

# Maintaining FDA Voluntary Retail Standards for Food Establishments in the Face of Limited Resources



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# FDA Retail Food Program Standards

The 9 FDA Retail Program Standards, together form the backbone of a modern, risk-based, and performance-driven food safety program.



Empowers local agencies to:

prioritize  
inspections

streamline  
procedures

focus on  
prevention

Standard	Purpose
1. Regulatory Foundation	Helps ensure your local regulations align with the latest FDA Food Code, giving you a modern legal framework for inspections.
2. Trained Regulatory Staff	Provides benchmarks for inspector qualifications and training plans so your team is equipped to identify and address food safety risks.
3. Inspection Program Based on HACCP Principles	Guides you in categorizing establishments by risk level and tailoring inspection frequency accordingly—so high-risk operations get more attention
4. Uniform Inspection Program	Encourages consistent inspection procedures and documentation, which improves fairness and data quality
5. FBI and Food Defense Preparedness	Helps you develop protocols for investigating outbreaks and responding quickly to protect public health.
6. Compliance & Enforcement	Offers strategies for progressive enforcement and corrective actions, ensuring violations are addressed appropriately
7. Industry & Community Relations	Promotes outreach and education to food businesses and the public, fostering voluntary compliance and collaboration.
8. Program Support & Resources	Helps assess whether your program has the staffing, equipment, and funding needed to operate effectively.
9. Program Assessment	Encourages self-assessment and performance tracking so you can identify gaps and continuously improve your program.

# FDA Retail Program Standards

Provides the framework for Health Departments to develop a highly effective food safety program.

Focus on risk-based inspections and active managerial control

Aim to reduce foodborne illness through continuous improvement

Voluntary—but increasingly recognized as a national benchmark

# The Resource Challenge

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Limited staffing and funding

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Onboarding & Training

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Competing public health priorities

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Time-intensive reporting and documentation

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Technology gaps and outdated systems

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Inconsistent inspection protocols across jurisdictions.

# Strategies for Maintaining Standards with Limited Resources

- Prioritize **high-impact standards** (e.g., 2, 3, 5)
- Use **risk-based scheduling** to focus inspections
- Implement **digital tools** to streamline reporting
- Encourage **self-inspections** and AMC documentation from operators.

# Leveraging Third-Party Partnerships

- **Universities:** interns, research, training modules
- **Nonprofits:** community outreach, multilingual education
- **Industry groups:** SOP development, compliance programs, support health department food inspection program, new establishment and HACCP Plan reviews, food inspections. Training & PIC Development.
- **Technology Integration:** inspection software, mobile apps
- **FDA support:** grants, technical assistance, Retail Food Specialists

# Policy and Advocacy

Advocate	Advocate for flexible inspection models.
Seek	Seek support for staffing and tech upgrades.
Use	Use data from risk factor studies to justify funding.
Promote	Promote public transparency to build trust within the food community.

# Welcome to the Panel Discussion

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