

Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards (Retail Program Standards)

What are the Retail Program Standards?

The [Retail Program Standards](#) and administrative procedures establish a foundation for exceptional retail regulatory programs when instituted in a regulatory retail food program. They are intended to reinforce sanitation while providing direction for reducing factors that contribute to foodborne illness. FDA provides instructional services, guidance, and forms through Self-Assessment and Verification Audit ([SAVA Workshops](#)) throughout the year.

What are the benefits to the Retail Program Standards?

The Retail Program Standards help regulatory retail food programs self-assess and allocate resources to support effective and efficient operations. While all states—and most local, territorial, and tribal health agencies—are [enrolled](#) in the Retail Program Standards, jurisdictions can work to improve conformance through several supplemental [funding opportunities](#). Standards can be achieved individually through self-assessment and verification audits as the regulatory program utilizes a continuous quality improvement process.

What is included in the Retail Program Standards?



Administrative Procedures - General procedures for enrolling, remaining an active participant, and resolving issues associated with the interpretation and application of the Program Standards.



Standard 1: Regulatory Foundation - Adoption of a sound, science-based regulatory foundation for the public health program. A jurisdiction's regulatory foundation needs to have provisions at least as stringent as the current FDA Food Code or one of the two most recent previous editions.



Standard 2: Trained Regulatory Staff - Regulatory retail food program inspection staff shall have the knowledge, skills, and ability to adequately perform their required duties through training and standardization.



Standard 3: Inspection Program Based on [HACCP Principles](#) - An inspection program based on risk categorization that, through policies and documentation, targets immediate and long-term correction through active managerial control.



Standard 4: Uniform Inspection Program - Retail program policies and procedures should implement an ongoing quality assurance program to evaluate and ensure uniformity among regulatory staff in the interpretation of regulatory requirements, along with compliance and enforcement procedures.



Standard 5: Foodborne Illness and Food Defense Preparedness and Response - The program should have an established system to detect, collect, investigate, and respond to complaints and emergencies that involve foodborne illness, injury, and intentional and unintentional food contamination.



Standard 6: Compliance and Enforcement - The program must demonstrate credible follow-up for each violation noted during an inspection, with particular emphasis placed on out-of-compliance risk factors and interventions that most often contribute to foodborne illness.



Standard 7: Industry and Community Relations - The program should document participation in forums that foster communication and information exchange among regulators, industry, and consumer representatives. The jurisdiction documents outreach activities that provide educational information on food safety.



Standard 8: Program Support and Resources - The program provides funding, staff, and equipment necessary to support an inspection and surveillance system designed to reduce risk factors and interventions known to contribute to foodborne illnesses.



Standard 9: Program Assessment - This standard applies to the process used to measure the success of a jurisdiction's efforts in reducing the occurrence of foodborne illness risk factors, to enhance food safety and public health in the community. The standard requires a risk factor study that determines the occurrence of foodborne illness risk factors in their regulated industry and implementing an intervention to address the findings of the study.