



Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
Division of Food and Recreational Safety
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How to Determine a Restaurant Permit Category

Restaurants are placed into four categories based on food safety risks. Prepackaged restaurants serve only individually wrapped single food servings that are prepared and packaged off premise by a licensed processor with preparation on the premise limited to heating and serving. EXAMPLE– whole frozen pizzas. The other three categories (simple, moderate and complex) use a point system to determine the complexity. Use the list below to calculate your complexity factor.

Complexity Factor	Point(s)
Food is not prepared until an order is placed.	0
Food items are held hot for one meal period or for a maximum of 4 hours, whichever is less.	0
Food preparation is limited to mixing together prepackaged products that do not need to be cooked further except for aesthetic reasons (such as frozen soup concentrate with milk), or to condiment preparation (such as slicing pickles and onions).	0
The restaurant contains a self-service salad or food bar.	1
The restaurant handles raw poultry, meat, or seafood.	1
The seating capacity of the restaurant or operation is 50 or more.	1
Food is served through a drive through window for food pickup.	1
The restaurant promotes delivery of ready-to-eat food products to customers.	1
Potentially hazardous foods are cooled, reheated, or hot or cold held for service longer than 4 hours.	1
Food is prepared in one location and then transported to be served in another location.	1
The restaurant contains or uses banquet facilities as well as main dining area.	1
Food is served that requires preparation activities such as chopping, dicing, slicing, boiling, and blanching in order for that product to be served.	1
Total Points Simple Restaurant = 0 Moderate Restaurant = 1-4 Complex Restaurant = 5+	

*Please note, if your restaurant has been improperly categorized, it may delay your licensing until the fee difference for the pre-inspection and proper license category is collected by the Department.