Food Authority

NSW GOVERNMENT

Scores on Doors

Retail Food Business Rating Program

Guidelines 2022

Greater visibility of compliance enabling consumer choice

Scores on Doors is a voluntary program which began in 2010 and is open to eligible retail food businesses operating within participating local council areas.

Scores on Doors publishes the hygiene and food safety inspection result achieved by NSW retail food premises. It rates a participating food business's compliance with NSW food safety legislation, focusing on food handling practices linked to foodborne illness. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on sanitation practices, consumer safety and community awareness has been substantial, and the program can play an important role in restoring confidence.

The program uses a standardised checklist and demerit points scheme, generating a score that summarises the outcome. Food businesses are encouraged to display this prominently, allowing consumers to use the score to help them decide where to eat or buy food. The score can also be published on websites.

Scores on Doors is designed to reward well-performing businesses, improve food safety practices, drive food safety culture and ultimately reduce foodborne illness.

foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/retail/scoresondoors

Who is the program for?

The Scores on Doors program is for retail food businesses which process and sell food in NSW that is:

- ready-to-eat
- potentially hazardous (i.e. requires temperature control)
- for immediate consumption.

These businesses include:

- restaurants
- takeaway shops
- pub bistros
- hotels
- cafes
- bakeries
- clubs

The program is not intended for supermarkets, delicatessens, low risk food premises or those selling pre-packaged food such as petrol service stations or greengrocers, temporary markets, mobile food vending vehicles or retail premises licensed and separately audited by the NSW Food Authority such as butchers.

How does it work?

Scores on Doors taps into the existing local council inspection program. Council's authorised officers conduct inspections for compliance with the food safety standards.

They calculate a hygiene and food safety score as part of their routine unannounced food safety inspection process.

No additional inspections are needed unless the food business has requested a follow-up visit and this service is made available by Council (see Reinspection requests from businesses).

Announced or partial inspections, for example, short follow-up inspections, are not used to determine the score.

Standardised inspection checklist

The Food Premises Assessment Report (FPAR) was developed in consultation with NSW councils and is based on legislative requirements of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (chapters 1 and 3), Food Act 2003 (NSW) and Food Regulation 2015.

The FPAR is used as a compliance checklist and includes a points system which determines the business's hygiene and food safety score — Good = 3 stars; Very Good = 4 stars; Excellent = 5 stars.

Find an example at:

www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/_Documents/scoresondoors/FPAR.pdf

The FPAR issues points for breaches, proportionate to their food safety risk. Breaches range from 1 point (minor) to 8 points (critical). *The Food Premises Assessment Report (FPAR) guidelines* provide guidance to council's authorised officers on how demerit points are assigned in different circumstances and breaches. The guidelines are available on the FRP Portal.

Critical breaches

If a 'critical' food safety breach is found during the inspection – a score of 8 points in the categories listed on the Food Premises Assessment Report – the food business is automatically ineligible for a rating and is assigned to 'No Grade', irrespective of the total points accrued.

The authorised officer will handle the issue according to Council's enforcement policy. There is a range of enforcement tools depending on the severity of the issue, including warning letters, penalty notices, prohibition orders, seizure notices and prosecution.

View the NSW Food Authority's compliance and enforcement policies at www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/industry/audits-and-compliance/compliance

The hygiene and food safety rating

The authorised officer completes the inspection checklist, calculates the demerit points received by the business and assigns a corresponding hygiene and food safety rating.

Points	Score	Definition
0-3	Excellent ★★★★★	The highest expected level of compliance with hygiene and food safety standards.
4-8	Very Good ★★★★	Very good hygiene and food safety practices.
9-15	Good ★★★	Good general standard of hygiene and food safety.

At the end of the inspection, the officer can discuss the rating with the food business proprietor or contact. The business will receive its display certificate and sticker on the spot. Or they can be mailed to the business.

Hygiene and food safety score displayed at premises

The certificate should be displayed at each public entrance to the food business or in a prominent location where food is ordered. The certificate should be displayed until:

- it expires, as marked on the certificate by the issuing authorised officer
- it is replaced by a new certificate from the council – the business must display only the current certificate
- the business becomes ineligible for the certificate – see below.

Reinspection requests from businesses

A food business may request a reinspection to improve its rating. Councils can decide whether to make re- inspections available in their local government area and inform businesses about their reinspection policy.

If offering a reinspection option, the NSW Food Authority recommends councils:

- provide guidelines and communicate clearly with businesses on reinspection policy throughout the process

- offer only one reinspection during the standard inspection period
- conduct an unannounced reinspection within 3 months of approving the request to reinspect
- charge re-inspection fee at the rate recommended in the NSW Food Regulation 2015
- handle complaints from food businesses about how inspections were conducted in accordance with council's standard complaints handling processes.

Removal of certificate

Complaints or other incidents may trigger unannounced inspections outside the routine inspection program. In these circumstances, authorised officers may calculate a new score if the inspection covers all elements in the FPAR.

If the new score changes the business's existing Scores on Doors rating, the previous certificate and sticker must be removed and, if applicable, issue a new certificate and sticker.

If the inspection indicates a critical food safety breach that would automatically render the business ineligible for a grade, the existing certificate and sticker must be removed.

Participation is voluntary

The Scores on Doors program is not currently legislated and is based on voluntary participation by local councils and food businesses.

Participating businesses:

- should display the certificate and sticker on the front window or door of the premises, or in a prominent location where food is ordered
- can promote their participation in the program and score in their own marketing, including the appropriate scoring website image provided by the NSW Food Authority on their own websites
- should be aware that local councils and/or the NSW Food Authority may publish scores.

Disclosure of information

Councils may display information about the businesses that participate in the Scores on Doors program and their scores. Local councils should seek their own legal advice in this situation.

Expiry date for certificates

The expiry date of the certificate should be based on a council's expected minimum frequency, which considers the food business's food safety risk profile and compliance history.

For most eligible food businesses, the expiry period will usually be the end of the next 12 month inspection period.

For medium risk businesses that achieve an 'Excellent (5 star)' score in two consecutive inspections, expiry dates may be set on an 18 month cycle, in accordance with council's policy and in consideration of the Food Authority's FRP Advisory Guideline 'Risk-based inspection frequency'. High risk businesses may be inspected more frequently.

FI392/2209