

Audit failure – action required

*You are receiving this information as an ‘**unacceptable**’ outcome was recorded as a result of your last audit.*

What does this mean?

An unacceptable audit means that you have failed to implement your food safety program and take corrective action. An audit failure indicates that the systems and controls in place at your business are not effectively managing food safety or maintaining compliance with required standards.

What happens next?

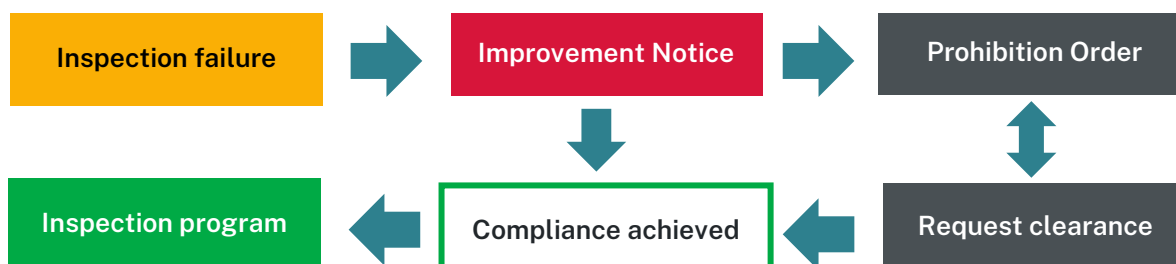
The authorised officer who attended your food premises is required to take enforcement action when a business fails an audit. As a minimum, you will receive an Improvement Notice to address defects raised in your audit report. An Improvement Notice records the defects observed by the officer, what action you must take to comply and the date you must complete the required action.

If you do not comply by the deadline, the Improvement Notice will be escalated to a Prohibition Order – preventing you from operating your business, using particular equipment or stopping you from producing food until you comply. On average, businesses that are ordered to close take 3 days before they are cleared to reopen – which can result in potential loss of trade and reputation for your business.

What are the penalties for not complying?

Repeat or critical failures may result in a formal interview being undertaken where the deficiencies will be discussed with you. This will then lead to additional action such as penalty notices, prosecution, seizure or a Prohibition Order being issued. The Food Authority will also consider whether it is appropriate to suspend or cancel your licence.

You need to be aware that if you receive a penalty notice or are prosecuted, details about your food business and offences may be made public on the NSW Food Authority website.



Next steps

Step 1: Check the compliance dates and any directions you have been given

If you have any questions about the action specified in the Audit Report or Improvement Notice, you need to speak with the responsible officer immediately to clarify their direction.

Step 2: Action the Improvement Notice

You must take immediate and effective action to comply by the due date specified on the Improvement Notice.

An Improvement Notice requiring compliance within 24 or 48 hours means that these are critical issues that must be addressed immediately. Failure to do so will result in a Prohibition Order.

Step 3: Seek assistance

Work out what needs to be done and if you need help to comply with the officer's direction. You can request an extension on an Improvement Notice by submitting the request in writing to the officer responsible for issuing the Notice. You will need to give reasons and demonstrate that you have made reasonable efforts to comply. You will be informed of the outcome of your request for extension before the due date.

Extensions will not be granted for matters involving critical food hygiene, process control, cleanliness or pest control matters. You must request and have the extension approved by the officer **before** the due date otherwise the original date will remain effective.

Who will check?

The officer responsible for issuing the Audit Report will schedule an unannounced audit within 30 days. The officer may attend a number of times within the 30-day period to check on compliance with the Improvement Notice. Depending on the severity of the breaches and your compliance history, you may also be asked to attend a formal interview to answer questions about the observed breaches.

About the NSW Food Authority

The NSW Food Authority is the government organisation that helps ensure NSW food is safe and correctly labelled. It works with consumers, industry and other government organisations to minimise food poisoning by regulating and providing information about the safe production, storage, transport, promotion and preparation of food.

Note: This information is a general summary and cannot cover all situations. Food businesses are required to comply with all of the provisions of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code and the *Food Act 2003* (NSW).

More information

- Visit foodauthority.nsw.gov.au
- Email food.contact@dpird.nsw.gov.au
- Phone 1300 552 406