

Inspection Connection FAQ

What is Inspection Connection?

Inspection Connection is a health unit service that helps you access inspection reports conducted by Public Health Inspectors. At this time only food safety inspection reports will be available as part of the Inspection Connection service.

There are two main components of Inspection Connection:

1. Access to online inspection results:

Recent inspection results conducted by a Public Health Inspector are available online for most food establishments in the County of Simcoe and District of Muskoka.

2. Posting of onsite signage:

As Public Health Inspectors complete food safety inspections, a green certificate of inspection sign will be offered to operators to post in their food establishment. Each sign will have a date of inspection listed to signify when the food establishment was last inspected.

How does this new service benefit me or the community?

Making inspection results more accessible will make eating out easier. The public is able to make informed decisions about where to eat in Simcoe and Muskoka by checking online or looking at the onsite signage.

As a part of our commitment to transparency and to make inspection results more accessible, the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit is in the process of using continuous quality improvement (CQI) processes to improve our inspection program. CQI is a tool for improving the operations of an organization with the end result of delivering improved services to clients. Using CQI ensures we carefully examine our program, identify areas of improvement and are deliberate in adjusting and enhancing services. Creating greater access to food safety inspection results and working internally to improve our services, will result in improved food safety standards in our communities and assist in reducing the risk of foodborne illnesses to the public.

What types of businesses will I be able to see inspection reports for?

We will make inspection reports available for the following types of food establishments in Simcoe County and the District of Muskoka:

- General food service establishments (restaurants, bars, cafeterias, delis, butcher shops, grocery stores, banquet halls, catering kitchens, etc.)

- Institutional food service establishments (hospitals, licensed child care centres, long-term care homes, etc.)
- Mobile food service premises (hot dog carts, catering vehicles, french fry trucks, etc.)

Inspection Connection will not provide inspection reports for special events, farmers' markets, licensed before and after school child care programs, shelters, or school nourishment programs.

Helping you understand Inspection Connection

What does the onsite certificate of inspection signage tell me?

A green certificate of inspection sign displayed in the window means that, on the date of the inspection, the minimum standards of the regulation were met.

A red CLOSED sign is given to an operator of a food establishment when the Public Health Inspector has observed that an immediate health hazard exists. The food establishment is required to post this sign at the entrance. A Public Health Inspector will remove the CLOSED sign if the health hazard(s) has been removed or corrected.

Why is there a blue sticker on some signs and not others?

During an inspection, a Public Health Inspector determines, in conjunction with the operator of the establishment, if there is at least one staff person working who is certified in food safety. If so, a blue sticker will be attached to the green sign to signify to the public that there was at least one certified food handler on-site at the establishment at the time of the inspection.

Why do I see signs in some food establishments, but not in others?

Inspection Connection onsite signage will be given to establishments by Public Health Inspectors and will reflect the last inspection date. A premise may not have a sign on display as the sign is voluntary to post. In addition, establishments such as those considered seasonal, may not have their signage posted until they open in 2015.

What do the online reports tell me?

The online inspection reports only describe the conditions of the establishment on the date of inspection and do not guarantee the conditions of a food establishment at all times.

The online report will tell you the establishment name, location, type of food establishment, type of inspection and will detail whether any areas of non-compliance were found during the inspection. Both critical and non-critical infractions will be listed. It may detail whether issue(s) identified by the Public Health Inspector were corrected during the inspection and whether follow up was required. It will also show any legal actions taken.

What does "non-compliance" mean?

It means that the food safety requirement listed on the report has not been satisfied and infraction(s) have been recorded.

What does “infraction” mean?

An ‘infraction’ refers to when a food establishment fails to meet a legal requirement of the Ontario Food Premises Regulation, 562. Other terms that mean the same thing are “violation,” “contravention” or “offense”.

What does "corrected during inspection" (CDI) mean?

It means that an infraction was found during an inspection and the operator was able to correct it immediately, without needing a re-inspection.

What is the difference between a critical and non-critical infraction?

Critical infractions are infractions (violations) that present a high risk for a health hazard to be present. Most critical infractions must be corrected at the time of inspection or, an acceptable measure must temporarily be in place to ensure that the hazard is controlled. An example of a critical infraction is not cooking food at the internal temperatures required to kill harmful bacteria.

Non-critical infractions (violations) present a low to moderate risk for a health hazard to be present. An example of a non-critical infraction is, a food handler not wearing a hair restraint while handling food.

Why can't I see the details of a charge laid against an establishment?

At this time we are not able to post online details of charges laid against an establishment. If you see that a ticket or summons was issued in the “Actions Taken” section of an inspection report and you are interested in understanding more details about those action(s) please call us for more information at 1-877-721-7520.

Is the website always up-to-date?

Inspection reports are uploaded daily and online results are posted within a few business days.

I can't find a specific food establishment's inspection report online.

What should I do?

If you are searching for a food establishment, first review the question above “what types of businesses will I be able to see inspection reports for?” or double check your search criteria (e.g. proper spelling, address, municipality).

As we make the transition to posting reports to our new online service and make improvements to our inspection program, there may be times when you are unable to find a report. A full inventory of reports will be available on Inspection Connection within the coming months. We encourage you to contact us if you are unable to find what you're looking for at 1-877-721-7520.

How long are inspection results available online?

Inspection results will be available online for 3 years. When a food establishment closes, their results are removed. When there is a new owner, only results since the new owner started are available online.

What does a Public Health Inspector look for during an inspection?

Some of the areas that Public Health Inspectors check during inspections include:

- Temperatures that foods are stored at (hot and cold)
- Cooking, reheating, and cooling times and temperatures
- Employee personal hygiene
- Flow of food through receiving, storage, preparation, and service
- Dish/equipment washing and sanitizing procedures
- Food sources – where foods are brought in from
- Pest control
- How garbage is collected, contained, and disposed
- Cleanliness of floors, walls, ceilings, equipment, and other surfaces

How often are establishments inspected?

The frequency that food premises are inspected can be at a minimum of one to three times a year and is based on several factors including:

- Type and volume of food served
- Type of population served (e.g. general public, children, seniors)
- Length of time they are open in a calendar year
- Number of food preparation steps and the amount of food handling
- History of foodborne illnesses and compliance with the Ontario Food Premises Regulation, 562

For example, a seasonal restaurant may only need to be inspected once if they are only open from May to August.

Does an operator know when an inspector is coming?

The majority of inspections are unannounced and carried out without notice. In addition, inspections may occur as the result of a complaint, suspected foodborne illness or food recall. Only rarely, such as when a food establishment doesn't have regular operating hours, an inspection may be scheduled.

When would a Public Health Inspector close an establishment?

An inspector may close a food premises if he/she believes an immediate health hazard exists, as defined under Section 13 of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*.

An establishment may be closed for the following reasons:

- Foodborne illness outbreak
- No potable water (not suitable for drinking)
- No power source
- Sewage backup
- Unsanitary conditions
- Insect/rodent infestation
- Heat/smoke/water damage

What should I do if I think I have a foodborne illness from a restaurant or want to make a complaint about a food establishment?

Please contact a Public Health Inspector at 705-721-7520 or submit your complaint through our secure Health Connection [email form](#). The information you provide will be kept confidential and is not shared with the owner, operator, or any employee of an establishment.