



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH AGENCY
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES DIVISION

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FOOD FACILITY AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Environmental Health Services has initiated an incentive program for food establishments which identifies and awards a certificate to facilities that routinely exhibit excellent food safety and sanitation practices. The award eligibility criteria are determined by several factors including the type of food service and preparation occurring within the facility, the significance of the violations observed during the inspection (if any), and the overall score of the inspection. Different eligibility criteria are established for different types of facilities. Food facilities are classified based on the type of foods served and methods of preparation. The Award eligibility criteria are broken down into two categories. Food facility classifications and award eligibility categories are described below.

FOOD FACILITY CLASSIFICATIONS

San Luis Obispo County Environmental Health has classified fixed-location food facilities into three categories, Minimal Preparation, Limited Preparation, and Full Preparation. The categories are assigned based on the nature of the food products served and the preparation methods occurring within the facility. The foods served and method of preparation occurring within a facility correlates to the potential that the food facility may create situations where unhealthy foods are served. Food facility classifications are as follows:

- I. **Minimal Food Preparation.** These are typically prepackaged food and/or produce stores; or places that serve beverages in disposable cups, warming hot dogs for self-service, or making popcorn. Examples follow:
 - Farm/Produce stands – whole or trimmed produce
 - Prepackaged food markets
 - May also have beverage and ice dispensing and bulk food like granola, nuts, candy sold out of self-service bulk containers (no food preparation is conducted)

- II. **Limited Food Preparation.** These are typically places that prepare food to order the same day. They also may or may not have reusable customer plates, cups or utensils that require washing and sanitization. Food is not prepared ahead of time; and there is no cooling, thawing, or reheating of food. Examples follow:
 - Fast food restaurants (i.e. McDonalds, Wendy's)
 - Sandwich shops (i.e., Subway)
 - Coffee shops (i.e. Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf, Peets Coffee)
 - Bakeries and donut shops that have baked goods only or dispensing of beverages
 - Juice stores
 - Ice cream shops (i.e., Doc Bernsteins)

- III. **Full Food Preparation.** These are typically places that have a more extensive menu with food that is prepared ahead of time; cooling or reheating of foods; more handling of raw ingredients. Examples follow:
 - Full service restaurants
 - Sushi restaurants
 - Buffets
 - Salad bars
 - Full service grocery stores with multiple units (i.e. deli, bakery, fish, meat, hot food to go, etc.).
 - Schools that serve kids (18 years and under)

AWARD OF EXCELLENCE CATEGORIES

There are two categories of eligibility:

- Minimal Food Preparation
- Limited and Full Food Preparation Facilities

Minimal Preparation Facilities present the least amount of food preparation activities and represent their own classification. Limited and Full Preparation Facilities present a more comprehensive amount of food preparation activities and are grouped together for the purpose of award eligibility criteria.

HOW DOES A FOOD FACILITY QUALIFY FOR AN AWARD OF EXCELLENCE?

- Minimal Preparation Facility - No violations were observed during the routine inspection therefore the facility received an overall score of 100.
- Limited and Full Preparation Facility – No “critical” or “repeat” violations were observed during the routine inspection and the facility received an overall score of 99 or greater.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is a Critical Violation?

- A critical violation is any violation that may present a food safety risk if not corrected such as employee practices and hygiene, time and temperature relationships for bacterial growth prevention, lack of hot water, vermin infestation, etc.

2. What is a Repeat Violation?

- A repeat violation is any violation that was cited during the last inspection and either wasn't corrected following the last inspection or was corrected and has occurred again.

3. In what manner and how often is the Award of Excellence certificate issued?

- Following an unannounced routine inspection, if the results of the inspection show that the eligibility criteria have been met, and the food facility has been determined to exhibit excellent food safety and sanitation practices, the Environmental Health Specialist will issue the Award of Excellence certificate to the food facility along with the final inspection report. Awards are not issued following an initial opening inspection for a new facility as no preparation activities are occurring, or for reinspections performed to confirm compliance with violations cited during the routine inspection.

4. How is a facility identified as an Award winner?

- First, the facility will be issued a certificate at the end of the regular inspection.
- Second, food facilities receiving the Award of Excellence will be represented on the inspection results website, <http://www.EatSafeSLO.org>, with a gold star icon.
- Third, Environmental Health will post a listing of all the names of the facilities having received the award on our web site in the first quarter of the following year.

5. How long has the Award of Excellence Program been in effect?

- This office began issuing the Award of Excellence on January 1, 2012.