

Comments from the Inspector on Facility Ratings

Food Safety Team, USAF School of Aerospace Medicine

The ratings that may be assigned to your facility following an evaluation are *excellent*, *satisfactory*, *marginal*, and *unsatisfactory*. Instead of hastily interpreting the ratings as “super”, “good”, “O.K”, and “uh-oh,” let’s briefly discuss each rating’s significance.

An *excellent* rating is given to a facility that is doing everything possible to prevent foodborne illness. Foodhandling techniques are flawless and the facility’s level of sanitation is well above standard. Used sparingly, this rating singles out the “above and beyond” food facilities on an installation and encourages others to strive for the same title.

A *satisfactory* rating also identifies a facility that is preventing foodborne illness; however, minor discrepancies in sanitation (often referred to as housekeeping discrepancies) and personal hygiene are present. Since minor discrepancies will not cause foodborne illness, they will be left to the supervisor for corrective action.

Believe it or not, a *marginal* rating also signifies that a facility is preventing foodborne illness. This rating is subjective; it is given when a facility shows a downward trend in sanitation (housekeeping), **not** in food safety. No critical discrepancies can be present! Keep in mind, minor discrepancies (no matter how numerous) will not cause foodborne illness. Marginal ratings require a re-inspection within 5 working days.

Finally, an *unsatisfactory* rating identifies a facility with unsafe foodhandling practice(s). It is given when one or more critical discrepancies (annotated with an asterisk in the Food Code) are identified. Critical discrepancies, if left uncorrected, are likely to cause foodborne illness. They should be corrected immediately if possible. If not, a re-inspection is necessary within 24 hours or after sufficient time to have the discrepancy corrected as deemed appropriate by the inspector (with the facility manager’s input).

For more information, contact your base Public Health office at 6-1225 or contact the Food Safety Team at the USAF School of Aerospace Medicine (Brooks AFB, TX), at DSN 240-2058 or E-mail a message to johnnie.foster@brooks.af.mil