

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Food Service Program Review

June 2018

Certified Food Safety Managers Course (ServSafe):

Classes are held at the Gwinnett Environmental Health Dept —

Location

455 Grayson Hwy. Ste 600
Lawrenceville, GA 30046

Class hours

First Class: 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM
Second Class: 8:30 AM — Test given promptly. No one will be admitted late to class or testing.

** If at least 10 people have not registered for the class it, will be cancelled and rescheduled. **

Tentative Schedule

June 18-19
July 16-17
August 20-21

Cost

\$150.00

On-site Food Safety Training:

A food service establishment may schedule and an on-site class in food safety at their facility. The instructor is an Environmental Health Specialist. The cost is \$125 for groups of three (3) individuals.



Gwinnett County EH

P: 770-963-5132
F: 770-339-4282

Newton County EH

P: 770-784-2121
F: 770-784-2129

Rockdale County EH

P: 770-278-7340
F: 770-278-8919

Click the County for more info

FDA Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards

Not to toot our own horn, but... *beep beep*! As of April 2018, Gwinnett, Newton, and Rockdale County Health Departments (GNR) have officially achieved conformance with ALL NINE of the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards (or, "Program Standards" for short). This is a really big deal. Of the 831 jurisdictions enrolled in the program throughout the United States (including Washington D.C. Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands), ONLY FOUR (that's 4; count them: 1, 2, 3, 4) have achieved all nine of the standards. That's a full conformance rate of 0.6 % (not even a whole 1 %)! 

So, now that excitement is out of the way... You are probably wondering, "what does this mean". Well, the short of it means that GNR has effectively shown that its Food Service program is very similar to (if not, just like) the FDA. To find out more about the Program Standards, visit this [FDA link](#). On that page they have information about each Program Standard in greater detail, a list of all jurisdictions enrolled, and the process of enrolling and achieving them.

What are each of the Program Standards?

The FDA states "the [Program Standards] define what constitutes a highly effective and responsive program for the regulation of foodservice and retail food establishments."¹ There are a total of nine (9) Program Standards; each geared to a particular aspect of the Food Service program. Below is a listing of all 9:

- Standard 1: Regulatory Foundation
- Standard 2: Trained Regulatory Staff
- Standard 3: Inspection Program Based in HACCP Principles
- Standard 4: Uniform Inspection Program
- Standard 5: Foodborne Illness and Food

- Defense Preparedness and Response
- Standard 6: Compliance and Enforcement
- Standard 7: Industry and Community Relations
- Standard 8: Program Support and Resources
- Standard 9: Program Assessment

How does achieving these help GNR?

By achieving these Program Standards, GNR laid the foundation to become a part of a more uniform national inspection program. Furthermore, it helps address any gaps that exists within a jurisdiction's Food Service program.

Here are some examples of how meeting the Program Standards are useful:

- *Standard 2:* Establishes a framework for a rigorous training program that can be consistently followed each time a new inspector is on-board. At GNR, we have developed a comprehensive training program where new inspectors will be exposed to a variety of foods, cultures, human interactions, and facility conditions during their joint field training (at least 50 training inspections with a standardized trainer). We have also created a supplemental, documented program that covers various food inspection topics, procedures, and protocols in a classroom setting to better prepare them for real-world inspections. Lastly, the number of trainers per new inspector has been limited to two. These all serve to increase the level of consistency and accuracy of food inspections.
- *Standard 4:* Our program has an established quality assurance program consisting of three employees (one being the District Standard—the person trained by the FDA that all other inspectors should model their inspections after). They are the liaisons between our Health District

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Questions or suggestions for future issues? Email Jason.Reagan@gnrhealth.com

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and the State Health Department. This team: ensures quality report reviews; oversees the training program; performs at least four quality assessment inspections with each inspector; standardizes new inspectors within 18 months of hire and recertifies all currently standardized inspectors once every three years. This team, also, presents any relevant information obtained during the previous month in written format made available to each inspector. This also enhances consistency of the food service program.

- *Standard 7:* If you are still reading this (or have ever read any of these), you are actively participating in Standard 7. Community outreach is important to make sure that consumers and operators are informed about food safety and what is going on with their Health Department. Other ways that we provide community outreach included: providing monthly ServSafe courses; presentations to local educational institutions, various associations, government agencies, and other miscellaneous groups; providing on-site trainings to facilities in need; and developing educational handouts to be used by facility operators.
- Lastly, *Standard 9:* Standard 9 is an assessment of the occurrence of “risk factor violations” (i.e., inadequate handwashing, temperature abuse, separation of raw and unwashed foods from other ready-to-eat foods, etc).



Picture of a prep cooler. Food should be 41°F or below.
Picture courtesy of Phoenix Restaurant Equipment

GNR’s Standard 9 Results

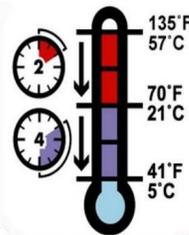
As talked about earlier, Standard 9 is about assessing the occurrence of risk factor violations. In order to obtain these results, over 250 restaurants in various industry segments (i.e., fast food, full service, schools, and highly susceptible populations like hospitals) were surveyed. The most non-compliant items overall and for each

individual segment was obtained. Here are the top 5 non-compliance rates for the overall study:

- Cooling Times and Temperatures.....45.9 %
- Cold Holding39.1 %
- Food Contact Surfaces33.3 %
- Date Marking26.0 %
- Food Separation and Protection25.7 %

How GNR Will Use this Data

As a requirement of Standard 9, GNR created a baseline risk factor occurrence (think of a baseline as a starting point). Within five years, GNR will perform another survey of another random facility sample to see if non-compliance improved (meaning the numbers above got smaller) or if they worsened (those numbers got larger). In the meantime, we can’t just sit here and take a “wait and see” approach. Interventions will be created or updated to help decrease the occurrence of risk factor violations. After all, the name of the game is food safety (and as well all know, food safety is an ACTIVE process).



Cooked food should be cooled from 165°F to 41°F within a total of 6 hours; but cooled to 70°F within the first 2 hours.
Picture courtesy of KRHA.

Each year, for the next five years starting in 2018, GNR will run a different campaign to address each of the top 5 non-compliant items for that study. This year, we will be addressing “Cold Holding and Cooling Times and Temperatures” (because they go hand-in-hand). Look out for more of helpful tips on Cold Holding and Cooling coming soon. Some of the

proposed interventions are:

- Develop and enhance informational material;
- Engage in specialized on-site training targeting risk factor;
- Produce food safety videos; and
- Increase presence amongst industry.

Sit tight! We’ll let you know if we have gotten any better in five years!

This was a lot of information, but (hopefully) a lot of great and exciting information! The goal of the Program Standards is to become a part of a uniform national inspection system and enhancing existing programs. GNR does this all to better assist our food service establishments and the community that we both serve!

Sources:

1. Administration, F. a. (2017, May 19). Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards. Retrieved from <https://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/RetailFoodProtection/ProgramStandards/>