

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING AN INSPECTION

A GUIDE FOR INDIANA PRODUCE FARMS

EDUCATE BEFORE AND WHILE WE REGULATE

Under Indiana Senate Enrolled Act (SEA) 331, the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) will begin produce safety inspections in July 2019. This new produce inspection program is focused on promoting food safety and preventing foodborne illnesses linked to fresh produce. The amount of time an inspection will take depends on the type of inspection, farm activities, farm size, and observations made during the inspection.

Prior to the Inspection

You will be notified of the inspection, as the inspectors will strive to schedule the inspection at a time that works for all involved parties. You also may request to schedule the inspection. Inspectors will make every effort to accommodate your request, but their ability to do so depends on available resources.

Day of the Inspection

When an ISDH inspector(s) arrives on your farm, the inspector(s) will ask to speak to the owner or person in charge. The inspector(s) will introduce themselves, provide identification, and describe the reason for the visit. A person knowledgeable in growing, harvesting, packing, and holding activities—preferably the person responsible for produce safety—should plan on accompanying the inspector(s) during the inspection.

Initial Interview

Before the inspection begins, the inspector(s) will provide you with a brief description of the scope of the inspection and activities to be conducted during the inspection. The inspector(s) will ask about the activities performed during the day(s) of the inspection, such as whether the farm is undergoing planting, harvesting, packing, or holding processes. The inspector(s) will work with the person in charge to coordinate inspection activities with farm operations. Any biosecurity practices, hazards, safety protocols, and other required procedures should be shared with the inspector before the inspection starts.

Walk-Through of the Farm

During the inspection, the inspector(s) will observe your farm operations. They will ask questions about any farming practices and operations that they are not able to observe during the inspection. They will take notes, and possibly pictures, and will review farm food safety-related records. Throughout the inspection, the inspector(s) will explain what is being looked at and why.

If there are any practices that do not satisfy the rule requirements, the inspector(s) will explain the reason(s) for each concern and its significance to public health. They will provide an opportunity for corrective action to be taken. All initial inspections will be educational. The only exception to this is if an egregious condition exists. An egregious condition is the observation of a visible source and route of contamination. Such conditions must be considered serious as they are likely to pose an imminent public health risk.

Exit Interview

The inspector(s) will go over any observations and findings. If you are able to make a correction(s) during the inspection, the inspector(s) will document the correction(s) implemented in the inspection report. If the violation cannot be corrected during the inspection, the inspector(s) will work with the person in charge to determine a reasonable time frame to implement preventive measures and corrective actions.

The inspector(s) will then conclude the inspection by answering any questions you have. They will provide information about resources and technical assistance that are available to you. You will be issued an inspection report, complete with ISDH contact information, that will document the inspection.

MEET OUR INSPECTORS



JENNIFER COLEMAN

Northern Indiana
317-476-0059



BILL TULEY

Southern Indiana
317-419-1073



HEIDI WALKER

Central Indiana
317-903-6560

For questions regarding produce inspections and to schedule an On Farm Readiness Review (an FDA-developed program designed to prepare you completely for these inspections), contact the ISDH Food Protection Program, Produce Safety Division at producesafety@ish.in.gov, 317-476-0056, or your region's inspector. For more information, visit www.safeproducein.com and the ISDH Farm Food Safety Initiative website at <https://www.in.gov/isdh/25773.htm>.

