

Restaurant Rating System Review of the Naugatuck Valley Health District

TRENDS IN RESTAURANT RATINGS AND VIOLATIONS



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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Explanation of rating system
- Restaurant owners survey
- Rating improvement
- Restaurant violation trends from July 2013 to 2015

RATING SCORES



EXCELLENT



GOOD



FAIR



POOR

INTRODUCTION

The Naugatuck Valley Health District (NVHD) instituted a food establishment “Rating” program in July 2013. The rating system was designed to provide the public with information about the sanitary conditions observed in the establishment. Ratings (Excellent, Good, Fair or Poor) are provided by the sanitarian to the food service establishment with the inspection report during each inspection and are based on the absence/presence of “Risk Factor and Critical Violations” that are likely to cause food borne illness.

The Ratings apply to most facilities that prepare hot “potentially hazardous” foods. Ratings are not given to Seasonal and Temporary Food Service establish-

ments, schools, nursing and long term care facilities, or to establishments operated by government or non-profit organizations.

The rating system was established to give the public a better idea of how a restaurant was doing on inspections. It is also a great way to better educate the restaurants owners and workers about the inspection reports.

A rating system of excellent, good, fair and poor was chosen over a letter grade because A (90+), B (80+), and C (70+) have too much of a historical connection to school grading. The restaurant inspection scoring is more complex and better stated as excellent, good, etc.

HOW THE RATING SYSTEM WORKS

The rating system is broken into four categories based on the type of violations that the food inspector finds in each restaurant. The four categories are; excellent, good, fair and poor. The ratings are given as follows:

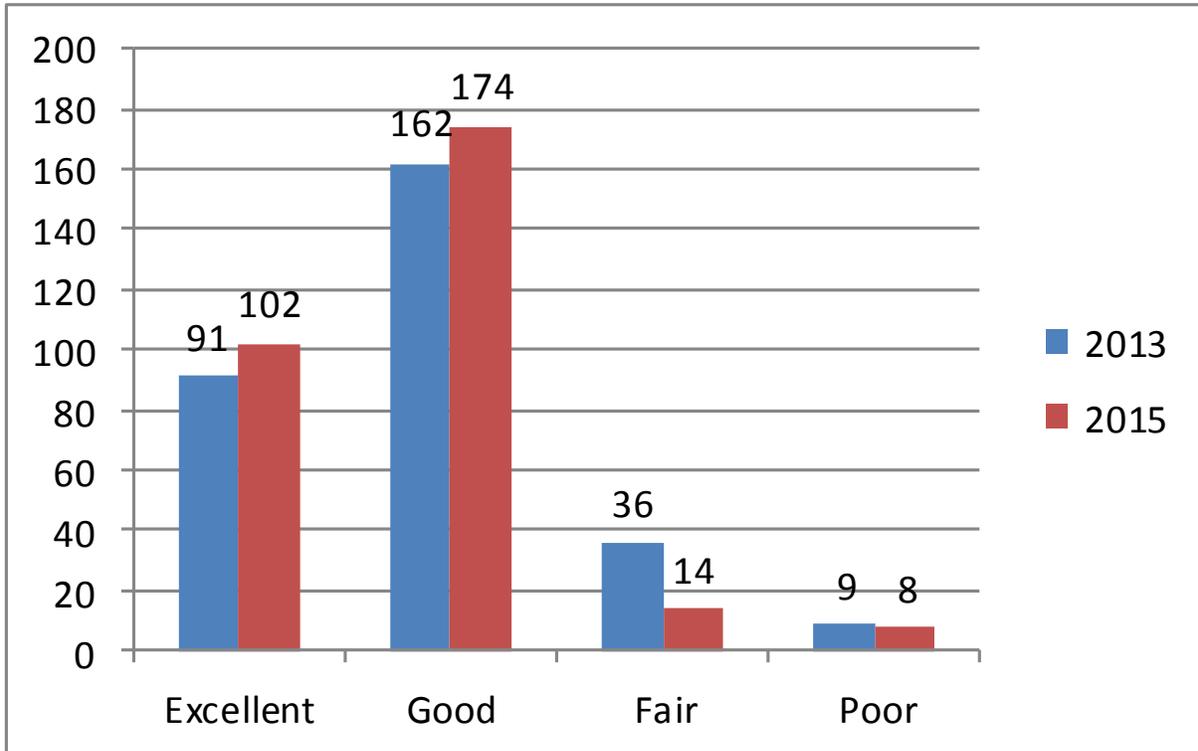
Excellent: A food service establishment having **no critical four point violations or risk factor violations**. A Qualified Food Operator, Designated Alternate or other knowledgeable and trained staff was on site at the time of inspection. Records of training are available, accurate and up to date. Safe food handling practices and procedures were observed at the time of inspection and the facility was found to be in compliance with the Public Health Code.

Good: A food service establishment having **no critical four point violations** and no more than **two risk factor violations**. Establishment is free of major structural defects and exhibits safe food handling practices and procedures at the time of inspection. The facility was found to be substantially in compliance with the Public Health Code.

Fair: A food service establishment having no uncorrected critical four point violations and no more than **four risk factor violations**. Establishment has conditions that need to be corrected such as structural defects or other violations and/or unsafe food handling practices likely to cause foodborne illness.

Poor: A food service establishment having a rating score of **less than 80** or any establishment with **one or more uncorrected critical four point violations**. An establishment with **five or more risk factor violations** at the time of inspection that are likely to cause foodborne illness or structural defects requiring correction. The establishment exhibits poor compliance with the provisions of the Public Health Code at the time of inspection.

RATING SCORES: INITIAL INSPECTION VS. 18 MONTHS AFTER RATING SYSTEM BEGAN



Overall, rating scores have increased 12% in the excellent category from July 2013 to January 2015.

NAUGATUCK VALLEY HEALTH DISTRICT

Name of Establishment _____

Address _____

Was inspected on _____ and received the following rating based on observed sanitary conditions, demonstrable knowledge of food service personnel and the presence or absence of 4 point critical and/or risk factor violations as listed in the Public Health Code of the State of Connecticut or the Food and Food Establishments Code of the Naugatuck Valley Health District.

RATING

 **Excellent** _____
 **Good** _____
 **Fair** _____
 **Poor** _____

Date of previous inspection: _____

Rating of previous inspection: Excellent Good Fair Poor

For more information on the ratings please visit www.nvhd.org
 Inspection reports are available for review in the Health District office
 88 Bank St. Seymour, CT 06483
 203-881-3255

Since the start of the rating system, restaurants in Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Derby, Naugatuck, Seymour, and Shelton, have improved their overall ratings. Over 75% of restaurant ratings are either in the good or excellent categories. Over the past year and a half, restaurant ratings have increased 12% in the excellent category, and 7% in the good category. And ratings have decreased 61% in the fair category which signifies that restaurants have improved since the rating system began.

The rating signs are required to be posted in the restaurant for the public to view. The signs explain the most recent rating, as well as, the rating that the restaurant received during the last inspection. The sign looks like the picture posted to the left.

TRENDS IN VIOLATIONS AFTER INITIAL INSPECTION SINCE RATING SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION COMPARED TO 18 MONTHS LATER

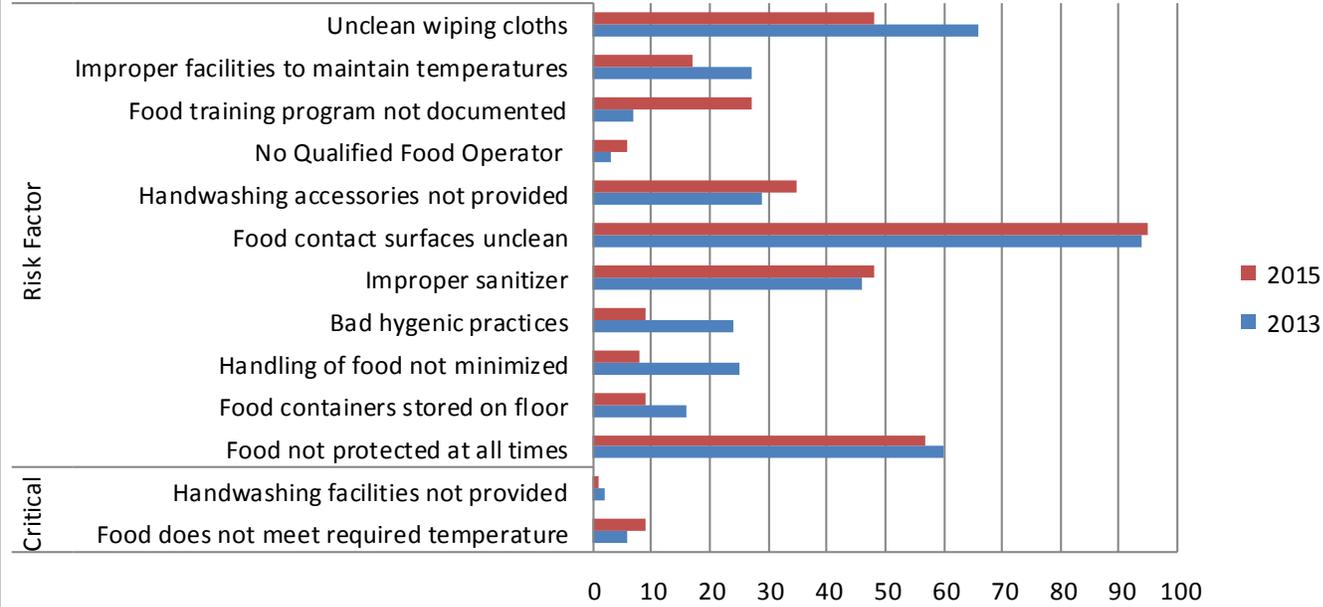
The health department assessed the change over time in the percent of all restaurants that were inspected prior to and since the rating system was implemented based on specific violations. We found that many risk factor violations were less prevalent after 18 months of implementing the rating system.

- The percent of restaurants that hold foods at proper temperatures increased by 50% since rating began.
- Restaurants that stored food containers on the floor decreased by 44%.
- Practicing good hygiene increased by 62% since rating restaurants.
- The handling of food improperly has decreased by 68% as well since the rating system was implemented.

Not all areas saw improvement, however progress is being made.



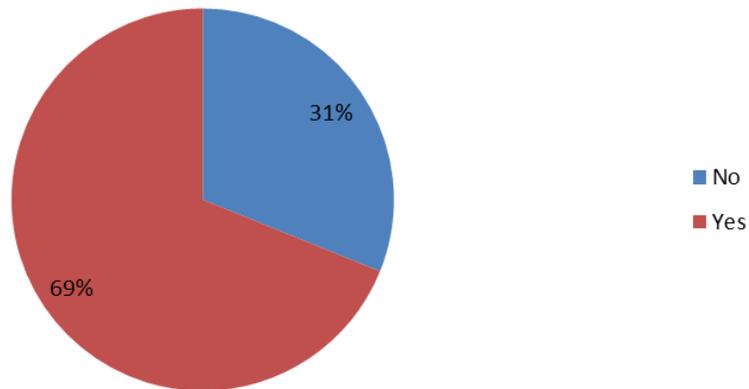
Restaurants with Food Safety Violations Prior to and Since Restaurant Rating System on their Most Recent Inspection



RESTAURANT OWNER SURVEY RESULTS

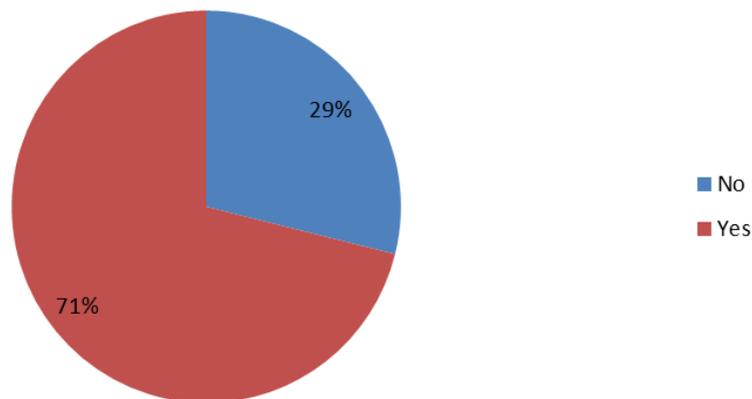
A survey was sent to all restaurant owners in the district jurisdiction to gather data on the perceptions and outcomes of the rating system. The survey collected data on the restauranters' understanding of the inspection process, violation corrections, staff engagement, public's knowledge of the posting of scores. There were 45 restaurant owners that responded to the survey.

Since the food rating system was established in July 2013, do you have a greater understanding of the inspection process?



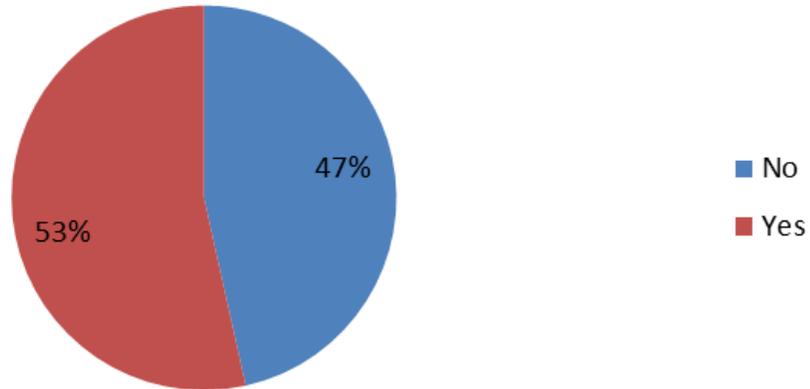
"We strive to follow regulations and keep our guests safe ." Anonymous Restaurant Owner

Do you have a greater understanding of what the risk factor and critical violations are and how to correct them?



PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE OF THE RATING SCORE

Does the public ask you or your employees about the posted ratings?



Restaurant owners were asked if customers ask about their food rating that is posted on the door or window. The response was just about 50/50. The restaurant ratings are available on Naugatuck Valley Health District's website. Over the course of 6 months, 15,600 people have viewed the ratings page and looked at various restaurants in their towns. This accounts for over 43% of usage on NVHD's website. It is important for the public to understand the rating system and know that it is there to protect the public's health.

“The new system has been very helpful and enlightening. It has motivated our restaurant as a group to work harder to comply.” Anonymous Restaurant Owner

Other concerns/comments:

Restaurant owners had mixed feelings about the rating system. Some owners stated that the rating system is only a snap shot of the restaurant inspection and therefore the scoring sheet should have some explanation of the rating. While others feel that it has been beneficial to their restaurant and think it is important for the public to know how their favorite restaurant is doing.



Naugatuck Valley Health District

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