



What to Expect of a Produce Inspection

A Guide for Washington Farms

The Produce Safety Program is responsible for the education and enforcement of the FSMA Produce Safety Rule. Our farm inspection program is focused on promoting food safety and preventing foodborne illnesses linked to fresh produce.

Routine inspections began in spring of 2019. During an inspection, inspectors record their observations and will require follow-up corrective actions for any conditions that could pose a risk to public health.

Inspections are different and separate from audits requested or required by marketing groups or buyers. Inspections are mandatory and provided at no charge to farms as the program is 100% federally-funded.

If you would like technical assistance prior to your inspection or have questions about your farm's coverage status, please contact us at producesafety@agr.wa.gov.

Initial Contact

Inspections are prioritized based on crop type, location, compliance history, size, and overall farm preparedness.

A WSDA Produce Safety Program staff person will contact you when it's time to schedule your inspection. Keep in mind that all inspections must occur during growing, harvesting, packing, and/or holding activities. They will do their best to make reasonable scheduling accommodations.

Tip: *One person from every covered farm must successfully complete the Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) Grower Training or equivalent training recognized by the FDA.*

Routine Produce Inspection

On your pre-scheduled inspection day, WSDA inspectors will ask to speak to the owner or person in charge, introduce themselves and explain the reason for the visit. They will also issue a written Notice of Inspection that cites our regulatory authority and indicates your inspection consent.

Inspection Support



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Wenatchee



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Initial Interview

The inspector will briefly describe the scope of the inspection and what to expect. The time an inspection takes depends on the type of inspection, farm activities, farm size, and observations during the inspection. The inspector will ask what activities, such as growing, harvesting, packing, and holding, are occurring that day.

Farm Walk-Through

The inspector will need to observe farm operations, but may also ask about farming practices or operations they cannot observe during the inspection. You can anticipate questions about employee training, health and hygiene practices, animal management, agricultural water, biological soil amendments of animal origin, and tools and equipment. They will take notes and review farm records. Throughout the inspection, the inspector will explain what is being observed and why.

Exit Interview

The inspector will review any observations and regulatory findings. The inspector will also identify preventive produce safety practices and conditions on your farm that align with the regulation.

If you are able to make corrections to identified violations during the inspection, these will be documented. If the violation cannot be corrected during the inspection, the inspector will work with you to determine a reasonable time frame for corrective actions and future preventive measures.

Finally, the inspector will answer any questions you have and issue an Inspection Report to document the visit.

For questions regarding produce inspections, contact producesafety@agr.wa.gov or (360) 902-1848.

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Common Compliance Issues

- Lack of annual employee training
- Missing or incomplete records
- Animals in the field or packing area
- Lack of pre-harvest monitoring to identify contaminated produce
- Portable toilet not accessible for cleaning and located too close to produce
- Insufficient cleaning and sanitizing of food contact surfaces

Recordkeeping Tips

- Records required for most covered farms:
 - Employee Training
 - Cleaning and Sanitizing
 - Biological Soil Amendment Treatment (if applicable)
- Electronic and handwritten records (using permanent ink) are acceptable.
- Records must be accurate and legible.
- You can use existing records from other audits or inspections.
- Most general records (except sales and water-related records) must be kept for two years.
- Records must include (as applicable):
 - Farm name and location
 - Actual values or observations obtained
 - Description of produce
 - Location of growing area
 - Activity date and time
- Records must be signed and initialed by the person performing the activity.
- Some records must be reviewed, signed and dated by a supervisor or responsible party.

Visit agr.wa.gov/producesafety for inspection documents and recordkeeping resources.