

#### [Rule 901:3-4-01 | Definitions.](#)

As used in this chapter:

(A) "Certified in food protection" means an individual has met the certification requirements pursuant to Chapter 3717. of the Revised Code.

(B) "Director" means the director of Ohio department of agriculture or an authorized designee of the director.

(C) "Misbranded" as defined in section [3715.60](#) of the Revised Code.

(D) "Noncommercial retail food establishment" means a retail food establishment as described in Chapter 3717. of the Revised Code, conducted by any of the following: an agency of government, a church, school, non-profit youth group whose membership consists primarily of persons aged eighteen or younger, or an organization which is described in subsection 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, Pub. L. No. 99-514, 100 Stat. 2085 (1986), U.S.C. 1, et seq., as amended and is tax exempt under subsection 501(a) of the Code.

(E) "Noncommercial temporary retail food establishment" means a temporary retail food establishment as described in Chapter 3717. of the Revised Code conducted by any of the following: an agency of government, a church, school, fraternal organization, service club organization, veterans organization, volunteer fire organization, non-profit youth group whose membership consists primarily of persons aged eighteen or younger, volunteer emergency medical service organization, or an organization which is described in subsection 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 Pub. L. No. 99-514, 100 Stat. 2085 (1986), U.S.C. 1, et seq., as amended and is tax exempt under subsection 501(a) of the Code, or any individual or group raising all of its funds for the benefit of one of these organizations if such operation is operated at an event for no more than five consecutive days, except when operated for more than five consecutive days under division (E)(2) of section [3717.23](#) of the Revised Code.

(F) "Process review inspection" means an inspection made to determine if a risk level IV processing procedure is in compliance with Chapter 3717. of the Revised Code.

(G) "Standard inspection" means an inspection designed to determine compliance with Chapter 3717. of the Revised Code, section [3715.551](#) of the Revised Code, and the rules adopted thereunder.

(H) "Temporary retail food establishment" means a retail food establishment that is operated at an event for not more than five consecutive days, except when operated for more than five consecutive days pursuant to division (E)(2) of section [3717.23](#) of the Revised Code.

(I) "Variance review" means a determination by the licensor of compliance with a food processing variance issued by the Ohio department of agriculture.

#### [Rule 901:3-4-02 | License.](#)

(A) During the month of February of each year, except as hereinafter provided, every person that operates a retail food establishment shall apply for a license for that year from the licensor of retail food establishments for the area in which the retail food establishment is located. This provision shall apply to all retail food establishments except seasonal retail food establishments, mobile retail food establishments, temporary retail food establishments, and new retail food establishments opened for business subsequent to March first of each year.

All licenses issued to retail food establishments expire pursuant to division (C) of section [3717.23](#) of the Revised Code.

(B) An application for a license to operate a new retail food establishment during any part of the year shall be filed as hereinafter provided not less than ten days before the retail food establishment is opened for business. If proper application has been made, the facility layout and equipment specifications have been approved and complied with on the final inspection, and all items are in compliance with Chapter 3717. of the Revised Code, Chapter 3717-1 of the Administrative Code, and this chapter; the ten-day waiting period may be waived and the license issued. The operator of a low risk and high risk mobile retail food establishment shall make application for a license to the board of health of the health district in which the operator's business headquarters are located. The operator of a mobile retail food establishment whose business address is located outside of Ohio shall make application for a license to the board of health having jurisdiction over the operator's first Ohio location in any one licensing year. A retail food establishment license issued to an operator of a mobile retail food establishment by an approved health district, as provided in Chapter 3717. of the Revised Code, shall be recognized by all other licensors in this state.

(C) The operator of a retail food establishment shall make written application for a license to the licensor on an application form prescribed or approved by the director which shall contain all pertinent information related to the premises utilized for the retail food establishment.

(D) Fees for issuing and renewing retail food establishment licenses, determined by the licensor in accordance with section [3717.25](#) of the Revised Code, may be levied upon each retail food establishment. These fees shall be used solely for paying the expense of the administration and enforcement of Chapter 3717. of the Revised Code, Chapter 3717-1 of the Administrative Code, and this chapter.

(1) In determining the amount of the annual license fee, the licensor shall use the categories established by rule [901:3-4-03](#) of the Administrative Code and the cost analysis established by rule [901:3-4-04](#) of the Administrative Code.

(2) If a license fee as prescribed under paragraph (D) of this rule is not filed with the licensor or postmarked on or before the due date, a penalty of twenty-five per cent of any such fee shall be imposed and paid.

(3) Fees authorized or charged under paragraph (D) of this rule shall be in lieu of all retail food establishment license fees required by the licensor on or with respect to the operation of, ownership of, or employment by retail food establishments within this state, except as provided in paragraph (C) of rule [901:3-4-03](#) of the Administrative Code.

(E) For each retail food establishment license issued the following applicable amount shall be collected and transmitted by the licensor to the director for deposit in the food safety fund

created in section [915.24](#) of the Revised Code and used for administering and enforcing Chapter 3717. of the Revised Code, Chapter 3717-1 of the Administrative Code, and this chapter:

(1) Twenty-eight dollars for each license that the licensor issues under the fee category specified in paragraphs (A)(1), (A)(2), and (A)(4) of rule [901:3-4-03](#) of the Administrative Code; or

(2) Fourteen dollars for each license that the licensor issues under the fee category specified in paragraph (B)(1) of rule [901:3-4-03](#) of the Administrative Code.

(F) The licensor shall submit a report of all retail food establishment licenses and temporary retail food establishment licenses issued during the period included in the fee transmittal completed in accordance with paragraph (E) of this rule on a form prescribed or approved by the director.

(G) The operator of a retail food establishment that also plans to cater shall apply for a catering food service operation endorsement to the operator's retail food establishment license. A retail food establishment license with such an endorsement shall be recognized by all other licensors in this state. The operator of such an establishment shall maintain a copy of the license at each catered event.

(H) A license holder shall display the license for that retail food establishment at all times at the licensed location.

(I) Each operator of a mobile retail food establishment shall conspicuously display the name of the operation, the city of origin, area code, and telephone number on the exterior of the mobile unit. The name and city of origin of the mobile retail food establishment shall be displayed with individual lettering measuring at least three inches high and one inch wide.

#### [Rule 901:3-4-03 | License fees and categories.](#)

(A) The license fees established by a licensor pursuant to section [3717.25](#) of the Revised Code for retail food establishments as described in section [3717.01](#) of the Revised Code shall be specified for the following categories:

(1) Retail food establishments, including micro markets, in which the interior premises is under twenty-five thousand square feet for each risk level specified in rule [901:3-4-05](#) of the Administrative Code;

(2) Retail food establishments in which the interior premises is twenty-five thousand square feet or more for each risk level specified in rule [901:3-4-05](#) of the Administrative Code;

(3) Temporary retail food establishments as a per event fee or as a per day fee; and

(4) Mobile retail food establishments as specified in rule [901:3-4-05](#) of the Administrative Code and low risk mobile retail food establishments as specified in rule [901:3-4-05](#) of the Administrative Code which will be fifty per cent of the mobile retail food establishment fee established in this rule.

(B) The licensor may establish a different fee for retail food establishments the licensor classifies as:

- (1) Noncommercial retail food establishments in all risk level categories, which shall be fifty per cent of the fee established in paragraphs (A)(1) and (A)(2) of this rule, as applicable; and
- (2) Noncommercial temporary retail food establishments, which shall be fifty per cent of the fee established in paragraph (A)(3) of this rule.

(C) The licensor may establish fees for:

- (1) Review of facility layout and equipment specifications for retail food establishments, other than mobile and temporary retail food establishments;
- (2) Any necessary collection and bacteriological examination of food or water samples, or similar services specified in rules adopted under section [3717.05](#) of the Revised Code; and
- (3) Attendance at a course of study offered by the licensor in food protection if the course is approved under section [3717.09](#) of the Revised Code.

[Rule 901:3-4-04 | Cost analysis and license fee calculation.](#)

(A) A cost analysis shall be conducted each fiscal year. The licensor shall use data from the previous fiscal year to calculate the actual cost of administering and enforcing Chapter 3717. of the Revised Code, and the rules adopted thereunder for food service operations and retail food establishments licensed by the licensor. The licensor shall calculate the actual cost of administration and enforcement attributable to each of the following components on forms prescribed or approved by the director:

- (1) Risk level I, risk level II, risk level III, and risk level IV food service operations and retail food establishments;
- (2) Temporary food service operations and temporary retail food establishments; and
- (3) Mobile retail food establishments and mobile food service operations.

(B) Except as specified in paragraph (D) of this rule, the licensor shall calculate the cost attributable to each component listed in paragraph (A) of this rule for administering and enforcing Chapter 3717. of the Revised Code and the rules adopted thereunder for operations licensed by the licensor. Cost shall not exceed all reasonable and necessary direct cost and indirect cost. For the purposes of this rule indirect cost means support cost which includes support staff cost plus overhead cost. The licensor shall use a form prescribed or approved by the director of agriculture and the director of health that includes the following data:

- (1) A list of all inspecting sanitarians who worked in the component;
- (2) The total hours worked in the component by each inspecting sanitarian;
- (3) The total hours that each inspecting sanitarian worked in the last fiscal year;
- (4) The total annual wages or salary paid to each inspecting sanitarian;
- (5) The total amount for fringe benefits paid on behalf of each inspecting sanitarian;

- (6) The total travel costs for each inspecting sanitarian;
  - (7) The support costs for the component as determined by one of the following methods:
    - (a) Use of actual support cost not to exceed thirty per cent of the total program cost for items, such as salary and fringe benefits of the health commissioner, the director of environmental health, supervisory staff, clerical staff, utilities, rent, supplies, equipment, liability insurance, and training; or
    - (b) Use of an indirect cost rate of thirty per cent of the wages or salaries and fringe benefits of inspecting sanitarians attributable to the component.
  - (8) The sampling and laboratory costs for the component other than those costs specified in paragraph (C) of rule [901:3-4-03](#) of the Administrative Code;
  - (9) Funding for the component which includes revenues obtained from license fees and penalty fees.
- (C) The licensor shall calculate the license fee for each retail food establishment category listed in rule [901:3-4-03](#) of the Administrative Code as follows:
- (1) For a temporary retail food establishment:
    - (a) Using fees established on a per event basis, the temporary food service operation and temporary retail food establishment category cost divided by the number of temporary food service operation and temporary retail food establishment licenses issued. If a licensor elects to establish a noncommercial fee for temporary food service operations and temporary retail food establishments, the category cost is divided by the number of licenses issued for commercial temporary food service operations and commercial temporary retail food establishments plus fifty per cent of the number of licenses issued for noncommercial temporary food service operations and noncommercial temporary retail food establishments; or
    - (b) Using fees established on a per day basis, the temporary food service operation and temporary retail food establishment category cost divided by the total number of days for which temporary food service operation and temporary retail food establishment licenses were issued. If a licensor elects to establish a noncommercial fee for temporary food service operations and temporary retail food establishments, the category cost is divided by the number of days for which commercial licenses were issued plus fifty per cent of the number of days for which temporary licenses were issued for noncommercial temporary food service operations and noncommercial temporary retail food establishments.
  - (2) For retail food establishments classified as risk level I, risk level II, risk level III, and risk level IV retail food establishments:
    - (a) Determine support costs in accordance with paragraph (B)(7) of this rule. Equally allocate support costs attributable to the risk level food service operations and retail food establishments component by dividing the support costs of the risk level food service operations and retail food establishments component by the total number of commercial risk level I, risk level II, risk level III, and risk level IV food service operations and retail food establishments plus fifty per cent of the noncommercial operations classified by risk level;

(b) Determine the total number of food service operations and retail food establishments in each risk level category. If the licenser elects to establish noncommercial categories for risk level food service operations and risk level retail food establishments the total number of food service operations and retail food establishments in each risk level category is the number of commercial risk level food service operations and commercial risk level retail food establishments plus fifty per cent of the number of noncommercial risk level food service operations and noncommercial risk level retail food establishments;

(c) Determine the number of standard inspection periods for each risk level category using the inspection time factor. The number of standard inspection periods is the minimum number of inspections required for each risk level category multiplied by the inspection time factor, the product of which is multiplied by the total number of food service operations and retail food establishments in each risk level category. The inspection time factor is the ratio of the average amount of time per inspection for all risk levels relative to the average time per inspection for the risk level I less than twenty-five thousand square feet operations. The inspection time factor for:

(i) Risk level I less than twenty-five thousand square feet is 1.00, and twenty-five thousand square feet or above is 1.88;

(ii) Risk level II less than twenty-five thousand square feet is 1.25, and twenty-five thousand square feet or above is 2.03;

(iii) Risk level III less than twenty-five thousand square feet is 1.64, and twenty-five thousand square feet or above is 4.84; and

(iv) Risk level IV less than twenty-five thousand square feet is 2.21, and twenty-five thousand square feet or above is 5.16.

(d) Determine the total number of standard inspection periods by summing the standard inspection periods for all risk level categories;

(e) Determine the non-support cost per standard inspection period: subtract the support cost from the total actual cost of the component and divide this amount by the total number of standard inspection periods;

(f) Determine the non-support cost for each risk level category by using the following formula:

$A \times B \times C$  = The non-support cost for each risk level, where A is equal to the non-support cost per standard inspection period, B is equal to the standard inspection period for the risk level category, and C is equal to the inspection time factor for the risk level category.

(g) Determine the maximum license fee that may be established: add the non-support cost for each risk level category to the support cost per license issued.

(3) The mobile retail food establishment and the mobile food service operation category cost divided by the number of mobile retail food establishments and mobile food service operation licenses issued.

(D) Additional considerations.

(1) The total sanitarian hours that may be accounted for in calculating the cost attributable to the food service operations and retail food establishments identified in paragraph (A)(1) of this rule shall not exceed an average of nine hours per risk classified food service operation and retail food establishment.

(2) Anticipated increases in costs that may be attributable to a component are limited to known increases for which official notification or board action has been documented.

(E) The licensor shall provide a proportional reduction in the fees to be charged in the next license period if a licensor included anticipated costs in the calculation of licensing fees and the total amount of anticipated costs was not incurred.

(F) The licensor shall provide for a proportionate reduction in fees to be charged in the next license period if discovered through an audit by the auditor of state or any other means that the licensor has charged or is charging a license fee that exceeds the amount that should have been charged.

(G) The licensor shall reduce the fees to be charged in the next license period when a reduction is imposed as a penalty under division (C) of section [3717.071](#) of the Revised Code.

#### [Rule 901:3-4-05 | Risk level of retail food establishments.](#)

The licensor shall determine the risk level based on the highest risk level activity of the retail food establishment in accordance with the following criteria:

(A) Risk level I poses potential risk to the public in terms of sanitation, food labeling, sources of food, storage practices, or expiration dates.

(1) Examples of risk level I activities include, but are not limited to, an operation that offers for sale or serves:

(a) Coffee, self-service hot beverage dispenser drinks, self-service fountain drinks, prepackaged non-time/temperature controlled for safety food beverages;

(b) Pre-packaged refrigerated or frozen time/temperature controlled for safety food;

(c) Fresh unprocessed fruits and vegetables;

(d) Pre-packaged non-time/temperature controlled for safety food; or

(e) Baby food or formula.

(2) A "food delivery operation" as defined in division (H) of section [3717.01](#) of the Revised Code shall be classified as risk level I.

(3) A "micro market" as defined in paragraph (B) of rule [3717-1-01](#) of the Administrative Code shall be classified as a risk level I.

(B) Risk level II poses a higher potential risk to the public than risk level I because of hand contact or employee health concerns but minimal possibility of pathogenic growth exists. Examples of risk level II activities include, but are not limited to:

(1) Handling, heat treating, or preparing non-time/temperature controlled for safety food;

(2) Holding for sale or serving time/temperature controlled for safety food at the same proper holding temperature at which it was received;

(3) Heating individually packaged, commercially processed time/temperature controlled for safety food for immediate service; or

(4) Hand dipping of commercially manufactured ice cream.

(C) Risk level III poses a higher potential risk to the public than risk level II because of the following concerns: proper cooking temperatures, proper cooling procedures, proper holding temperatures, contamination issues or improper heat treatment in association with longer holding times before consumption, or processing a raw food product requiring bacterial load reduction procedures in order to sell the product as ready-to-eat. Examples of risk level III activities include, but are not limited to:

(1) Handling, cutting, or grinding raw meat products;

(2) Cutting or slicing ready-to-eat meats and cheeses;

(3) Assembling, partially cooking, or cooking time/temperature controlled for safety food that is immediately served, held hot or cold, or cooled;

(4) Operating a soft serve ice cream or frozen yogurt machine;

(5) Reheating in individual portions only; or

(6) Heating of a product from an intact hermetically sealed package and holding the product hot.

(D) Risk level IV poses a higher potential risk to the public than risk level III because of concerns associated with: handling or preparing food using a procedure with several preparation steps that includes reheating of a product or ingredient of a product where multiple temperature controls are needed to preclude bacterial growth. Examples of risk level IV activities include, but are not limited to:

(1) Reheating bulk quantities of leftover time/temperature controlled for safety food more than once every seven days;

(2) Operating a heat treatment dispensing freezer;

(3) Catering food service operations as defined in division (G) of section [3717.01](#) of the Revised Code;

(4) Offering as ready-to-eat a raw time/temperature controlled for safety animal food or a food with these raw ingredients;

(5) Using freezing as a means to achieve parasite destruction;

(6) Preparing food for a primarily high risk clientele including immune-compromised or elderly individuals in a facility that provides either health care or assisted living;

(7) Using time as a public health control for time/temperature controlled for safety food;

(8) Non-continuous cooking of raw time/temperature controlled for safety food;



(9) Performing activities requiring a HACCP plan, as defined in paragraph (B)(52) of rule [3717-1-01](#) of the Administrative Code; or

(10) Activities requiring a variance for the process.

(E) The licensor shall determine the risk level of mobile retail food establishment based on the highest risk level activity of mobile retail food establishments in accordance with the criteria listed in paragraphs (E)(1) to (E)(2) of this rule:

(1) Low risk poses a potential risk to the public in terms of sanitation, food labeling, sources of food, and food storage practices in the mobile. Low risk activities include:

(a) Holding for sale or service pre-packaged refrigerated or frozen time/temperature controlled for safety foods; and

(b) Offering for sale or serving pre-packaged non-time/temperature controlled for safety foods.

(2) High risk poses a higher potential risk to the public than low risk because of concerns associated with: proper receiving, holding, and cooking temperatures; proper cooling procedures; processing a raw food that has undergone parasite or bacterial load reduction procedures in order to sell or serve it as ready-to-eat; handling or preparing food using a procedure with several preparation steps that includes reheating of a product or ingredient of a product where multiple temperature controls are needed to preclude bacterial growth; offering as ready-to-eat a raw time/temperature controlled for safety meat, poultry product, fish, or shellfish; or a food with these raw time/temperature controlled for safety items as ingredients; or using time in lieu of temperature as a public health control for time/temperature controlled for safety food. Examples of high-risk activities include, but are not limited to:

(a) Assembling or cooking time/temperature controlled for safety food that is immediately served, held hot or cold, or cooled;

(b) Operating a heat treatment dispensing freezer;

(c) Reheating bulk quantities or individual portions of leftover time/temperature controlled for safety food;

(d) Heating a food from an intact, hermetically sealed package and holding it hot; or

(e) Operating as a mobile catering food service operation as defined in paragraph (L) of rule [3701-21-01](#) of the Administrative Code.

#### [Rule 901:3-4-06 | Retail food establishment inspection frequency.](#)

A licensor shall inspect retail food establishments at least every fifteen months as follows:

(A) Risk level I: at least one standard inspection each licensing period. With the inspection of micro markets, the license holder must be notified prior to inspection and at minimum is to be completed by the end of the next business day after notification.

(B) Risk level II: at least one standard inspection each licensing period.

(C) Risk level III: at least two standard inspections each licensing period.

(D) Risk level IV: at least two standard inspections and if applicable two process review inspections, and if applicable two variance reviews each licensing period. The licensor may conduct process review inspections on the same visits as standard inspections and when applicable verify the terms of any variance that may have been issued.

(E) Temporary retail food establishments: at least one inspection during the period of operation.

(F) New retail food establishments: one standard inspection not later than thirty days after the license has been issued. If less than six months remain in a licensing period, the licensor may elect to eliminate one standard inspection, one process review inspection and one variance review for an establishment classified as risk level III or IV.

(G) Mobile retail food establishments: at least one standard inspection each licensing period.

#### [Rule 901:3-4-07 | Approval of facility layout and equipment specifications.](#)

No person, firm, association, organization, corporation, or government operation shall construct, install, provide, equip, or extensively alter a retail food establishment until the facility layout and equipment specifications therefore have been submitted to and approved in writing by the licensor. When the facility layout and equipment specifications are submitted to the licensor, the licensor shall act upon them within thirty calendar days after date of receipt. The facility layout and equipment specifications shall be approved by the licensor in accordance with the rules adopted pursuant to section [3717.05](#) of the Revised Code stating the criteria for facility layout and equipment specifications.

#### [Rule 901:3-4-08 | Appeal procedures.](#)

(A) This rule prescribes procedures for appealing the proposed denial, suspension, or revocation of a retail food establishment license and appealing the suspension of a license for a violation presenting a clear and present danger to the public health. An appeal of a proposed denial, suspension, or revocation of an endorsement on a retail food establishment license and appeal of the suspension of an endorsement on a license for a violation presenting a clear and present danger to the public health shall be conducted in the same manner.

(B) In the case of a proposal to deny, suspend, or revoke a retail food establishment license, the licensor shall provide the license holder with written notice of the proposed action and the cause for the action. The notice shall describe the procedure for appealing the proposed denial, suspension, or revocation.

(1) The licensor shall provide written notice by certified mail, return receipt requested, or by hand delivery. If the notice is returned because of failure of delivery, the licensor shall send the notice by regular mail to the retail food establishment location listed on the license or conspicuously post the notice at an entrance of the operation, and posting or mailing constitutes notice.

(2) After receiving the notice, to obtain a hearing, the license holder must submit a written request that the licensor receives within fifteen days.

(3) The licensor shall schedule a hearing before the licensor or a hearing officer designated by the licensor. If the licensor provides a hearing officer, the hearing officer shall be licensed to

practice law in Ohio and shall not have participated in any manner in the decision to take the action against the license holder.

(4) The licenser shall mail or hand-deliver notice of the date, time, and place of the hearing to the license holder no less than ten days before the scheduled date.

(5) At the hearing, the license holder shall have the opportunity to present the license holder's case orally or in writing and to confront and cross-examine witnesses. The license holder may be represented by counsel and may review the case record before the hearing. If the licenser is a board of health of a city or general health district or the authority having the duties of the board of health under section [3709.05](#) of the Revised Code, and a hearing officer has been designated, a member of that board does not have to be present at the hearing.

(6) If the hearing is before a hearing officer, the hearing officer shall prepare a written recommendation as to the validity of the licenser's action, which shall rest solely on the evidence presented at the hearing and the statutory and regulatory provisions governing the licenser's action. The hearing officer shall describe the basis for the hearing officer's recommendation, but need not prepare a full opinion or formal findings of fact and conclusions of law. The hearing officer shall mail by certified mail, return receipt requested, or hand-deliver the recommendation to the licenser and the license holder. Either party may file objections to the recommendation provided that the objections are received by the licenser within five days of receiving a copy of the recommendation from the hearing officer.

(7) After reviewing any timely objections, the licenser may by motion take additional evidence or approve, modify, or disapprove the hearing officer's recommendation and shall enter an order in the record of the proceedings.

(8) If the licenser does not receive a timely request for a hearing, the licenser may immediately enter an order as proposed in the notice.

(C) In the case of a suspension of a license issued for a violation presenting clear and present danger to the public health, the licenser shall provide the license holder with written notice of the action, the cause for the action, and the effective date of the action. The written notice shall specify the procedure for appealing the suspension and shall list the address to which a hearing request shall be sent or delivered. The license holder may appeal the suspension by mailing or hand-delivering a written request for a hearing to the address specified in the notice. If a hearing is requested, the hearing shall be heard not later than two business days after the request is received by the licenser. At the hearing, the license holder shall have the opportunity to present the license holder's case orally or in writing and to confront and cross-examine witnesses. The license holder may be represented by counsel and may review the case record before the hearing. At the hearing, the licenser shall determine whether the clear and present danger to the public health continues to exist.

(D) Any determination made or order entered by the licenser pursuant to this rule shall be made as follows:

(1) If the licenser is a board of health of a city or general health district or the authority having the duties of the board of health under section [3709.05](#) of the Revised Code, by majority vote of the members of the board or authority present at a meeting at which there is a quorum;

(2) If the director is acting as the licensor pursuant to section [3717.11](#) or [3717.111](#) of the Revised Code, by decision of the director.

If the licensor conducts the hearing, the licensor may immediately render a decision denying, suspending, or revoking a license, or render a decision removing or continuing a license suspension. If the licensor is a board of health of a city or general health district or the authority having the duties of the board of health under section [3709.05](#) of the Revised Code, the determination or order may be considered and made at a meeting without publication or advertisement, and may become effective without such publication or advertisement, recording or certifying. An order is not effective until the order is recorded in the licensor's record of the proceedings.

#### [Rule 901:3-4-09 | Complaint investigation procedure.](#)

(A) The licensor shall accept all complaints regarding retail food establishments. The complaints shall be investigated in accordance with a written policy of the licensor. The policy shall include at a minimum:

(1) A complaint form or electronic database to be used to document the receipt of all complaints and contains at least the following:

(a) The name and address of the retail food establishment; and

(b) A statement of facts about the complaint including the date and time of any alleged occurrence.

(2) The time frame for conducting investigations of complaints according to the potential risk to the public health, and

(3) The criteria for declining to investigate a complaint.

(B) The licensor shall:

(1) Document the results and disposition of the licensor's investigation on a food inspection form prescribed or approved by the director;

(2) Maintain the complaint form, any laboratory results, food inspection form documenting the investigation findings, and any other records pertaining to the complaint in the retail food establishment's file or electronic database;

(3) Investigate each complaint in a fair and complete manner; and

(4) If requested, report the results to the complainant orally or in writing upon completion of the investigation.

#### [Rule 901:3-4-10 | Dispute mediation procedure.](#)

A licensor or license holder may request mediation by the Ohio department of agriculture to resolve a dispute regarding the application of Chapter 3717. of the Revised Code, Chapter 3717-1 of the Administrative Code, or this chapter pertaining to retail food establishments. The request shall be in writing and contain a detailed description of the dispute including any applicable supporting documentation. The Ohio department of agriculture shall investigate the

case and the findings transmitted to all affected entities. A request for mediation does not affect the right of any party to seek any other remedy available by law.

#### [Rule 901:3-4-11 | Enforcement support.](#)

(A) For the purpose of this rule "enforcement support" means the provision of any of the following by the Ohio department of agriculture in the license suspension, license revocation, prosecution, or proposed prosecution of a person for a violation of the provisions of Chapter 3717. of the Revised Code, Chapter 3717-1 of the Administrative Code, or this chapter:

- (1) Consultation regarding the facts of the case;
- (2) Case preparation assistance if the county prosecutor or legal representative requests assistance;
- (3) Expert testimony;
- (4) Evidence collection; and
- (5) Review and comment on case documentation.

(B) To request enforcement support a board of health or the authority having the duties of a board of health must request assistance to the director on a form prescribed by the director.

#### [Rule 901:3-4-12 | Articles - requirement to cease use.](#)

(A) Any article such as a utensil, material, or piece of equipment may be removed from use in a retail food establishment or a food service operation by the licensor if the article presents a public health hazard. For the purposes of this rule, a public health hazard is presented by any article whose use can reasonably be expected to result in the contamination or adulteration of a food product based upon its state of repair, cleanliness, location, or construction. The licensor may tag any such article and prohibit the article's use by the license holder.

(B) A tag removing an article from use shall state the reason for the article's removal from use, and either

- (1) The provisions for returning the article to use, or
- (2) The disposition of the article if the article cannot be satisfactorily reconditioned.

(C) No license holder shall remove or permit to be removed, a tag without the permission of the licensor.

(D) Any action that may be taken by a licensor under paragraphs (A) to (C) of this rule may be taken by a health commissioner or other person employed by the licensor if the person or health commissioner is authorized by the licensor to take the action.

#### [Rule 901:3-4-13 | Records.](#)

A license holder of a retail food establishment shall:

(A) For the purpose of any investigation provide the licensor, upon request and within a reasonable time, proof of origination of the foods sold at the retail food establishment.

(B) Maintain records required as a condition of a variance or a required HACCP plan, as defined in paragraph (B)(52) of rule [3717-1-01](#) of the Administrative Code, for a period of one year.

[Rule 901:3-4-14 | Collection of food samples for the purposes of identifying adulteration and misbranding.](#)

(A) A licensor may submit a sample for testing to the Ohio department of agriculture consumer protection laboratory when:

- (1) A food or food additive is the subject of a consumer complaint;
- (2) At the request of a consumer after a physician has isolated an organism from the consumer as the physician's patient;
- (3) A food or food additive is suspected of having caused an illness;
- (4) A food or food additive is suspected of being adulterated or misbranded;
- (5) A food or food additive is subject to verification of food labeling and standards of identity; or
- (6) The director considers a sample analysis necessary or the sample is part of an Ohio department of agriculture food sample monitoring program.

(B) Samples taken for any reason specified in paragraph (A) of this rule, should when possible, be from a non-compromised package and of the same lot, code, or production unit as the food or food additive that is of concern. As used in this rule, "non-compromised" means securely wrapped

and packaged as purchased, not opened by the complainant, or otherwise handled in a manner that might result in the discrediting of the sample results.

(C) The licensor shall take reasonable care to ensure that the sample is:

- (1) Not contaminated by the sampling or shipping process;
- (2) Maintained at a temperature that is appropriate to help minimize additional growth of bacteria, other organisms, and deterioration until received by the laboratory;
- (3) Collected, submitted, and shipped in accordance with any guidelines for such sample submission as directed by the consumer protection laboratory; and
- (4) For a non-compromised sample a chain of custody is documented. For the purposes of this rule, "chain of custody" means the documentation of the history of the handling of a sample by persons in charge of a sample from the initial sampling to receipt and analysis by the analyzing laboratory.

(D) The Ohio department of agriculture's consumer protection laboratory may charge a licensor a reasonable fee for the analysis of a sample unless the sample is considered to be an official sample as defined in rules promulgated pursuant to section [901.43](#) of the Revised Code or the fee has been waived by the director.

(E) No person shall refuse to furnish a sample for analysis upon a demand and tender of payment.

[Rule 901:3-4-15 | Embargo of food.](#)

(A) For the purposes of this rule, "expired" means:

(1) In the case of infant formula, the "use by" date required by 21 C.F.R. 107.20 (as published on April 1, 2021) has passed; or

(2) In the case of baby food, that any expiration date, "use by" date, or sale date established by state or federal law or marked on the container by the manufacturer, processor, or packager has passed.

(B) Whenever a licensor finds or has cause to believe within a retail food establishment or food service operation in the licensor's jurisdiction that any food is adulterated, or so misbranded as to be dangerous or fraudulent, within the meaning of sections [3715.01](#) and [3715.52](#) to [3715.72](#) of the Revised Code, or that infant formula, or baby food is expired, the licensor shall affix to the item a tag giving notice that the item is, or is suspected of being, adulterated, misbranded, or expired and has been embargoed. The tag shall warn all persons not to remove or dispose of the item by sale or otherwise until permission for removal or disposal is given by the licensor or the court. No person may remove or dispose of a detained or embargoed item by sale or otherwise without such permission.

(C) When a food, infant formula, or baby food that has been embargoed has been found by the licensor to be adulterated, misbranded, or expired, the licensor shall petition the municipal or county court in whose jurisdiction the item is embargoed for an order for condemnation of the item. When the licensor has not found within ten days that an item embargoed is adulterated, misbranded, or expired, the licensor shall remove the tag or other marking.

(D) If the court finds that an embargoed item is adulterated, misbranded, or expired, the item shall, after entry of the decree, be destroyed at the expense of the claimant thereof, under the supervision of the licensor, and all court costs, fees, storage, and other proper expenses shall be taxed against the claimant of the item or the claimant's agent; provided, that when the adulteration or misbranding can be corrected by proper labeling or processing of the item, the court, after entry of the decree and after such costs, fees, and expenses have been paid and a good and sufficient bond, conditioned that the item shall be so labeled or processed, has been executed, may by order direct that the item be delivered to the claimant thereof for labeling or processing under the supervision of the licensor. The expense of supervision shall be paid by the claimant. The bond shall be returned to the claimant of the item on representation to the court by the licensor that the item is no longer in violation of sections [3715.01](#) and [3715.52](#) to [3715.72](#) of the Revised Code, and that the expenses of supervision have been paid.

(E) Whenever the licensor finds in any retail food establishment or food service operation, any meat, seafood, poultry, vegetable, fruit, or other perishable foods that are unsound, or contain any filthy, decomposed, or putrid substance, or that may be poisonous or deleterious to health or otherwise unsafe, the foods are declared to be a nuisance, and the licensor shall forthwith condemn or destroy the foods, or in any other manner render the items unsalable as human food.



(F) Any action that may be taken by a licensor under paragraphs (A) to (E) of this rule may be taken by a health commissioner or other person employed by the licensor if the person or health commissioner is authorized by the licensor to take the action.

[Rule 901:3-4-16 | Certification in food protection.](#)

(A) Persons seeking approval for a course of study for persons to be certified in food protection, shall make application to the Ohio department of health in accordance with Chapter 3701-21 of the Administrative Code.

(B) Any person recognized by the Ohio department of health as "certified in food protection" shall also be recognized as such by the Ohio department of agriculture and any other licensor of retail food establishments in Ohio.

(C) The licensor shall mandate person in charge certification for risk level I, II, III, and IV retail food establishments and high risk mobile retail food establishments for the reasons provided in paragraph (K) of rule [3701-21-25](#) of the Administrative Code. This paragraph does not apply to micro markets as defined by rule [3717-1-01](#) of the Administrative Code.

[Rule 901:3-4-17 | State survey procedures for program evaluation.](#)

(A) Pursuant to section [3717.11](#) of the Revised Code the director will survey at least once every three years the retail food establishment program of every licensor for retail food establishments. The licensor will provide the director with all requested information to complete the survey.

(B) The director will provide the survey methodology to all licensors. The methodology shall include:

(1) A review of the administrative aspects of the retail food establishment program including applications and licensing, cost analysis and fee adoption, facility layout and equipment specification review, inspections and reports and enforcement;

(2) A written or electronic assessment pursuant to division (H) of section [3717.33](#) of the Revised Code to be administered in the following manner:

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (B)(2)(b) of this rule, each individual registered as an environmental health specialist or environmental health specialist in training that has conducted food inspections within the last licensing year will be evaluated by the director using the assessment;

(b) Any individual registered as an environmental health specialist or environmental health specialist in training that previously passed the assessment given by the director of health within the same calendar year in which a survey occurs will not be obligated to be assessed again by the director during a survey conducted in the same calendar year;

(c) The individual is allowed to reference the Ohio uniform food safety code during the assessment;

(d) No smart watches or cellular phones will be permitted during the assessment;

(e) The assessment will consist of not more than fifty questions in length;



- (f) The individual will have one hundred twenty minutes to complete the assessment;
- (g) In order to pass the assessment, the individual will correctly answer eighty per cent of the assessment questions;
- (h) In accordance with division (H) of section [3717.33](#) of the Revised Code, each licensor will provide the director the most commonly documented violations within the jurisdiction by January thirty-first of each year.

(3) A review of other performance standards relevant to the conduct of the retail food establishment program. Performance standards are outside the scope of the status of compliance.

(C) The director will survey the retail food establishment program in accordance with the survey methodology and determine whether the licensor is qualified to administer and enforce Chapter 3717. of the Revised Code, this chapter and Chapter 3717-1 of the Administrative Code. The licensor will be classified as provisional if any subparagraph of paragraph (C)(1), (C)(2), or (C)(3) of this rule is identified as "needs improvement" during the current survey. The licensor will be classified as provisional if all subparagraphs of paragraph (C)(4) of this rule are identified as "needs improvement" during the current survey.

(1) Fee setting:

- (a) Licensing fees exceed the maximum calculated fee; or
- (b) Licensing categories do not comply with rule [901:3-4-03](#) of the Administrative Code; or
- (c) Licensor charges licensing fees that have been disapproved.

(2) Licensing:

- (a) Licensor charges additional fees to retail foods establishments not specified in paragraph (C) of rule [901:3-4-03](#) of the Administrative Code; or
- (b) Licensor does not remit state fees to the director as specified in division (C)(2) of section [3717.25](#) of the Revised Code and paragraph (E) of rule [901:3-4-02](#) of the Administrative Code.

(3) Inspections:

- (a) Inspections are not conducted at the frequency specified in rule [901:3-4-06](#) of the Administrative Code; or
- (b) Inspections are not conducted by a registered environmental health specialist or environmental health specialist in training.

(4) Program administration:

- (a) Less than fifty per cent of the registered environmental health specialist or environmental health specialist in training pass the written assessment or electronic assessment; and
- (b) The licensor does not administer and enforce Chapter 3717. of the Revised Code, this chapter and Chapter 3717-1 of the Administrative Code; and

(c) The licensor does not train and evaluate its food program staff.

(D) After the survey is complete, the director will classify the licensor as approved or provisional and provide a survey report to the licensor within forty-five days of the completion of the survey. The director will transmit the survey report to the licensor by regular U.S. mail or e-mail to the address provided by the licensor on the local health district information form. The survey report will include:

(1) A set time frame for correcting the deficiencies;

(2) Procedures for program disapproval that the department will pursue if the licensor fails to correct the deficiencies identified in paragraph (C)(1), (C)(2), (C)(3) or (C)(4) of this rule or other deficiencies identified by the director, revealed by the survey; and

(3) An opportunity to request a meeting with a representative of the director to discuss the deficiencies.

(E) The director will re-evaluate a licensor's provisional retail food establishment program in the established time frame to determine if the program is in compliance. If in compliance, the director will classify the licensor as approved. If the deficiencies have not been corrected, the director will propose to disapprove the licensor, or will propose to revoke the approval, whichever is appropriate. The director will transmit the determination to the licensor by regular U.S. mail or e-mail to the address provided by the licensor on the local health district information form.

(F) The licensor may request an informal hearing on the director's proposed determination if a written request is received by the director no later than thirty days after the date the proposed determination is mailed or emailed by the director of agriculture to the licensor. The informal hearing will be conducted before the director or the director's authorized representative no later than thirty days after the director received the request for hearing. At the hearing, a representative of the licensor may present information orally and in writing. The director will transmit by regular U.S. mail or e-mail to the address provided by the licensor on the local health district information form a written decision no later than thirty days after the conclusion of the informal hearing.

#### [Rule 901:3-4-18 | Reinstatement of a licensor.](#)

The director may reinstate a licensor if all the conditions in division (D) of section [3717.11](#) of the Revised Code are met. Upon reinstatement, the director shall provide the licensor a set-time frame for survey which shall be no later than one year after reinstatement. The licensor shall be classified as provisional until the licensor has successfully passed the survey. If the director determines that the licensor is qualified to administer and enforce Chapter 3717. of the Revised Code, Chapter 3717-1 of the Administrative Code, and the applicable rules of this chapter, the director shall classify the licensor as approved. If the director determines that the licensor is not qualified, the director may propose to revoke the approval in accordance with paragraph (D) of rule [901:3-4-17](#) of the Administrative Code.