

Commission for Public Health

JOSH STEIN • Governor

DEVDUTTA SANGVAI • Secretary

KELLY KIMPLE • Director, Division of Public Health

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 2, 2025

TO: Rulemaking Interested Persons

FROM: Virginia Niehaus, Rulemaking Coordinator, Commission for Public Health and

Director of Regulatory and Legal Affairs, Division of Public Health

RE: Notification of Proposed Rule Amendments: 10A NCAC 46 .0213; 15A NCAC

18A .2661 and .2901

Pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.2, this memorandum serves as the required notice to interested persons that the Commission for Public Health (CPH) is proposing to amend rule 10A NCAC 46 .0213 and rules 15A NCAC 18A .2661 and .2901. These rules are proposed for amendment to align with Session Law 2023-137, s. 29.1, 29.2, 29.3. CPH has submitted notice of its intent to amend these rules to the NC Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH).

In accordance with G.S. 150B-21.4, the NC Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM) was consulted on the proposed rules and determined that a fiscal note is not required.

The notice of text that was published in today's edition of the NC Register is attached to this memorandum and may be found on OAH's website at https://www.oah.nc.gov/rules-division/north-carolina-register. The text of the proposed rules may be found on CPH's website at https://cph.dph.ncdhhs.gov/.

A public hearing on these rules is scheduled for Thursday, September 25, 2025 at 2:00 pm. The public hearing will be held by teleconference. You may participate in the public hearing by dialing 919-715-0769. No access code is required.

CPH is accepting public comments on the proposed rules from September 2, 2025 through November 3, 2025. You may submit comments by email to cphcomment@ml.nc.gov or by mail to Virginia Niehaus, CPH Rulemaking Coordinator, 1931 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1931. Comments will also be accepted at the public hearing. No effective date is proposed, as the rules are subject to legislative review.

Should you have questions related to this memorandum or the proposed rules, please contact Mr. Shane Smith, Food Protection and Facilities Branch Head, Environmental Health Section, Division of Public Health at (919) 210-3663.

Attachment

cc: Dr. Ronald May, Chair, Commission for Public Health

Dr. Kelly Kimple, Director, Division of Public Health

Mr. Larry Michael, Section Chief, Environmental Health, Division of Public Health

Mr. Jon Fowlkes, Deputy Section Chief, Environmental Health, Division of Public Health

Mr. Shane Smith, Food Protection and Facilities Branch Head, Division of Public Health

Ms. Devon Collins, Deputy Director, Regulatory and Legal Affairs, Division of Public Health

TITLE 10A - DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Notice is hereby given in accordance with G.S. 150B-21.2 that the Commission for Public Health intends to amend the rules cited as 10A NCAC 46 .0213 and 15A NCAC 18A .2661, .2901.

Link to agency website pursuant to G.S. 150B-19.1(c): https://cph.dph.ncdhhs.gov/

Proposed Effective Date: Subject to Legislative Review

Public Hearing:

Date: September 25, 2025

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Location: This public hearing will be held by teleconference at (919) 715-0769 (no access code required).

Reason for Proposed Action: The Commission for Public Health proposes to amend three rules governing environmental health services and regulation of food establishments to align with Session Law 2023-137 (15A NCAC 18A .2661, .2901 and 10A NCAC 46 .0213). These rule amendments are subject to legislative review.

Comments may be submitted to: Virginia Niehaus, CPH Rulemaking Coordinator, 1931 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1931; email cphcomment@ml.nc.gov

Comment period ends: November 3, 2025

Rule(s) is automatically subject to legislative review: S.L. 2023-137, Section 29.1, .29.2, and 29.3

Fiscal impact. Does any rule or combination of rules in this notice create an economic impact? Check all that apply.

State funds affected
 Local funds affected
 Substantial economic impact (>= \$1,000,000)
 Approved by OSBM
 No fiscal note required

CHAPTER 46 - LOCAL STANDARDS

SECTION .0200 – STANDARDS FOR LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS

10A NCAC 46 .0213 FOOD, LODGING/INST SANITATION/PUBLIC SWIMMING POOLS/SPAS

- (a) A local health department shall provide food, lodging, and institutional sanitation and public swimming pools and spas services within the jurisdiction of the local health department. A local health department shall establish, implement, and maintain written policies which shall include:
 - (1) The frequency of inspections of food, lodging, and institutional facilities and public swimming pools and spas with the following being the minimum:

Type of Establishment Frequency Per Fiscal Year (July 1 – June 30)

Adult Day Service Facilities1/yearBed and breakfast homes1/yearBed and breakfast inns1/6 monthsChild day-care facilities1/6 months

Food Service Establishments

Risk Category I
Risk Category II
Risk Category III
Risk Category III
Risk Category IV
1/4 months
Risk Category IV
1/3 1/4 months
Institutions
1/6 months
Local confinement facilities
1/year

Lodging 1/year Migrant housing water and sewage evaluation 1/year

Primitive Experience Camps

Operating 6 months or less per year 1/year
Operating more than 6 months per year 1/6 months
Private boarding schools and colleges 1/year

Public swimming pools and spas which operate only between 1/operational

April 1 and October 31 each year season

Public swimming pools and spas which operate at times other 2/year

than between April 1 and October 31 each year

Residential care facilities 1/year
Schools 1/year
Summer camps 1/year
Tattoo Artists 1/year

Risk Category I applies to food service establishments that prepare only non-potentially hazardous foods.

Risk Category II applies to food service establishments that cook and cool no more than two potentially hazardous foods. Potentially hazardous raw ingredients shall be received in a ready-to-cook form.

Risk Category III applies to food service establishments that cook and cool no more than three potentially hazardous foods.

Risk Category IV applies to food service establishments that cook and cool an unlimited number of potentially hazardous foods. This category also includes those facilities using specialized processes or serving a highly susceptible population.

- (2) An educational visit for Risk Category IV food establishments once per fiscal year. The educational visit shall not result in the issuance of a new grade or grade card. During an educational visit, the local health department shall review all of the following with the permit holder for the establishment:
 - (A) Violation of any priority item or priority foundation item, as defined by Part 1-201.10 of the Food Code incorporated by reference at 15A NCAC 18A .2650 as amended by 15A NCAC 18A .2651, that occurred during the three previous inspections;
 - (B) The five major risk factors contributing to foodborne illness as set out in the Preface of the Food Code incorporated by reference at 15A NCAC 18A .2650 and identified on the inspection form furnished by the regulatory authority as described in 15A NCAC 18A .2661(b); and
 - (C) If applicable, any Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point Plan or HACCP Plan, as defined by Part 1-201.10(B) of the Food Code incorporated by reference at 15A NCAC 18A .2650 as amended by 15A NCAC 18A .2651.
- (2)(3) Provisions for investigating complaints and suspected outbreaks of illness associated with food, lodging, and institutional facilities, and public swimming pools. Corrective actions shall be taken in cases of valid complaints and confirmed outbreaks of illness.
- (3)(4) Provisions for keeping records of activities described in Subparagraphs (1), (2), and (3)(1) and (2) of this Paragraph. (b) A local health department shall establish, implement, and maintain written policies for the provision of sanitation education for food service personnel and orientation and in-service training for Environmental Health Specialists. The policies shall include the following requirements for Environmental Health Specialists providing food, lodging, and institutional sanitation services:
 - (1) Completion of the centralized training course provided by the Division for newly employed Environmental Health Specialists;
 - (2) Compliance with Delegation of Authority as stated in 15A NCAC 01O .0100; and
 - (3) Compliance with the Board of Sanitarian Examiners' requirements.

History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-4(b); 130A-9; S.L. 2023-137;

Eff. October 1, 1984;

Amended Eff. March 1, 1988; December 1, 1987; October 1, 1986; Transferred and Recodified from 10 NCAC 12 .0239 Eff. April 4, 1990;

Amended Eff. August 1, 2007; May 1, 1996; July 1, 1993; October 1, 1992; December 1, 1991;

Pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A, rule is necessary without substantive public interest Eff. January 5, 2016.

CHAPTER 18 - ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

SUBCHAPTER 18A - SANITATION

SECTION .2600 – THE SANITATION OF FOOD SERVICE ESTABLISHMENTS

15A NCAC 18A .2661 INSPECTIONS AND REINSPECTIONS

- (a) Upon entry into a food establishment for an inspection or reinspection, the regulatory authority shall provide identification and the purpose in visiting that establishment. The regulatory authority shall inquire as to the identity of the person in charge and invite the person in charge to accompany the regulatory authority during the inspection. If no employee is identified as the person in charge, the regulatory authority shall invite an employee to accompany the regulatory authority on the inspection. Following the inspection, the regulatory authority shall offer to review the results of the inspection with the person in charge or employee, as applicable.
- (b) The grading of food establishments shall be conducted using an inspection form furnished by the regulatory authority. The form shall provide for the following information:
 - (1) the name and mailing address of the food establishment;

- (2) the name of the permit holder;
- (3) the permit status and score given;
- (4) standards of construction and operation as listed in .2651 through .2677 of this Section;
- (5) an explanation for all points deducted;
- (6) the signature of the regulatory authority; and
- (7) the date.
- (c) The grading of food establishments shall be based on the standards of operation and construction as set forth in Rules .2650 through .2676 of this Section.
- (d) The Food Establishment Inspection form shall be used to document points assessed for violation of the rules of this Section as follows:
 - (1) Violation of Chapter 2 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2652 of this Section related to person in charge present, demonstration of knowledge, or performance of duties shall equal no more than 1 point.
 - (2) Violation of Chapter 2 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2652 of this Section related to the person in charge being a certified food protection manager by having certification from an accredited program shall equal no more than 1 point.
 - (3) Violation of Chapter 2 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2652 of this Section related to management awareness, policy present, and allergy awareness shall equal no more than 2 points.
 - (4) Violation of Chapter 2 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2652 of this Section related to proper use of reporting, restriction, and exclusion shall equal no more than 3 points.
 - (5) Violation of Chapter 2 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2652 of this Section related to procedures responding to vomiting and diarrheal events shall equal no more than 1 point.
 - (6) Violation of Chapters 2 and 3 of the Food Code as amended by Rules .2652 and .2653 of this Section related to proper employee eating, tasting, drinking, or tobacco use shall equal no more than 1 point.
 - (7) Violation of Chapter 2 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2652 of this Section related to no discharge from eyes, nose, and mouth shall equal no more than 1 point.
 - (8) Violation of Chapter 2 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2652 of this Section related to hands clean and properly washed shall equal no more than 4 points.
 - (9) Violation of Chapter 3 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2653 of this Section related to no bare hand contact with ready-to-eat food or approved alternate method properly followed shall equal no more than 4 points.
 - (10) Violation of Chapters 5 and 6 of the Food Code as amended by Rules .2655 and .2656 of this Section related to handwashing facilities supplied and accessible shall equal no more than 2 points.
 - (11) Violation of Chapters 3 and 5 of the Food Code as amended by Rules .2653 and .2655 of this Section related to food obtained from an approved source shall equal no more than 2 points.
 - (12) Violation of Chapter 3 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2653 of this Section related to food received at proper temperature shall equal no more than 2 points.
 - Violation of Chapter 3 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2653 of this Section related to food in good condition, safe, and unadulterated shall equal no more than 2 points.
 - Violation of Chapter 3 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2653 of this Section related to required records available, shellstock tags, and parasite destruction shall equal no more than 2 points.
 - (15) Violation of Chapter 3 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2653 of this Section related to food separated and protected shall equal no more than 3 points.
 - Violation of Chapter 4 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2654 of this Section related to food-contact surfaces cleaned and sanitized shall equal no more than 3 points.
 - Violation of Chapter 3 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2653 of this Section related to disposition of returned, previously served, reconditioned, and unsafe food shall equal no more than 2 points.
 - (18) Violation of Chapter 3 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2653 of this Section related to cooking time and temperatures shall equal no more than 3 points.
 - (19) Violation of Chapter 3 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2653 of this Section related to reheating for hot holding shall equal no more than 3 points.
 - (20) Violation of Chapter 3 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2653 of this Section related to cooling time and temperatures shall equal no more than 3 points.
 - (21) Violation of Chapter 3 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2653 of this Section related to hot holding temperatures shall equal no more than 3 points.
 - Violation of Chapter 3 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2653 of this Section related to cold holding temperatures shall equal no more than 3 points.
 - (23) Violation of Chapter 3 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2653 of this Section related to date marking and disposition shall equal no more than 3 points.
 - (24) Violation of Chapter 3 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2653 of this Section related to time as a public health control procedures and records shall equal no more than 3 points.
 - Violation of Chapter 3 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2653 of this Section related to consumer advisory provided for raw or undercooked foods shall equal no more than 1 point.

- (26) Violation of Chapter 3 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2653 of this Section related to pasteurized foods used and prohibited foods not offered shall equal no more than 3 points.
- (27) Violation of Chapter 3 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2653 of this Section related to food additives approved and properly used shall equal no more than 1 point.
- (28) Violation of Chapter 7 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2657 of this Section related to toxic substances properly identified, stored, and used shall equal no more than 2 points.
- (29) Violation of Chapters 3, 4 and 8 of the Food Code as amended by Rules .2653, .2654, and .2658 of this Section related to compliance with variance, specialized process, and HACCP plan shall equal no more than 2 points.
- (30) Violation of Chapter 3 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2653 of this Section related to pasteurized eggs used where required shall equal no more than 1 point.
- (31) Violation of Chapters 3 and 5 of the Food Code as amended by Rules .2653 and .2655 of this Section related to water from an approved source shall equal no more than 2 points.
- (32) Violation of Chapter 8 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2658 of this Section related to variance obtained for specialized processing methods shall equal no more than 2 points.
- (33) Violation of Chapters 3 and 4 of the Food Code as amended by Rules .2653 and .2654 of this Section related to proper cooling methods used or adequate equipment for temperature control shall equal no more than 1 point.
- (34) Violation of Chapter 3 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2653 of this Section related to plant food properly cooked for hot holding shall equal no more than 1 point.
- (35) Violation of Chapter 3 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2653 of this Section related to approved thawing methods used shall equal no more than 1 point.
- (36) Violation of Chapter 4 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2654 of this Section related to thermometers provided and accurate shall equal no more than 1 point.
- (37) Violation of Chapter 3 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2653 of this Section related to food properly labeled or original container shall equal no more than 2 points.
- (38) Violation of Chapters 2 and 6 of the Food Code as amended by Rules .2652 and .2656 of this Section related to insects and rodents not present or no unauthorized animals or persons shall equal no more than 2 points.
- (39) Violation of Chapters 3 and 6 of the Food Code as amended by Rules .2653 and .2656 of this Section related to contamination prevented during food preparation, storage, and display shall equal no more than 2 points.
- (40) Violation of Chapter 2 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2652 of this Section related to personal cleanliness shall equal no more than 1 point.
- (41) Violation of Chapters 3 and 4 of the Food Code as amended by Rules .2653 and .2654 of this Section related to wiping cloths properly used and stored shall equal no more than 1 point.
- (42) Violation of Chapters 3 and 7 of the Food Code as amended by Rules .2653 and .2657 of this Section related to washing fruits and vegetables shall equal no more than 1 point.
- (43) Violation of Chapter 3 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2653 of this Section related to in-use utensils properly stored shall equal no more than 1 point.
- (44) Violation of Chapter 4 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2654 of this Section related to utensils, equipment, and linens properly stored, dried and handled shall equal no more than 1 point.
- (45) Violation of Chapter 4 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2654 of this Section related to single-use and single-service articles properly stored and used shall equal no more than 1 point.
- (46) Violation of Chapter 3 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2653 of this Section related to gloves used properly shall equal no more than 1 point.
- (47) Violation of Chapters 3 and 4 of the Food Code as amended by Rules .2653 and .2654 of this Section related to equipment, food and non-food contact surfaces approved, cleanable, properly designed, constructed and used shall equal no more than 1 point.
- (48) Violation of Chapter 4 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2654 of this Section related to warewashing facilities installed, maintained, used, and test strips shall equal no more than 1 point.
- (49) Violation of Chapter 4 of the Food Code as amended by Rule.2654 of this Section related to non-food contact surfaces clean shall equal no more than 1 point.
- Violation of Chapter 5 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2655 of this Section related to hot and cold water available and adequate pressure shall equal no more than 1 point.
- Violation of Chapter 5 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2655 of this Section related to plumbing installed and proper backflow devices shall equal no more than 2 points.
- Violation of Chapter 5 of the Food Code as amended by Rule .2655 of this Section related to sewage and wastewater properly disposed shall equal no more than 2 points.
- Violation of Chapters 5 and 6 of the Food Code as amended by Rules .2655 and .2656 of this Section related to toilet facilities properly constructed, supplied, and cleaned shall equal no more than 1 point.
- Violation of Chapters 5 and 6 of the Food Code as amended by Rules .2655 and .2656 of this Section related to garbage and refuse properly disposed and facilities maintained shall equal no more than 1 point.
- Violation of Chapters 4 and 6 of the Food Code as amended by Rules .2654 and .2656 of this Section related to physical facilities installed, maintained, and clean shall equal no more than 1 point.

- Violation of Chapters 4 and 6 of the Food Code as amended by Rules .2654 and .2656 of this Section related to meets ventilation and lighting requirements and designated areas used shall equal no more than 1 point.
- (e) In filling out the inspection form, points may be deducted only once for a single occurrence or condition existing within or outside of the food establishment. Deductions shall be based on actual violations of the rules of this Section observed during the inspection. The regulatory authority shall take zero, one-half, or a full deduction of points depending upon the severity or the recurring nature of the core item violations. Priority items or priority foundation items may be corrected during the inspection and no more than one-half of the total point value shall be deducted when the violation meets the following criteria:
 - (1) the priority item or priority foundation item violation was not documented on the previous inspection; and
 - (2) correction of the item is documented on the inspection form.
- (f) At the time of inspection, if a priority item or priority foundation item violation is observed and not corrected, the regulatory authority shall take one-half or a full deduction of points depending upon the severity or the recurring nature of the violation.
- (g) In determining whether items or areas of a food establishment are clean for purposes of enforcing the rules set forth in this Section and grading a food establishment, the regulatory authority shall consider, among other things:
 - (1) the age of the accumulated material;
 - (2) the cleaning practices of the food establishment; and
 - (3) the health risk posed by the circumstances.
- (h) Upon request of the permit holder or his or her representative a reinspection shall be made. In the case of a food establishment that requests an inspection for the purpose of raising the alphabetical grade, and that holds an unrevoked permit, the regulatory authority shall make an unannounced inspection within 10 business 15 calendar days from the date of the request.
- (i) In the case of food establishments that have been closed for failure to comply with the rules of this Section, a reinspection to consider the issuance or reissuance of a permit shall be scheduled by the regulatory authority.
- (i) In Section 8-304.11 of the Food Code delete (K).

History Note:

Authority G.S. 130A-248; S.L. 2019-129; S.L. 2023-137;

Eff. September 1, 2012;

Pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A, rule is necessary without substantive public interest Eff. July 20, 2019;

Amended Eff. October 1, 2021.

SECTION .2900 - RESTAURANT AND LODGING FEE COLLECTION AND INVENTORY PROGRAM

15A NCAC 18A .2901 DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS

- (a) For the purposes of this Rule, the following definitions shall apply:
 - (1) "Department" means the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.
 - (2) "Disaster" means when a declaration has been made by the President of the United States under 44 C.F.R. Part 206, Subpart B, which is hereby incorporated by reference, including any subsequent editions or amendments, or by the Governor of North Carolina under G.S. 166A-19.3(3).
 - (3) "Emergency" means when a state of emergency declaration has been issued under G.S. 166A-19.3(19).
 - "Event" means a National Special Security Event designated by the President of the United States under 18 U.S.C. 3056(e)(1), which is hereby incorporated by reference, including any subsequent editions or amendments.
 - "Rate of compliance" means the number of inspections <u>and educational visits</u> for food and lodging establishments conducted by the local health department during the previous state fiscal year divided by the number of inspections <u>and educational visits</u> mandated to be conducted by the local health department per state fiscal year pursuant to G.S. 130A-249 and 10A NCAC 46 .0213, not to exceed a value of 1.
- (b) Fees collected pursuant to G.S. 130A-248(d), minus state expenses budgeted for the collection and inventory program, shall be distributed to local health departments for the support of local public health programs and activities as follows:
 - (1) seven hundred and fifty dollars (\$750.00) to each county; and
 - (2) the balance of funds that remain after the distribution described in Subparagraph (b)(1) of this Rule shall be distributed to each county in accordance with the formula provided in Subparagraph (b)(2)(A) of this Rule. After the distribution of funds pursuant to Part (b)(2)(A) of this Rule, the balance of any funds that remain shall be distributed in accordance with the formula provided in Part (b)(2)(B) of this Rule to the counties that have one hundred percent compliance with the inspection requirements for food and lodging establishments as set out in G.S. 130A-249 and 10A NCAC 46 .0213 in the immediately preceding state fiscal year:
 - (A) [the remaining balance of funds after distribution in Subparagraph (b)(1) of this Rule] multiplied by (the number of facilities in the county divided by the number of facilities in the state) multiplied by (the county's rate of compliance) equals the allocation to the county; and
 - (B) [total amount of remaining funds after distribution in Part (b)(2)(A)] multiplied by (the number of facilities in the county divided by the number of facilities in all counties with 100 percent compliance with mandatory inspection requirements for food and lodging establishments as set forth in G.S. 130A-249 and 10A NCAC 46 .0213 during the previous fiscal year) equals the additional allocation to the county.
- (c) Notwithstanding the definition of rate of compliance in Paragraph (a) of this Rule, the total amount of funds distributed to a local health department shall be calculated in accordance with Paragraph (b) of this Rule, but using the local health department's rate of compliance from the last state fiscal year that was completed immediately prior to a disaster, emergency, or event, when:

- (1) one or more counties served by the local health department is named in a disaster or emergency declaration or in an event designation;
- (2) the local health director or the local health director's designee submits a written attestation to the State Environmental Health Director that includes the following:
 - (A) an explanation of how disruption caused by the disaster, emergency, or event is such that inspections that are required pursuant to G.S. 130A-249 and 10A NCAC 46 .0213 for food and lodging establishments cannot be carried out as planned because of the local health department's involvement in the response to the disaster, emergency, or event; and
 - (B) a statement that the loss of funds as a result of the local health department's decreased rate of compliance is expected to result in a financial hardship to the local health department's environmental health program; and
- (3) the Department determines that sufficient funds are available to make a disbursement to the local health department in accordance with this Paragraph.
- (d) Attestations written pursuant to Paragraph (c) of this Rule shall be submitted to the State Environmental Health Director by mail at 5605 Six Forks Road, 1632 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1632.

History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-9; 130A-248; 130A-249; <u>S.L. 2023-137;</u> Eff. May 1, 1991; Readopted Eff. July 1, 2022.