Mandarin](#)

Testing Your Sanitizer - [English](#) | [Spanish](#) | [Mandarin](#)

Sanitizing Food Contact Surfaces - [English](#) | [Spanish](#) | [Mandarin](#)

Time/Temperature Control for Safety Foods - [English](#) | [Spanish](#) | [Mandarin](#)

Safe Food Temperatures - [English](#) | [Spanish](#) | [Mandarin](#)

Checking Your Thermometers - [English](#) | [Spanish](#) | [Mandarin](#)

Cooling Food Safety - [English](#) | [Spanish](#) | [Mandarin](#)

Date Marking for Food Safety - [English](#) | [Spanish](#) | [Mandarin](#)

[Hand Washing / Non Bare Hand Contact](#)

Mecklenburg County Public Health

Food Safety Management System (FSMS) Guide

Comprehensive Guide to Implementing or
Reinforcing FSMS in a Food Establishment.



Next



Components of a Food Safety Management System (FSMS)

(Click  to dive into each component of a FSMS)

01 Procedures, Training, and Monitoring **Includes 5 Risk Factors and Food Allergens*

Click to access procedures, training materials, and monitoring tools for the person in charge.

You'll also get on-the-spot training resources designed to help food employees build or reinforce your PTM.

02 List of Resources

Access food safety resources available in multiple languages, including guidance for different risk factors and operational needs.

03 Defining and Understanding the Roles in Food Safety Management System (FSMS)

Discover what FSMS means and how each role contributes to a strong, collaborative system that protects against foodborne illness.

04 Food Safety Culture at Retail

Understand what food safety culture is and how it influences daily practices that protect against foodborne illness.



 Back





(Click icon to go to Main Selection Page)

**Pick one of the
following topics**
(Click to choose)

Personal Hygiene

**Holding
Temperatures**

**Equipment and
Cross-
Contamination**

**Cooking
Temperatures**

Sources

**Food Allergy
Awareness**

Resources



Back





(Click icon to select another topic)

Holding Temperatures

What is your role in the food establishment? (Click to choose)



Person-in-Charge



Employee



Back





(Click icon to select another topic)



Employee Health Policy

P

Procedures must include:

Who?



All food employees must be properly trained to ensure they understand Employee Health Policy requirements.



This includes chefs, cooks, preparation employees, wait staff, expo staff, and any other staff that could interact with food, utensils, single-service articles, or common areas where customers may interact.

What is the expectation of a complete employee health policy?

Procedures for all food employees:

1. Understanding of the 6 diagnosed Foodborne Illnesses and the requirement to report to PIC.
2. Understanding of the five reportable symptoms of illness and the requirement to report to PIC.
3. Understanding reporting exposure to illness and the requirement to report to PIC.

Procedure for Management or PIC:

1. Set expectations of notification for staff and the importance of it whether it is prior to shift or at during a work shift.
2. Understanding and training of exclusion and restriction if employees report one of the above circumstances.
3. Reasonable return-to-work expectations for staff.
4. Reporting to the regulatory authority if an employee has been diagnosed with a reportable illness.

What is the corrective action?

Management of a food establishment must create or enforce a strong employee health policy. This policy must be used to conduct employee training.

If staff do not follow policy or if staff are not properly trained, review policy and discuss the importance of complying. Conduct routine training throughout the year to keep the information fresh.

Note: Employee health policy can be found in the resources or employee training section.

TOP TIPS



CLICK HERE

The PIC can use the following link to determine what to do if an employee reports a symptom or illness.

TRAINING

CLICK HERE

If the PIC is unsure of what questions he can ask. Use the link above to help in determining what questions you can ask an employee.



The inspector will be observing all food employees to determine if they are complying with the food code.



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Next





(Click icon to select another topic)



Employee Health Policy

T

Training must include:

Teach



Use Reliable Trainers: Find employees who are interested in being training champions.

Use Your Policies: Use your developed policies as a foundation. Utilize the FDA Employee Health Toolkit to assist in the learning process. [CLICK HERE](#)

Use Visual and Verbal Tools: Use training videos, posters, and on-the-spot training.



TOP TIPS



Training equips food employees with an understanding of employee health reporting and the importance of not coming to work ill.



Demonstrate

Be Interactive: Employee health can be something that is overlooked because it is not something that is conducted daily, such as food prep.

PICs can make it interactive by discussing it every day. Food employees tend to remember things like acronyms that are continuously used.

PICs can also check in on staff daily to ensure they are feeling well.



Incorporating signage that can be provided by the regulatory authority as visual reminders of the policy.

Practice

Continuous Practice: Quiz staff at random times to ensure they understand requirements to avoid bare-hand contact.

Continuous Reminder: Use reminder tools throughout the shifts.



The inspector will ask the PIC how employees are trained on employee health.



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(Click icon to select another topic)



Employee Health Policy

M

Monitoring must include:



Monitor/Follow Up

PIC and Employees can monitor each other to ensure the employee health policy is followed.



Establish a call-out system to ensure employees feel empowered not to come to work when ill, according to the policy.



This builds on Food Safety Culture.

Feedback

Involve food employees in the PTM process.

Seek feedback on the expectations from food employees.

Ex. What are the barriers to employee health? How can the process be improved?

Take Action

Does the feedback require updates to the policy?

Does the feedback mean that staff need additional training?

Does the feedback require updated training for the person-in-charge?



Active Managerial Control is accomplished when monitoring showcases effectiveness in policies and training.



Incorporate a method to monitor employee health. Involve all food employees in the process for better outcomes.



The inspector will ask the PIC what systems are in place to ensure employees are monitored to prevent them from working while sick.



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(Click icon to select another topic)



Employee Health Policy

Personal Hygiene

As a food employee, your responsibility is to make sure you wash your hands as required:



OUTBREAK



Why is it Important

Why should I follow Employee Health policies?

Foodborne illness is completely preventable, yet it causes an estimated 48 million illnesses and 3,000 deaths each year in the United States. In restaurants, the most common causes of outbreaks are sick food workers and unsafe food handling practices.

Who could be affected if you go to work sick?

Think about the people you care about—your grandparents, your little siblings, your baby cousin, your mom or dad, maybe even someone in your family who's pregnant or has a health condition. These are the people who could get seriously sick from a foodborne illness. Even if you feel okay, working while sick can spread harmful germs to others. Some might only feel a little sick, but others could end up in the hospital. Is that a risk worth taking?

What should I do if I do not want to call out because I am afraid of losing my job?

Your workplace should have a health policy that encourages you to report symptoms or illness to your manager. Staying home when you're sick helps protect customers and keeps everyone safe.



Symptoms and Illnesses

Diagnosed Symptoms

1. Diarrhea
2. Vomiting
3. Jaundice (Yellowing of skin and/or eyes)
4. Sore throat with Fever
5. Infected cuts or wounds or lesions containing pus on the hand, wrist, or an exposed body part (such as boils and infected wounds, however small)

Diagnosed Illnesses

1. Norovirus
2. Hepatitis A Virus
3. *Shigella* spp. infection
4. Shiga Toxin-Producing *Escherichia coli*
5. Typhoid fever (caused by *Salmonella* Typhi)
6. *Salmonella* (nontyphoidal)

Exposure of Illness

It is important that you report to the PIC if you have been exposed to an outbreak of the reportable illnesses by outbreak, or if you live/work with a family member who has a reportable illness.



← Back

FDA Employee Health Toolkit

CLICK HERE

Next →





(Click icon to select another topic)



What is TCS?

**Holding
Temperatures**

As a food employee, your responsibility is to know what TCS foods are:



What is TCS?



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Thank You

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Retail Program Standards Coordinator

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MECKLENBURG COUNTY
North Carolina