

The following information is provided to further illustrate why local public health departments, with qualified environmental health staff (registered Sanitarians), can improve food safety in their communities.

1. Local programs can ensure all facilities are inspected at least once a year and provide closer monitoring to identify new restaurants, change of ownership, planned remodeling or to look out for problems such as operating without permits, unapproved outside grilling, and unapproved changes in type of food service.
2. Local programs can utilize staff more cost effectively due to less travel to and from facilities.
3. Legal support from Corporation Counsel office provides more effective and speedier enforcement when it is necessary to achieve compliance.
4. Local enforcement can utilize issuance of citations as well as license suspension or revocation to achieve compliance.
5. Local oversight and accountability is a plus for the community since policy makers and citizens will know whom to call when there is a problem.
6. Accessibility and availability are at a higher level to:
 - a. Respond to food service operator questions and to help them solve problems.
 - b. Respond to consumer complaints.
 - c. Respond to news media on food safety issues.
 - d. Respond to suspected food borne illness outbreaks or food borne illness complaints.
7. Local environmental health staff have better opportunities to collaborate with other local inspection offices (zoning, building, and fire) to achieve a higher level of health code compliance for food service operations.
8. Local oversight provides an opportunity for short response times to assess whether the food service operator accomplishes corrections of critical food safety violations.
9. Temporary food service operations will be monitored for food safety practices on a regular basis whether they operate during the week, evenings or on weekends.
10. Plan review for new and remodeling of food service facilities is done to minimize non-code complying problems after the project is completed and ready to be opened.
11. Knowledge of and familiarity with the needs of local food establishment operators allows targeting education and training to help meet those needs in a way that will be most effective. For example, if there is a minority population presenting language and cultural barriers, outreach and appropriate food sanitation education is best done on a local level.
12. Encouragement and training of food service operators to initiate full or partial hazard analysis critical control point (HAACP) principles to prevent food contamination in their establishments is more likely to occur.
13. A risk based inspection program can be developed that will prioritize staff time to direct more of their effort to monitor food safety practices in those establishments demonstrating a higher risk for causing food borne illness.
14. Local public health staff are in a better position to monitor the community for food borne disease outbreaks and respond quickly. If there is a suspected food borne disease outbreak at a particular restaurant or there is a food service employee with a communicable disease, local environmental health staff are going to better know what actions will be sufficient to protect the public health because they will be more familiar with the operation and operator.
15. Local environmental health staff will have a closer working relationship with the local public health nursing staff to facilitate a quicker, coordinated response to confirmed food borne disease cases or outbreaks.
16. Many local health departments have access to laboratory services allowing sampling of food and equipment to test for bacteriological contamination as well as to identify breakdowns in sanitation practices in the restaurant.
17. Local environmental health services are in a better position to promote food safety practices to the public and to promote partnerships to address food safety, since there is an on-going relationship with the community, local policy makers, food industry people and the media.
18. Innovative strategies to respond to new food safety issues or food borne pathogens can be more easily implemented.
19. A total food safety program for both restaurants and retail food stores can be accomplished at the local level, if agent status with the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection is also obtained.
20. Provide complimentary safe food handling advice to local community potlucks & fundraising groups to ensure overall health of citizens and event organizers.