

2024 NNPH Risk Factor Study Report Executive Summary

The Northern Nevada Public Health (NNPH) 2024 Risk Factor Study Report presents an analysis of food safety compliance in Washoe County, focusing on the five primary risk factors contributing to foodborne illnesses:

1. poor personal hygiene
2. contaminated equipment
3. improper holding times and temperatures
4. inadequate cooking
5. food from unsafe sources

Building on the 2017 Baseline Risk Factor Study Report, the 2024 follow-up study evaluates the effectiveness of previous intervention strategies and persistent challenges in food safety practices at local food establishments.

The study, conducted across diverse facility types—fast food restaurants, full-service restaurants, schools, senior independent living facilities, and retail food stores—identified several key findings:

- **Certified Food Protection Managers (CFPMs):** Facilities with CFPMs present showed improved compliance rates. Schools had the highest CFPM presence, while senior independent living facilities lagged.
- **Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS):** Establishments with well-developed FSMS exhibited fewer violations. However, many facilities, particularly fast food and full-service restaurants, still operate with underdeveloped systems.
- **Allergen Awareness:** Improvements were noted in allergen awareness and training since 2017, although some gaps remain, especially in aligning with updated allergen standards to include the ninth major food allergen, sesame.
- **Risk Factor Compliance:**
 - Progress was seen in compliance with personal hygiene, holding times and temperatures, and cooking practices.
 - Cross-contamination issues increased, particularly in full-service restaurants and senior independent living facilities.
 - Improper cold holding of time/temperature control for safety (TCS) foods and inadequate date-marking persist as significant concerns.
 - Overall, proper handwashing, protection from cross contamination, proper cold-holding, proper cooling, and adequate date-marking were the actions identified as priorities for intervention.

The findings of the 2024 NNPH Risk Factor Study Report highlight both progress and areas for improvement, emphasizing the need for enhanced food safety education, resource allocation, and regulatory oversight. By addressing persistent challenges in high-risk areas, NNPH aims to further reduce foodborne illnesses and safeguard public health.