

CITY OF MILWAUKEE SANITATION GRADING SYSTEM

An Overview for Food Establishment Operators

The City of Milwaukee Health Department Division of Consumer Environmental Health inspects all restaurants, grocery stores, convenience stores, mobile food trucks, and mobile peddlers at least once a year for compliance with health and sanitation codes. Beginning in 2018, each city licensed food establishment's annual regulatory food inspection will result in an A, B, or C grade placard issued to each establishment.

WHY A SANITATION GRADING SYSTEM?

In Milwaukee, 32% of establishments holding a City of Milwaukee Food Dealer License have received priority violations – a rate that has increased over the past several years. Priority violations are those most likely to contribute to foodborne illness. In 2016, there were an estimated 4,483 cases of foodborne illness in Milwaukee. We can do better. Sanitation grading systems have been shown not only to reduce foodborne illness, but also to increase compliance of establishments in adhering to existing food code regulations.

WHAT IS THE MHD DOING TO PREPARE FOR THIS SYSTEM?

For nearly three years, the MHD has been working to research, evaluate, develop, and test Milwaukee's Sanitation Grading System with a goal of establishing a system that is easy to understand, advances food safety, and is equitable to food businesses. What have we done?

RESEARCH & EVALUATION

The MHD has spoken with leadership, consumers, and food operators in major cities with grading systems to learn best practices in developing, implementing, and maintaining a grading system. Locally, we engaged an independent research firm to conduct focus groups and surveys of both consumers and operators to better understand current knowledge and opinions regarding a sanitation grading system. This information has resulted in the placard designs and is helping the MHD address questions and concerns as the system has been developed.

SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

We have conducted statistical analysis and developed a scoring system that takes into account your inspection history over time, not just on a single inspection. Just like a school grade is not issued based on one exam, your Sanitation Grade will ultimately reflect multiple inspections. Milwaukee's Sanitation Grading System will also include an appeal process, and will allow you to earn points back upon re-inspection.

INSPECTOR TRAINING & CONSISTENCY

Our inspectors are trained and experienced food safety experts who pass a rigorous national exam and have regular evaluations. While there will always be some degree of variation across inspectors, our goal is to increase consistency. Along with standardization training done throughout 2017 for all inspectors, in 2018 we will be implementing a method called peer-to-peer inspection. Through this method, staff perform inspections side by side to they learn how they review restaurants compared to each other, identifying discrepancies and allowing inspectors to reach consensus on enforcement across establishments. This process has been shown to improve the accuracy and consistency of inspections.

OPERATOR OUTREACH

Along with print and online information, we will be holding in-person information sessions to answer questions and help you prepare for your 2018 inspection. We will be announcing dates and locations for these information sessions soon. We also remain available by phone and email to answer any questions.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREPARE?

- **REVIEW THE ATTACHED INFORMATION.** Find an overview of Milwaukee's Sanitation Grading System attached, which includes an overview of how the scoring system will result in the letter grade for your establishment.
- **TALK TO YOUR INSPECTOR.** MHD Inspectors and Managers can help you implement standards and systems to assure that your establishment meets the best food safety standards on a daily basis.
- **ASK FOR YOUR REPORT CARD.** Our HealthSpace software is in place. Upon request we can provide your establishment with your 2017 inspection analyzed and graded as a preview to the 2018 Sanitation Grading System. This grade would be for your informational purposes only, and will not be issued as an official City of Milwaukee Health Department Sanitation Grading System score.