



Virtual Food Safety Inspection Guide



Virtual Food Inspections

- Useful for low-risk activities (i.e., follow-ups, education, compliance assistance)
- Should be used as an additional tool, **not** in place of in-person inspections



In-Person Food Inspections

- The gold standard
- Critical for high-risk public health threats (i.e., complaints, permit renewals, major non-compliance)

Elements of a Successful Virtual Food Inspection:

Documents

Required:

- ✓ Facility Layout
- ✓ Equipment List
- ✓ Menu(s)
- ✓ List of Special Food Processes
- ✓ Food Handler's Certificate

If Applicable

- Completed Permit Application
- Paid Inspection Fee



Tools

Required by Business Owner:

- Device capable of video and audio
- Sufficient Internet/Wi-Fi Connection
- Light Meter or access to a Light Meter Application
- Calibrated Thermometer
- Sanitizing Test Kits



Facility Evaluation

- Sink Areas (Water Temperatures)
- Dishwashing Areas (Sanitation Levels)
- Food Holding/Refrigeration Areas (Heating/Cooling Temperatures)



Final Report

Instead of receiving a physical signature from the business owner, inspectors must now request an acknowledgment email for receipt of the final report.



Virtual inspections involve business owners and people-in-charge to a higher degree, which improves dialogue between the business and inspectors, develops better relationships between the parties, and leads to valuable experience.

Featured States:



Hawaii

Established a checklist for the Owner/Operator of a Food Establishment that prepared them for the pre-operational inspection.



South Carolina

Developed a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) that includes a checklist and picture references for virtual inspections, which facilitated over 42,000 virtual food inspections in 2 years during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Virginia

Created inspection guidance that addressed special considerations allowing pre-operational, complaint, and follow-up inspections to be conducted virtually.

