



Catawba County Public Health

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NEW STATE FOOD RULES BENEFIT CATAWBA COUNTY RESTAURANTS AND RESIDENTS

HICKORY, NC – A new food code approved by North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services became effective in Catawba County September 1. The new food code enforces safe food handling and is expected to help reduce the transmission of food borne illnesses.

Changes will be noticeable to both food establishments and consumers. From the new updates, several stand out for food establishments.

- Each food establishment is now required to have staff in charge pass an American National Standards Institute (ANSI) accredited exam to demonstrate knowledge on food protection.
- Food establishments are required to develop and adhere to an employee health policy to help prevent the transmission of illness.
- Food establishments' employees can no longer handle ready-to-eat foods with their bare hands.
- Food establishments are required to date-mark opened, ready-to-eat food.
- Food establishments will be required to decrease the refrigerated cold-holding temperature for potentially hazardous foods from 45° to 41° Fahrenheit. A six-year grace period will be allowed to accommodate the purchase of new refrigerators to adjust to this rule.

From the other side of the counter, two changes that may be noticed by consumers include:

- Sanitation ratings: The maximum sanitation score an establishment can receive is now 100%, previously 102%, because bonus points for ANSI certification are no longer optional.
- Mobile push carts and local food trucks will also now have sanitation scores.

“We’re looking forward to the positive public health changes the new code is expected to bring,” said Doug Urland, director, Catawba County Public Health. “Public Health environmental health specialists will be conducting extra visits and providing additional literature to local food establishments to help ensure they understand the new code.”

The complete food code can be viewed at www.catawbacountync.gov/EnvironmentalHealth/.

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“Leading the Way to a Healthier Community”

