

## **Levels of Risk** **Food Service Operations/Retail Food Establishments**

In Ohio, food facilities and mobile food units are categorized and licensed according to their highest risk level activity. There are four different levels of risk for permanent food facilities and two risk levels for mobile food units, each with different inspection and food safety training requirements. Contact your local health department with any questions about levels of risk or permitted license activities.

### **Risk Level Classifications and Terms:**

Large (L) is > 25,000 ft<sup>2</sup>

Small (S) is < 25,000 ft<sup>2</sup>

Commercial (C)

Non-Commercial (N)

TCS Foods = Time and temperature controlled for safety foods

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#### **• Level I = C1S, C1L, N1S, N1L**

***Main Concerns:*** General sanitation, labeling, source of food, storage temperature control, expiration dates

- Pre-packaged non-TCS foods and beverages
- Pre-packaged refrigerated and/or frozen TCS food and beverages
- Fresh, unprocessed fruits and vegetables
- Self-service beverages (fountain drinks, coffee, hot beverage dispenser drinks)
- Baby food, baby formula
- Food delivery sales operation

#### **• Level II = C2S, C2L, N2S, N2L**

***Main Concerns:*** Level I concerns; hand contact, employee health;  
Permits handling of TCS foods in situations where there is little or no potential for pathogen growth

- Handling, heat treating, or preparing non-TCS food
- Processing of non-TCS produce for ready-to-eat sale
- Holding for sale or serving TCS food at the same proper holding temperature it was received
- Heating individually packaged, commercially processed TCS food for immediate service
- Hand dipping of commercially manufactured ice cream
- Making and bagging ice for sale
- Baking of non-TCS food
- Bulk displays of unwrapped non-TCS foods
- Re-packaging of non-TCS food prepared elsewhere

#### **• Level III = C3S, C3L, N3S, N3L**

***Main Concerns:*** Level I and II concerns; proper cooking temperatures, proper cooling procedures, proper holding temperatures, contamination issues and/or improper heat treatment in association with longer holding times before consumption, or processing a raw food product to sell as ready-to-eat that requires bacterial load reduction procedures

- Handling, cutting, grinding raw meat products
- Cutting or slicing ready-to-eat meats and cheeses
- Assembling TCS food
- Heating/Cooking TCS food (for immediate service, hot/hold holding, or cooling)
- Partially cooking TCS food (ex. steaks or burgers with consumer advisory)
- Operating a soft serve ice cream or frozen yogurt machine
- Reheating in individual portions only
- Processing of TCS produce for ready-to-eat sales
- Heating of a product from an intact, hermetically-sealed package and hot holding
- Bottling unpasteurized 100% juice with proper label and consumer advisory for sale or service onsite

## **Levels of Risk** **Food Service Operations/Retail Food Establishments**

- **Level IV = C4S, C4L, N4S, N4L**

**Main Concerns:** *Level I, Level II, and Level III concerns; food goes through several preparation steps where temperature control is needed to prevent bacterial growth*

- Operating a heat treatment dispensing freezer
- Reheating bulk quantities of leftover TCS foods for hot holding more than once per week
- Catering as defined in 3717.01(G) of the Revised Code
- Time as a Public Health Control (Time in lieu of temperature)
- Non-continuous cooking of raw TCS food
- Using freezing as a means of parasite destruction
- Service to high-risk clientele including immune-compromised or elderly individuals in a facility that provides either healthcare or assisted living
- Offering as ready-to-eat a raw TCS animal food or food with these raw ingredients
- Activities requiring a HACCP plan or Variance, including but not limited to:
  - Reduced oxygen packaging
  - Acidifying TCS food for preservation (ex. kimchi, sushi rice)
  - Smoking/curing food for preservation
  - Pasteurizing fresh juice
  - Production of fresh yogurt
  - Selling of oyster, clam, and mussels from a shellfish tank

\* Note: Facilities that distribute/wholesale food with an ODA food processing registration do not require a risk level IV license unless other risk level IV activity is conducted on site

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- **Low Risk Mobile = Commercial Low Risk Mobile; Non-Commercial Low Risk Mobile**

**Main Concerns:** *general sanitation; labeling; source of food; storage temperature control; expiration dates*

- Pre-packaged non-TCS foods and beverages
- Pre-packaged refrigerated and/or frozen TCS food and beverages

- **High Risk Mobile = Commercial High Risk Mobile, Non-Commercial High Risk Mobile**

**Main Concerns:** *general sanitation; labeling; source of food; storage temperature control; expiration dates; proper receiving, holding, cooking, and cooling temperatures; hand contact; hand washing; cross contamination*

- Handling unpackaged TCS or non-TCS food and beverages
- Assembling or cooking TCS food
- Operating a heat treatment dispensing freezer
- Reheating TCS food in bulk or individual portions
- Use of Time as a Public Health Control (Time in Lieu of Temperature)
- Mobile catering (fee per event, rather than individual sales)