



### Restaurant Letter Grading: the First Six Months

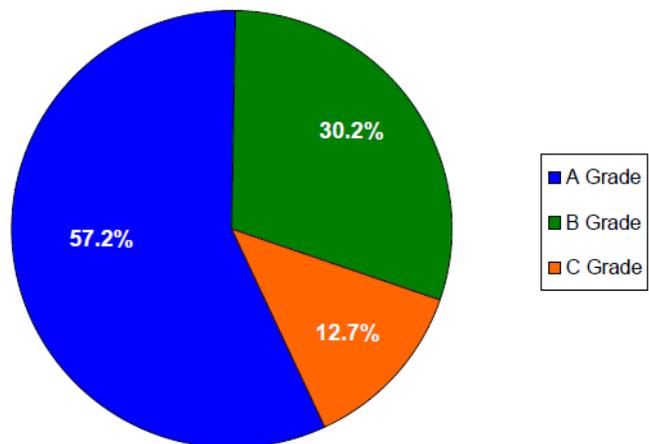
In July 2010, the New York City Health Department began requiring restaurants to publicly post letter grades – A, B or C – that summarize the results of their sanitary inspections. Restaurant letter grades help consumers make informed choices about where to eat, and consumer awareness creates a new incentive for the city’s restaurants to maintain high food safety standards.

Preliminary results from the first six months of letter grading suggest that restaurants are taking actions to improve their food safety practices, as shown below.

#### Most restaurants earn A grades

When restaurant grading was first proposed, the Health Department estimated that about one third of restaurants would earn A grades during the first year. So far, the results are better than expected. Of the 10,000 restaurants that received grade cards during the first six months of the initiative, 57% were awarded A grades and 87% received either A or B grades. The Health Department is slightly behind schedule on its plan to grade all of the city’s 24,000 restaurants by the Fall of 2011, but the agency expects to complete them by the end of the year.

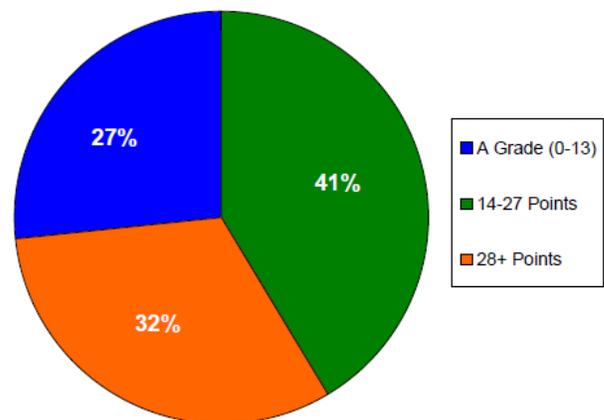
Distribution of Restaurant Grades as of January 12, 2011



#### Restaurants improve significantly between their first and second inspections

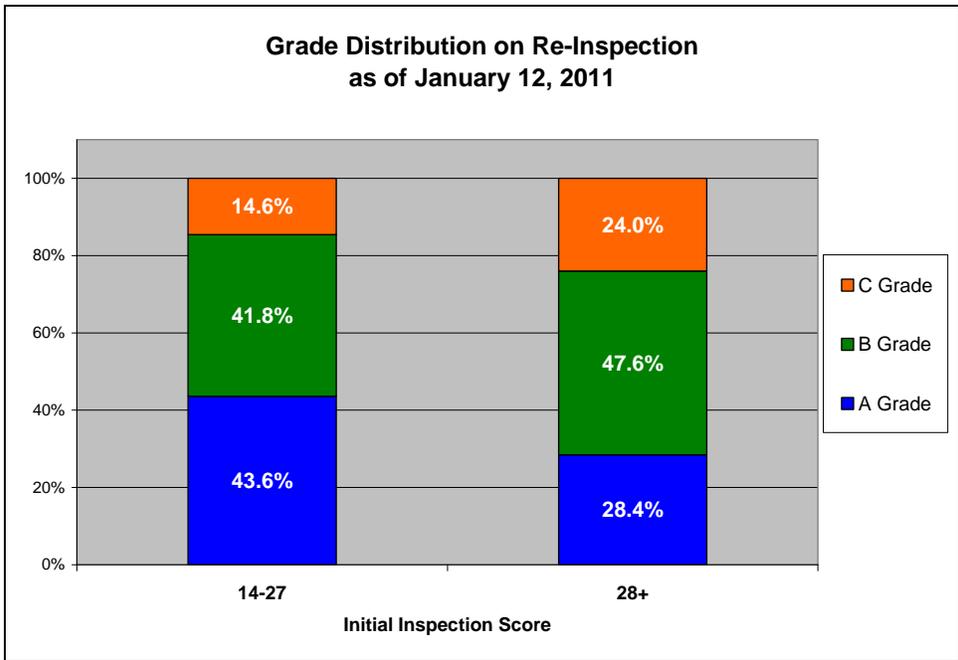
The grading program uses dual inspections to help restaurants improve their food-safety practices before they are graded. If a restaurant does not earn an A on its first inspection, the Health Department does not issue a grade. Instead, it conducts an unannounced second inspection roughly a month later, and grades the second inspection.

Initial Inspection Scores as of January 12, 2011



Records from first six months suggest that the system is motivating restaurants to improve their food safety practices. Just 27% of restaurants received A grades (0 to 13 violation points) on initial inspection, meaning that 73% required a second inspection.

But among those scoring in the B range (14 to 27 violation points) on initial inspection, nearly 44% improved to earn an A grade on second inspection. Of restaurants that scored in the C range (28 or more violation points) on their first inspection, 72% improved enough to earn an A or B on the second.



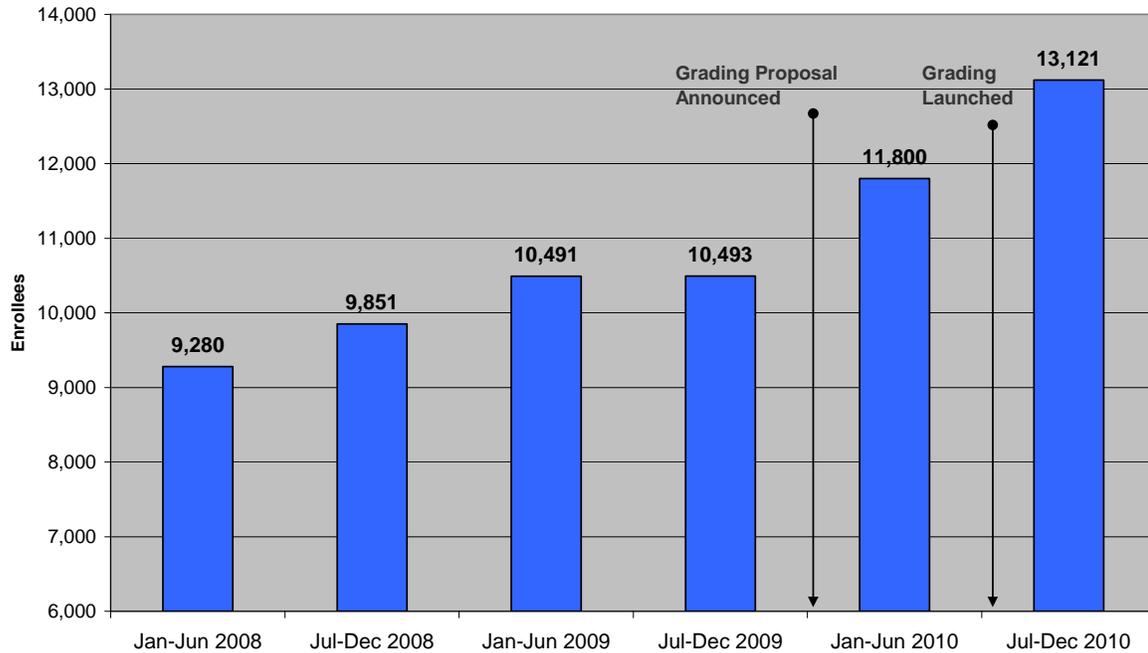
### Public recognition of grading is growing

The Health Department’s improved restaurant-inspection [website](#), which launched on the same day as the grading initiative, has grown in popularity. The site received more than 40,000 page views each month during the second half of 2010 – a five-fold increase over the previous year. And more than 156 additional websites downloaded a widget to give their viewers direct access to restaurant inspection results.

### Restaurants are increasing food safety training for their employees

Restaurants can improve their food safety practices and avoid violations of the Health Code by training their employees and supervisors. The letter grading system creates an additional incentive for training, and restaurant operators appear to be seizing it. In 2010, the number of people completing the Health Department’s food protection course was up significantly over the previous two years.

## Restaurant Supervisors Completing Health Department Food Protection Course



### The Health Department continues to educate restaurant owners on food safety and on grading

To help every restaurant maintain excellent food safety practices, the Health Department is mailing new publications to all the food establishments it inspects. The new materials are also available [online](#). *What to Expect When You're Inspected: A Guide for Food Service Operators* explains the agency's inspection process and what operators need to do to have a successful inspection. The guide includes a *Self-Inspection Worksheet* that lists every condition a health inspector assesses. The Health Department encourages every restaurant to use the worksheet to conduct weekly self-inspections. Self-inspection helps restaurants review food safety practices and correct any lapses before they're inspected. *Every Restaurant Can Achieve an A* is a poster for restaurant owners, managers, and workers. It lists some of the problems most frequently found by the Health Department during inspections and provides tips for avoiding them.

Between June and December of 2010, the Health Department conducted 25 free workshops for restaurant operators on the grading initiative and on changes to the Health Code on certain food temperature rules.

Workshops were held in every borough and were conducted in Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, and Korean, in addition to English. Nearly 2300 restaurant representatives attended.

