



Title:	Title: Risk-Based Food Service Establishment Permit Classification Policy	Page 1 of 3
Number:	FOOD Policy 2026-01	Effective Date: 01/01/2026
Applies To:	Permanent Food Service Establishments	Supersedes: N/A
Approved:	Eric Evans, RS, Asst. EH Director	Next Review: 10/01/2026

A. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish risk-based permit categories for permanent food service establishments. Permit classifications are consolidated into three categories—Low-Risk, High-Risk, and Add-On—consistent with the FDA’s process-based risk model and the Washington State Retail Food Code.

These classifications are used to determine permit fees, inspection frequency, and food safety risk-management priorities.

B. Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Kitsap Public Health District (Health District) to protect public health by minimizing the risk of foodborne illness and ensuring compliance with applicable local ordinances and state food safety regulations.

C. Guiding Principles and Definitions

1. Process Approach

A method for grouping food service operations based on the type of food-handling activities conducted and the level of food safety risk associated with those activities.

2. Flow of Food

The food preparation steps between the establishment receiving the food and selling it to the customer.

3. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) Plan

A written food safety plan that identifies hazards and establishes controls in accordance with HACCP principles developed by the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods.

4. Time/Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) Foods

Foods that require time or temperature controls to limit the growth of pathogenic microorganisms.

D. Implementing Procedures

1. Permit Classification

Permanent food service establishments shall be classified into permit categories based on the food processes conducted at the establishment.

a. Low-Risk Permit

An establishment shall be classified as Low Risk when food handling activities do not exceed the following processes:

1. Preparation and service of cold-held foods
2. Heating for immediate service of commercially prepared, fully cooked foods.

Inclusions to this category are bakeries limited to shelf-stable foods where no hot holding or cooling of TCS foods occurs, and school warming kitchens.

b. High-Risk Permit

An establishment shall be classified as High-Risk when food handling activities include one or more of the following processes:

1. Hot holding of TCS foods
2. Cooking raw animal proteins to destroy pathogens
3. Cooling of TCS foods

c. Add-On Permit

An Add-On Permit may be issued in the following cases:

1. A High-Risk establishment may be granted an Add-On Mobile Unit or Catering permit if the food preparation is conducted at the existing High-Risk establishment.
2. An establishment conducts a special process requiring Health District approval and a HACCP Plan Inspection (Special Process Permit)

A separate add-on permit shall be required for each additional retail operation, and each approved special process.

E. References

Managing Food Safety: A Manual for the Voluntary Use of HACCP Principles for Operators of Food Service and Retail Establishments; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Food & Drug Administration, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition [2006]

F. Policy Review History

- Initial Approval 12/2025