

December 2021



FOOD FOCUS

FOOD PROTECTION SERVICES

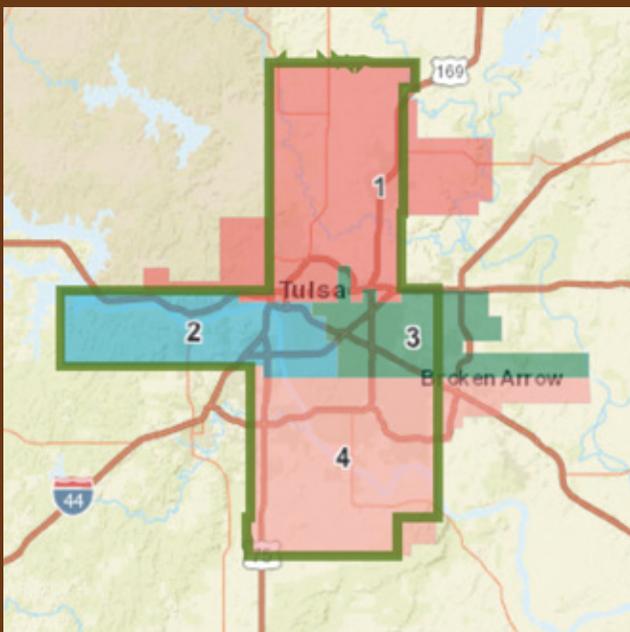
Big Changes

THD's Food Protection Service program is trying something new.

Tulsa County is now divided into four geographic quadrants that will be overseen by a supervisor along with their inspector teams. This change will reduce staff travel time, allow for more stability, and improve food safety throughout Tulsa County.

Establishment inspector interactions may vary but will be within the same supervisory group.

Please visit www.tulsa-health.org/food-safety/restaurant-inspections/who-my-inspector for more information.



Stay Healthy During the Holidays



The holidays are right around the corner. Friends, family, and good food are awaiting us. Unfortunately, holiday gatherings and not following food safety guidelines can also result in foodborne illness. Historically, November marks the first spike in Norovirus illnesses. Norovirus accounts for 58% of food related illnesses and is spread by accidentally getting tiny viral particles from feces (poop) or vomit from an infected person into one of your mucus membranes (the moist lining of your eyes, nose, and mouth). When someone is ill, they can shed billions of particles through vomit and diarrhea. It takes as few as 5 virus particles to make you sick.

Here are some Norovirus prevention tips:

- Don't work sick or allow employees to work while they are sick.
- Wash your hands frequently.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose, or mouth with dirty hands.
- When eating use utensils to move food from the plate to your mouth.
 - Finger foods aren't safe if your hands aren't properly cleaned.
- During winter months, use lotion if your hands become too dry.
 - Cracked skin may allow germs to enter your body.

Risk Factor Analysis

In the June 2021 Food Focus Newsletter, we informed you of a risk factor analysis project. The initial baseline study that measured risk factor trends using routine inspection data has been completed.

Of the five CDC foodborne illness risk factors (poor personal hygiene, improper holding temperature, inadequate cooking, contaminated equipment, and food from an unsafe source), Tulsa County food establishment results showed that Improper Holding Temperature and Contaminated Equipment were the top two risk factors needing improvement.

Visit tulsa-health.org to access the Tulsa County Risk Factor baseline report.

Contaminated Equipment Prevention Strategies:

- Protect food from cross contamination during storage, preparation, and display.
- Wash, Rinse, Sanitize, and air-dry food contact surfaces before they come in contact with food.
- Properly clean and sanitize work surfaces and equipment after handling raw proteins and vegetables.

Proper Holding Temperature Strategies:

- Keep food out of the temperature range between 41°F and 135°F, a.k.a the temperature danger zone.
- Keep Time-Temperature Controlled for Safety (TCS) foods requiring refrigeration at 41°F or below.
 - Assess equipment to verify that it is working properly.
 - Don't overload refrigeration equipment. Store food items so that air flow isn't restricted.
- Keep hot held TCS foods at a temperature of 135°F or above.
 - Examples of hot holding methods include steam tables, heat lamps, double boilers, and hot holding cases/cabinets.
- Cool down TCS foods properly from 135F to 70F within two hours then to 41F within an additional four hours.
 - Use shallow metal pans that are loosely covered on top shelf in refrigeration units.
- Discard refrigerated, TCS ready-to-eat foods within seven days of preparation.
 - Date label TCS food items to indicate date prepared.
 - Discard TCS foods stored in refrigerator for more than seven days.
 - When in doubt (if unlabeled), throw it out!

