



Department of Health and Human Services
Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention
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February 1, 2011

To: Department of Education, and School Food Service Directors
From: Lisa Brown, Program Director, Health Inspection Program
Re: Maine School Kitchen Inspection Policy

I am writing in response to the USDA's Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004's mandate that requires Maine CDC's Health Inspectors to perform two school kitchen inspections per school year at each of Maine's 670 schools.

The Health Inspection Program currently inspects all school facilities at least once per school calendar year which is consistent with our risk based inspection approach. Inspection results show that Maine schools perform very well, with few, if any violations. The failure rate for school inspections is very low. In school year 2009-2010, there have been 9 school failures, resulting in a 1% failure rate. When a school fails an inspection, a follow up inspection occurs very soon and within the school year. There is no record of any recent foodborne illness outbreak in Maine schools. Further, school foodservice personnel are well trained in food safety and handling practices. They participate every 5 years in a food handler's course called *Serving it Safe*, in which they must pass an exam to receive certification. In addition, all Maine schools are required to have in place and practice a Hazard Analysis Critical Control Plan (HACCP).

According to the US FDA and based on the practices described above, Maine schools fall into a low risk category that requires only one inspection per year. We believe that performing one inspection per school calendar year in most schools is adequate to ensure the food safety in Maine school kitchens.

I hope that this policy provides useful information regarding our inspection strategy for Maine school kitchens. Please call me at 287-5691 or email me if you have any questions. Thank you for your good work!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lisa M. Brown".

Lisa Brown
Program Director
Health Inspection Program

Cc: Nancy Beardsley, Director, Division of Environmental Health
Dora A. Mills, M.D., MPH, Director, Maine CDC
Christine Zukas-Lesard, Deputy Director, Maine CDC,
District and Municipal Health Inspectors