

# Request for Proposal

## Quality of Life of Street Vendors



Photo Credit: Niki Siabanis (Spacing Toronto)



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Definitions .....	3
Introduction.....	4
Background Information .....	4
Problem .....	6
Stakeholders .....	7
Engineering Problem .....	9
Design Requirements.....	10
Objective.....	10
Constraints .....	10
Criteria .....	10
Appendix A: Current Cart Designs.....	11
Appendix B: DineSafe System.....	13
Infraction Examples.....	13
DineSafe Inspection Procedure.....	14
Infraction Category Table.....	15
Appendix C: Foodborne Illnesses Data.....	16
Bibliography .....	18

## DEFINITIONS

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### Community

A sense of community is represented by four elements: membership, influence, integration and fulfilment of need. [1] The street vendors of Toronto can be defined as a community due to their shared occupational interests, their similar influence on the economy and also their perception of needs.

### Quality of Life

WHO defines Quality of Life as *“individuals’ perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns. It is a broad ranging concept affected in a complex way by the person’s physical health, psychological state, level of independence, social relationships, personal beliefs and their relationship to salient features of their environment.”* [2]

### Need

The concept of need is multi-faceted and can vary in definition with the context it is used in. [3] A general form of need can be said to be the gap between *What Is* and *What Should Be* in a given situation. “Need” can also change as the situation evolves, thus need analysis must be an iterative component of the design process. [4]

### Engineering Design

Engineering design is the process of devising a system, component, or process to meet desired needs. [5]

### Sporadic Foodborne Illnesses

Sporadic cases are defined as those occurring among individuals not known to be associated with an outbreak of disease. [6]

### Outbreak-Associated Foodborne Illness

Outbreaks occur when a group of people consume the same contaminated food and subsequently two or more of them become ill with the same infection. [6]

### DineSafe

DineSafe is Toronto Public Health's food safety program that inspects all establishments serving and preparing food, following which it discloses the results to the public of the aforementioned inspections. [7]

## INTRODUCTION

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This RFP requests proposals for a cost-effective solution to improve the sanitation and storage features of the prevalent street food cart design in the downtown area of the City of Toronto. The objective of this improvement is to improve the quality of life of street vendors in the downtown Toronto vicinity.

There are 150 mobile food premises in the GTA [7], and the street vendors working at these establishments are strongly represented by the Toronto Street Food Vendors Association (SFVA). As a majority of their time is spent handling food, street vendors have a general need for good hygiene, a reliable water supply and an efficient garbage disposal system. Although food cart designs that provide solutions to some of these problems do exist [8], their exorbitant prices make them inaccessible for many street vendors, who generally have a weak financial background [9].

This need of cost-effective carts with good sanitary features is evident by the large number of sanitation related infractions reported by DineSafe in the City of Toronto [10]. This document substantiates the claim that this is a legitimate need of the street vending community in Toronto and analyses the problems associated with this need. The various stakeholders affected by this issue are identified and their personal interests in this issue are also explored. Finally, an engineering framing of the problem and specific requirements for a design solution are provided.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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The community of the City of Toronto cumulatively spends upward of \$6.6 billion in purchasing food products [11]. Street food is not only a cultural but also an economic element of the city. In fact one in eight jobs in Toronto is directly related to food retail [11]. Toronto's Food Charter (set in 2001 by the Toronto City Council and Toronto Food Policy Council) [12] which is an official statement of commitment to the strategy of providing the people of the city with healthy and good-quality food [12] further highlights the importance of food. Food can also bring distinct communities and cultures together and Toronto has various communities and organizations that are directly involved in enhancing the food culture in Toronto. Recognized by the Toronto Public Health, street vendors in Toronto are a major source of food for consumers.

Street vendors make up an essential part of the City of Toronto and contribute to its development in many ways economically and culturally. Street vending provides employment opportunities for the unskilled labour force of Toronto, livens the atmosphere of the streets of the city, making it more appealing for tourists, displays the culinary diversity of Toronto, forms an inimitable Toronto street subculture, and provides a cheap and readily accessible source of food for locals and tourists alike. According to a Toronto street food survey results, the most common suggested improvements to street food were increased variety of food and more street vendors in general, indicating the large demand which is being created currently in the City of Toronto. [13]

There is an increasing trend among Torontonians to eat out rather than cook at home [11], due to their busy schedules. Approximately 4% of the average household income is spent on retail food [14]. This emphasizes the importance of the quality of the food being purchased. The primary source of reported foodborne illness cases was the poor sanitation of the retail outlet from which the food was purchased. To promote food diversity while maintaining health standards, Toronto

## Sanitation Issues with Toronto Street Food Vendors

Public Health has implemented an inspection system to ensure that the food provided through commercial outlets is prepared in sanitary conditions. According to their findings as documented in the Toronto Public Health Food Premises and Inspection Disclosure Report (Figure 1) [10], more than 90% of the food inspection infractions found were related to sanitation concerns.

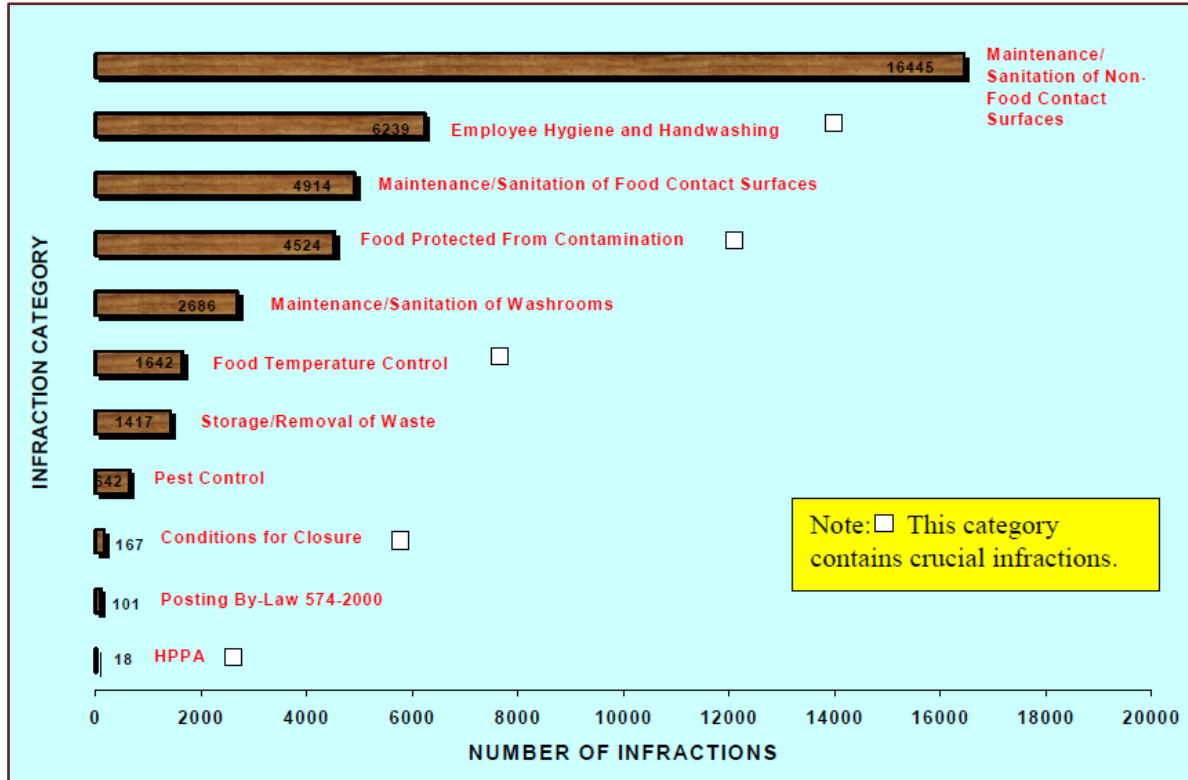


Figure 1: Number of Food Premises Infractions by Infraction category, 2001 [10]  
(Refer to Appendix B for infraction examples)

Sanitation is of particularly great concern to street vendors, whose limited access to water and often rushed schedules, can easily lead them to neglect sanitation. This basic requirement affects both the street vendors' personal livelihood and work, and in turn their quality of life. According to DineSafe, there are 150 street vending locations in the City of Toronto [7], the majority of which are located in the downtown area [15]. These vendors are generally restricted, by regulations [16], to sell a pre-determined range of food, which apply to all the carts mentioned previously. This restriction results in stagnation and often results in vendors leaving the business, as it becomes unprofitable [9].

## PROBLEM

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In July 2012, major sanitation problems were found afflicting numerous street vendors around the city, including rodent infestations and lack of free-running water [17]. With the great popularity of street food in Toronto, this issue is major concern; many groups of people are affected, such as the vendors themselves, the consumers, and Toronto Public Health's DineSafe program.

In November 2011, a DineSafe health inspector made a routine inspection to a street food cart at the intersection of Simcoe St. and Queen St. He found that the cart was operating under egregious health violations; severe rodent infestation, lack of means to keep the cart clean, and lack of a temperature control for food storage [18]. The rodent infestation creates a thriving environment for rodent-transmitted diseases such Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome, Haemorrhagic Fever with Renal Syndrome and many more [19]. According to TPH Staff Report of February 2006 [20], the rodent infestation greatly depends on the sanitation levels of establishment and the availability of rodent-attracting materials such as open food containers.



*Figure 2: City loses bid to shut down hotdog carts despite multiple health violations – The Star [18]*

These sanitation problems can result in an increased rate of foodborne illness, which is a major concern for the City of Toronto. According to Toronto Health's 2009 staff report on foodborne illnesses there were more than 2000 cases of sporadic foodborne illness and 500 cases of outbreak-associated foodborne illness per annum in Toronto during the 1998 to 2007 period [6]. The majority of cases of foodborne illness also occur in the age group of 20-39 [6], which places a significant burden on Toronto's productive labour force of which Toronto's economy bears the cost.

It was found that the main causes of foodborne illnesses are usually linked with the proper storage and temperature control of preserved food and the food-handler's hygiene [21].

The preservation of food is directly related to the storage conditions and temperature as bacteria grows quickly in food at temperatures between 4 and 60 degrees Celsius [22]. Hygiene is also a major problem for food vendors who often have to work with a limited water supply [18].

The currently manufactured carts are mostly not equipped to regulate temperature and are also not properly insulated. Moreover, many of these carts are not rodent proof and do not have adequate supply of running water. These conditions make these carts potential breeding sites for bacteria and a myriad of other microorganisms which in turn lead to food borne illnesses. This invites the possibility to improve the current design of these carts or possibly alter it completely so these carts do not have the aforementioned deficiencies.

## STAKEHOLDERS

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### Street Vendors and Managers:

- Street vendors are the actual cart operators who spend majority of their time handling the food that is served to the consumers. They are also responsible for cleanliness and the operating conditions of the cart. Street vendors are usually from a weak to moderate financial background and their aim is to achieve progressively higher sales over time, thus elevating their quality of life [9]. Their primary workplace is the cart and so it is important that their workplace is hazard free and does not endanger the health of the vendor or the quality of the food that would be served to potential consumers.
- In order to maximise sales, street vendors rely on building a solid reputation for reliable food. When a sanitation incident transpires, word spreads quickly, not only dealing a major blow to the individual vendor in question, but to the reputability of street food vendors in general.
- In addition, the street vendor managers are responsible for purchasing and licensing the carts. As such, it is also important that the product is worth investing into (for multiple locations) yet not too expensive (specifics in Requirements).

### Consumers:

- Many different types of people are included in this set of stakeholders such as the working population in the downtown area, tourists etc. The working population of Toronto, especially people who have long working hours, highly depend on fast food for their daily food intake and therefore are the majority of the consumers. Consumers, in general, prefer healthy and affordable food. Though they may not directly influence the development of a product to improve street vendors' hygiene, it is in the best interests of the street vendors to keep consumers satisfied, thus consumer opinion must not be overlooked.

### Toronto Public Health:

- Toronto Public Health is responsible for the overall health of the population and for implementing public policies. They promote healthy life habits, take measures to prevent diseases and protect the population against various health hazards. In terms of food, they have committed to promote proper food policies, prevent food borne illnesses and maintain food safety for the people of Toronto [12]. They regulate street food safety using DineSafe, a licensing and regular inspection system of the city's food outlets [7]. TPH has implemented a Food Handler Certification Program [23] and also the Food Strategy to establish a proper plan towards enhancing the food safety in Toronto.

### Street Food Vending Working Group:

- The Street Food Working Group is set-up by the Toronto Public Health, with an objective to help licensed food vendors expand their menu. They must review the licensing, regulatory and inspection framework for street food vending pertaining to food control [24]. This helps TPH gain another perspective on the by-laws and policies set by them for street food vending.

### Marianne Moroney:

- A street vendor herself for almost 8 years now and the executive director of Street Food Vendors Association [25], Marianne would be highly interested in a product that would



improve the quality of life of street vendors. She is an advocate of the rights of the street vendors in Toronto and believes they are not just a medium for selling goods. She actively supports initiatives to allow street vendors, specifically in the downtown area, to serve more diverse foods. Apart from her work in SFVA, she herself works extremely hard to support her family by her work. [25]

### Local Media:

- Media networks such as *The Star*, *Spacing Toronto*, etc. play a major role in popularising street food in the city as they spread information regarding current events and also sponsor and advertise street food events. They have regularly highlighted the issues facing street vendors, as well as the effects of programmes implemented by the City of Toronto to address these issues [26]. Although local media may not have a direct influence on the development of design, the appeal of the design could prompt them to popularize the businesses of vendors implementing it. As a result, these vendors would attract more customers, generate more revenue, and improve their quality of life.

### Private Property Owners:

- Owners of private property where the vendors would like to operate their cart. These areas are usually in a busy neighbourhood where there would likely be a higher number of potential customers. Their primary goal is to lease their property only to increase their own potential customers (e.g. parking lot owners would like higher volume of cars being parked there). Their interests are similar to those of the street vendors' and so they would also benefit from the improvement of the quality of life of street vendors.

We map the previously identified stakeholders on the basis of their influence on the decisions made regarding the selected community and their interest in the issue itself. The entities that hold the highest influential power and the highest interest would clearly be ranked higher in the stakeholder hierarchy. These stakeholders are part of the decision making process and are also directly affected by the solutions that are developed [27].

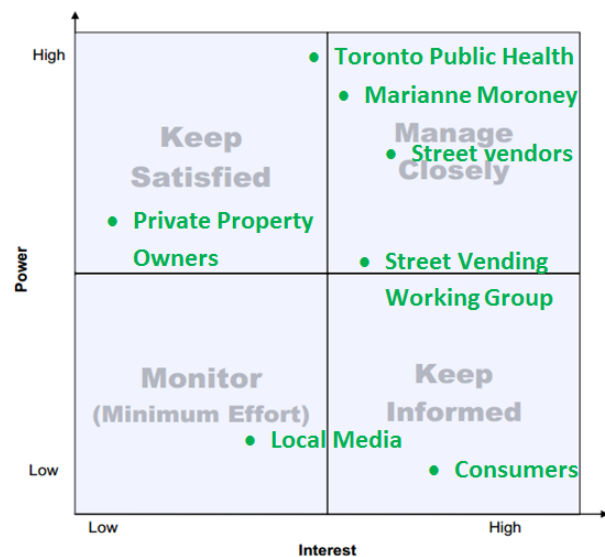


Figure 3: Stakeholders Power vs. Interest Plot

## ENGINEERING PROBLEM

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Considering the basic design of the carts currently being used in the downtown area (Appendix A):

- There is no insulation which means no temperature control of the goods inside the cart and no protection for the street vendor from the elements. This compromises two aspects of the requirements of sanitary conditions for food handling [28]:
  1. Temperature at which food must be stored due to the lack of proper food storage
  2. Hand washing before handling food due to the lack of a hot water supply
- The current design of the carts in the downtown area lack a proper temperature control system, or measuring system to ensure that the food being stored is in the optimal temperature range [22]
- The carts also do not have a proper waste storage, which leads to attracting various rodents and pests, also allowing them to “enter” the cart very easily

Overall, the engineering problems can be broken down into 4 smaller problems in order of priority:

1. Lack of an efficient temperature control system
2. Lack of running water or proper water storage (i.e. temperature controlled)
3. Design to minimize the access to rodents and pests
4. Lack of an adequate garbage disposal system

The design challenge of this RFP is then summarised to be:

*Improve the design of the current street food vending carts of downtown Toronto to accommodate for proper storage of food with temperature control. Additionally, ensure that the cart has a water supply or can store water effectively, which should be temperature controlled as well.*

## DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

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### OBJECTIVE

The main goal of this RFP is to elevate the quality of life of street vendors by allowing them to work in a sanitary environment which protects them from poor hygiene related hazards. Moreover the improved conditions should also let them provide a better quality of food leading to better revenue by being able to progressively increase their number of customers as they increase their reputation for selling healthy food.

### CONSTRAINTS

- Must be cost effective compared to the implementation
  - If a modification or add-on to the current design, less than 20% of the cart's price
  - If a redesigned cart, not more than current average price of carts (\$3600 CAD)
- Must not increase the cart's environmental footprint by more than 10% of the current footprint
- Must comply with all design codes and standards [29]
- Must occupy at most an area of 10 feet by 5 feet [30]
- Must not exceed the size specified according to the type of work station in the Toronto Municipal Code, Street Vending, 315-8 (1) [29]
- Must be safe to prepare food in
- Must have a lighting system for vending at night
- Must have an exhaust fan if cart is enclosed

### CRITERIA

- Prevention of rodent infestation (metric: number of rodents spotted over a 6 month period, lesser is preferred)
- Efficient storage of food and equipment (metric: mass of food stored at temperature ranges, more is preferred)
- Effective temperature control (metric: °C range and ability to maintain the range, optimal range [22] and more time it's maintained for is preferred)
- Durability and maintainability (metric: \$/year spent on maintenance and operation, lesser is preferred)
- Comfort level of the street cart operator (metric: temperature inside cart regardless of weather and the space provided to the operator to move about, temperature closer to room temperature and more space is preferred)
- Aesthetic appeal (metric: number of consumers attracted purely on cart design, more is preferred)
- Efficient garbage disposal system (metric: mass of the garbage that can be stored without leaking it's scent, more is preferred)
- Water storage capacity (metric: litres of water stored, fresh and waste separately, where fresh is stored at a controlled temperature, more is preferred)
- Ease of operation (metric: hours spent to learn operation procedure of cart, lesser is preferred)

## APPENDIX A: CURRENT CART DESIGNS

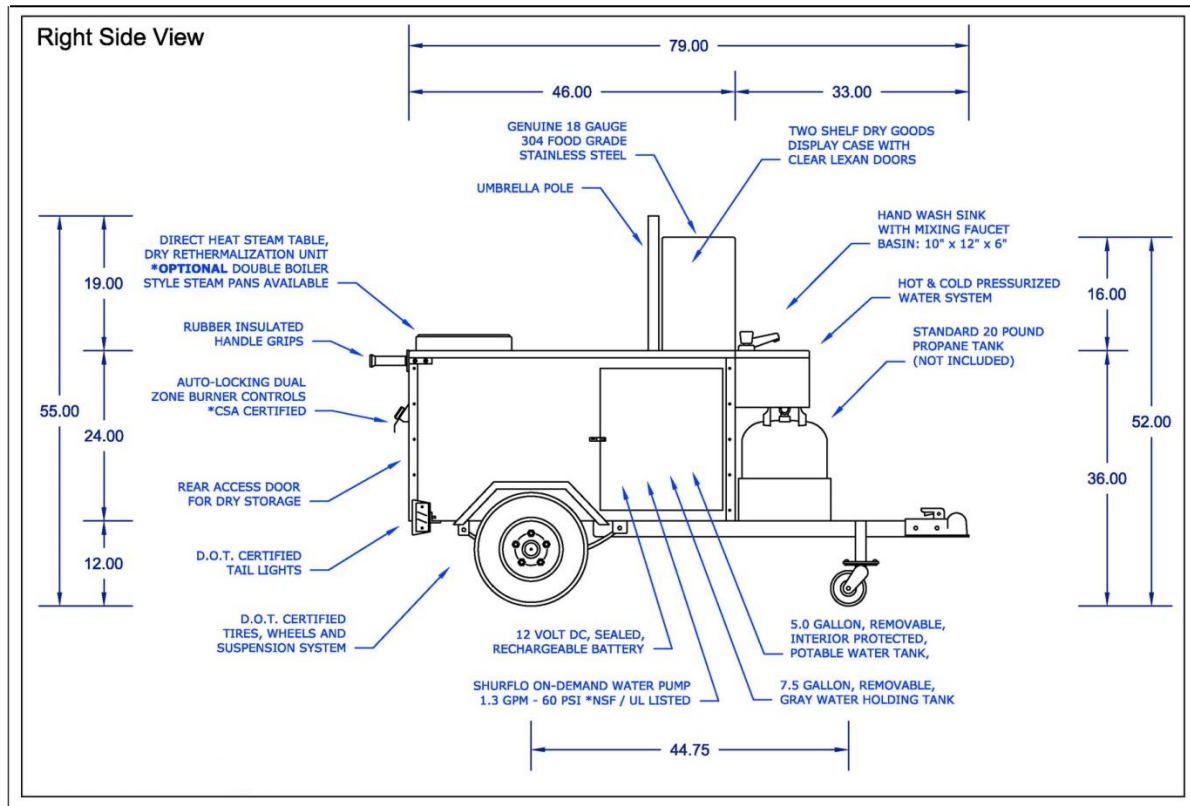


Figure 1: The DreamMaker Ventura Hot Dog Cart [33]

The DreamMaker Ventura hotdog cart is the most popular cart sold by DreamMaker. It is designed for efficiency, high production and maximizing profit. This cart has a stainless steel finish that enhances aesthetics and provides solutions to many of the sanitation problems identified above, such as a reliable supply of water and an efficient temperature controlled storage space. This also indirectly solves the pest control problem, since the food storage available ensures that bacteria do not grow quickly in the food, thus reducing the risk of pest infestation. The design does not however provide a garbage disposal system, leaving that responsibility solely to the vendor. This is still a potential problem, since an improper disposal system could attract pests.

### Some Important Features:

- Cost: \$3,499.00 USD (approximately \$3600.00 CAD)
- Insulated hatch door for storage of extra food and cold beverages
- Built with stainless steel for durability and maintainability
- Stainless steel finish for improved aesthetics
- Inserts for steaming available
- Hot/Cold water hand sink
- Fully pressurized water system
- Waste water tank easily removable
- 18 Gauge, 304 Stainless Steel food contact surfaces
- 5 gallon fresh water holding tank and 7.5 gallon waste water tank

## Sanitation Issues with Toronto Street Food Vendors



Figure 1: Japadog: Vancouver's Street Food Pioneer  
<http://foodpunk.ca/2010/11/13/japadog-vancouvers-street-food-pioneer/>



Figure 2: Re-up BBQ Cart, the sequel: Beef Brisket sandwiches and Southern Sweet Tea  
<http://foodpunk.ca/2011/05/19/re-up-bbq-cart-the-sequel-beef-brisket-sandwiches-and-southern-sweet-tea/>



Figure 3: Toronto Street Food: Minding the Store  
<http://davegerry.wordpress.com/tag/toronto-street-food/>



## APPENDIX B: DINESAFE SYSTEM

### INFRACTION EXAMPLES

Infraction Type	Examples
<b>Minor Infractions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infractions that present a minimal health risk.</li> <li>• These items must be corrected by the next inspection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walls, floors or other non-food contact surfaces or equipment need cleaning or repair (e.g., cracked or missing floor tiles, cracked or peeling paint not directly over food preparation area)</li> <li>• Inadequate ventilation and lighting systems</li> <li>• Hair constraints not worn</li> </ul>
<b>Significant Infractions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infractions that present a potential health hazard.</li> <li>• These items must be corrected within 24-48 hours or legal action may be taken.</li> <li>• These items indirectly involve food, through handling, preparation, storage and/or service.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food contact surfaces or equipment require cleaning or repair</li> <li>• Repair of refrigeration and mechanical dish washing equipment required</li> <li>• Accurate indicating thermometers not provided</li> <li>• Lack of hand wash basin with the necessary supplies</li> <li>• Garbage not stored in a sanitary manner</li> <li>• Improper cleaning and sanitizing of equipment and utensils</li> <li>• Washroom cleanliness not maintained, supplies not provided</li> </ul>
<b>Crucial Infractions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infractions that present an immediate health hazard.</li> <li>• These items directly involve food, such as contamination, time-temperature abuse or lack of safe (potable) water or any other condition that is a health hazard.</li> <li>• These items must be corrected immediately or an Order to Close the premises can be issued and/or immediate action must be taken to remove or eliminate the health hazard.</li> <li>• Enforcement action will be taken.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No hot and cold running water under pressure in food preparation area or where utensils are washed</li> <li>• Rodent or insect infestation without effective method of pest control</li> <li>• Inadequate refrigeration</li> <li>• Sewage back-up</li> <li>• Lack of safe potable water</li> <li>• Food contaminated or adulterated</li> </ul>

*Figure 1: Examples of Minor, Significant and Crucial Infractions of the Food Premises Regulation, given on the DineSafe website <http://www.toronto.ca/health/dinesafe/system.htm>*

## DINESAFE INSPECTION PROCEDURE

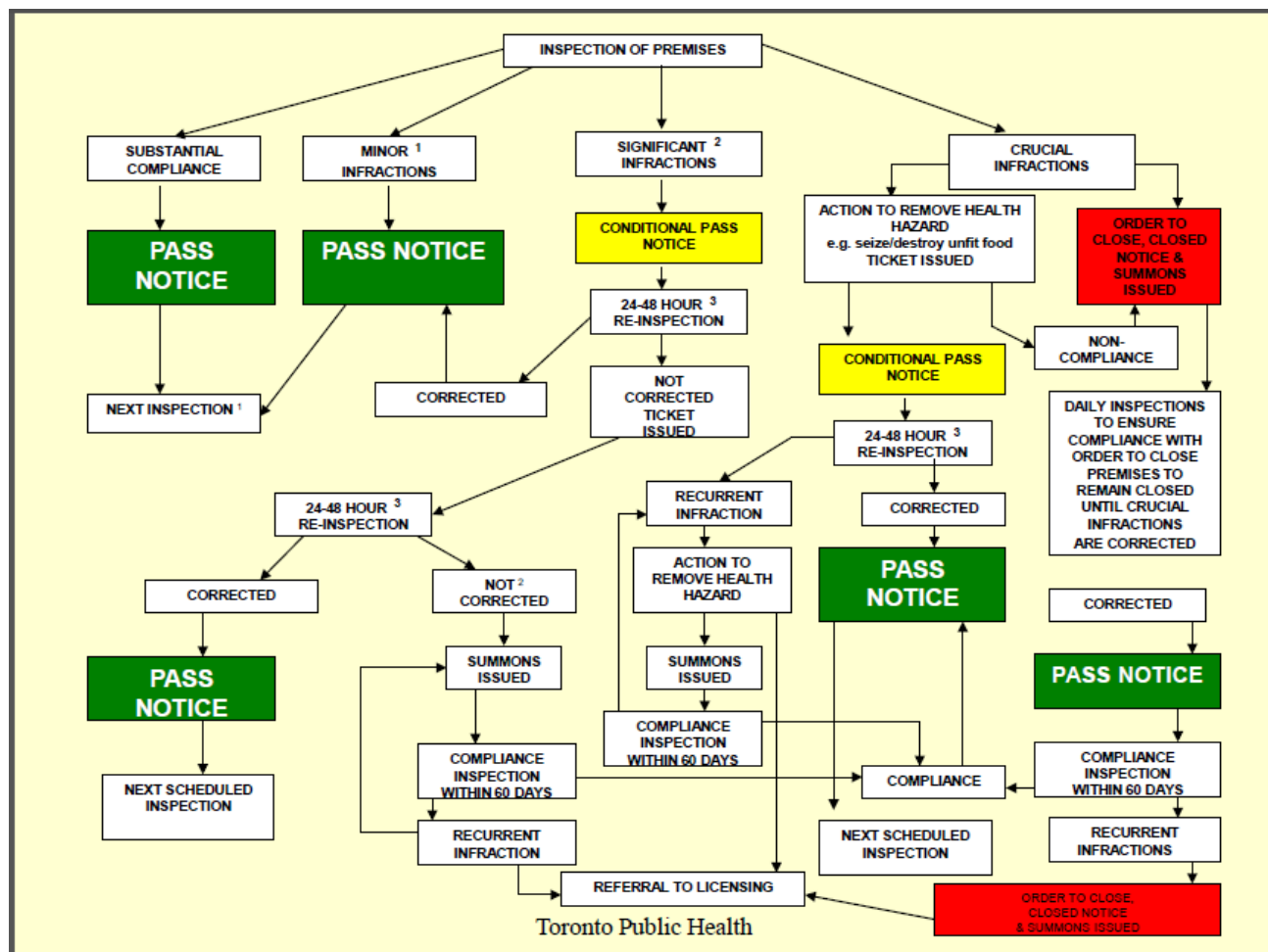


Figure 2: Inspection and Disclosure System [31]

## INFRACTION CATEGORY TABLE

Infraction Category Table			
FACTOR	INFRACTION CATEGORY		
	MINOR	SIGNIFICANT	CRUCIAL
RISK	Infractions that are <i>unlikely</i> to present a health hazard.	Infractions that present a <i>potential</i> health hazard if not corrected.	Infractions that present an <i>immediate</i> health hazard(s) at the time of inspection.
REASON	Infractions mostly involve the physical structure of the premises (floors, walls, ceilings) without impact on any aspect of food.	Infractions <i>indirectly</i> impact on <i>food</i> and/or its <i>handling</i> , and/or <i>preparation</i> , and/or <i>storage</i> , and/or <i>service</i> .	Infractions <i>directly</i> impact on <i>food</i> through time and temperature abuse, and/or contamination, and/or the lack of <i>potable water</i> .
TIME	Noted infraction(s) will be followed up on <i>next inspection</i> .	Noted infraction(s) will be followed up with a re-inspection within <i>24 to 48 hours</i> .	Noted infraction(s) will be corrected immediately and followed up with a re-inspection within <i>24 to 48 hours</i> or a re-opening inspection upon elimination of the health hazard(s).
LEGAL ACTION	TICKET (Outstanding infractions)	TICKET and/or ORDER and/or SUMMONS	ORDER and/or SUMMONS and/or CLOSURE
STATUS	PASS	CONDITIONAL PASS	CONDITIONAL PASS or CLOSED

Figure 3: Levels of infractions and corresponding implications [10]



## APPENDIX C: FOODBORNE ILLNESSES DATA

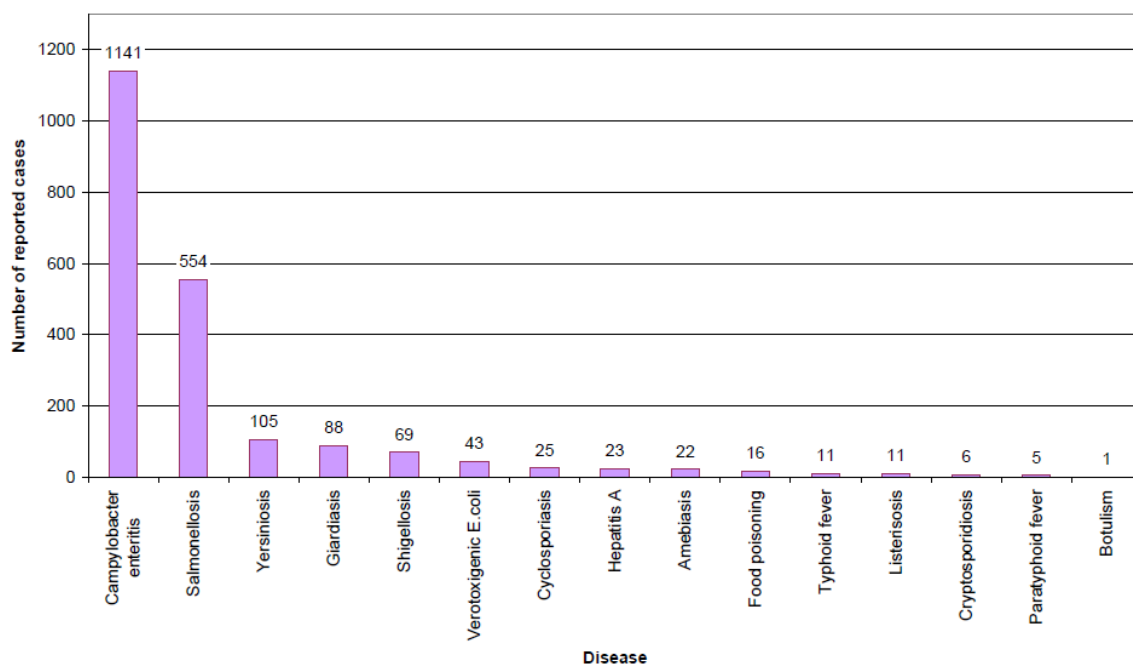


Figure 1: Average number of sporadic cases of foodborne illness, by disease. Toronto, 1998 to 2007 [6]

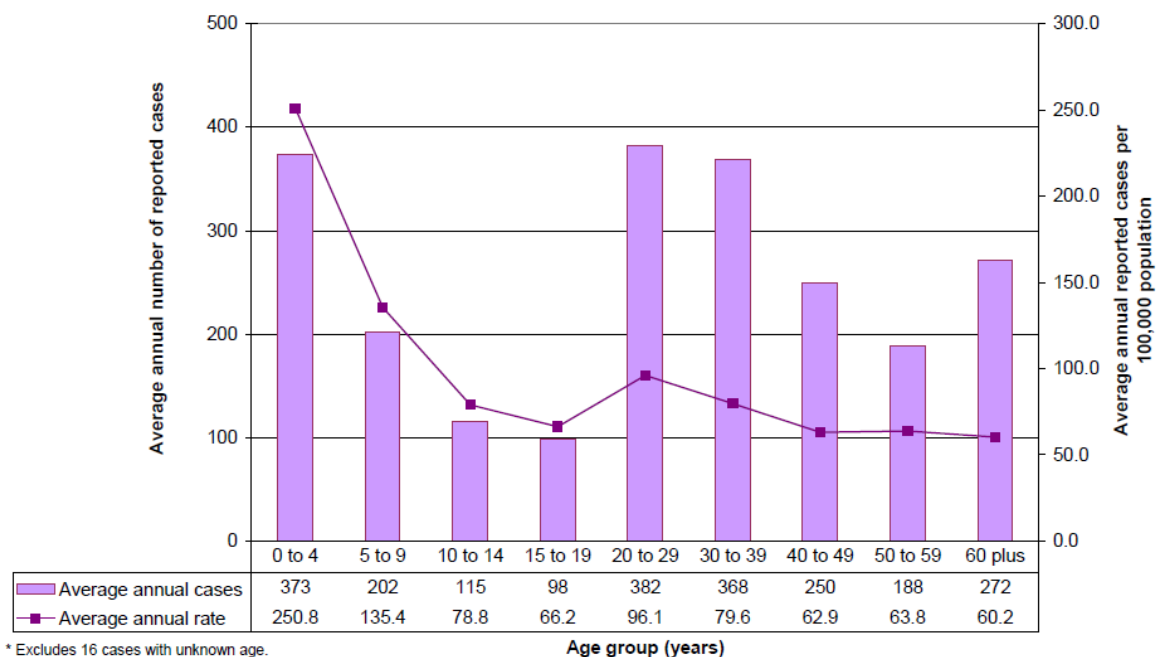
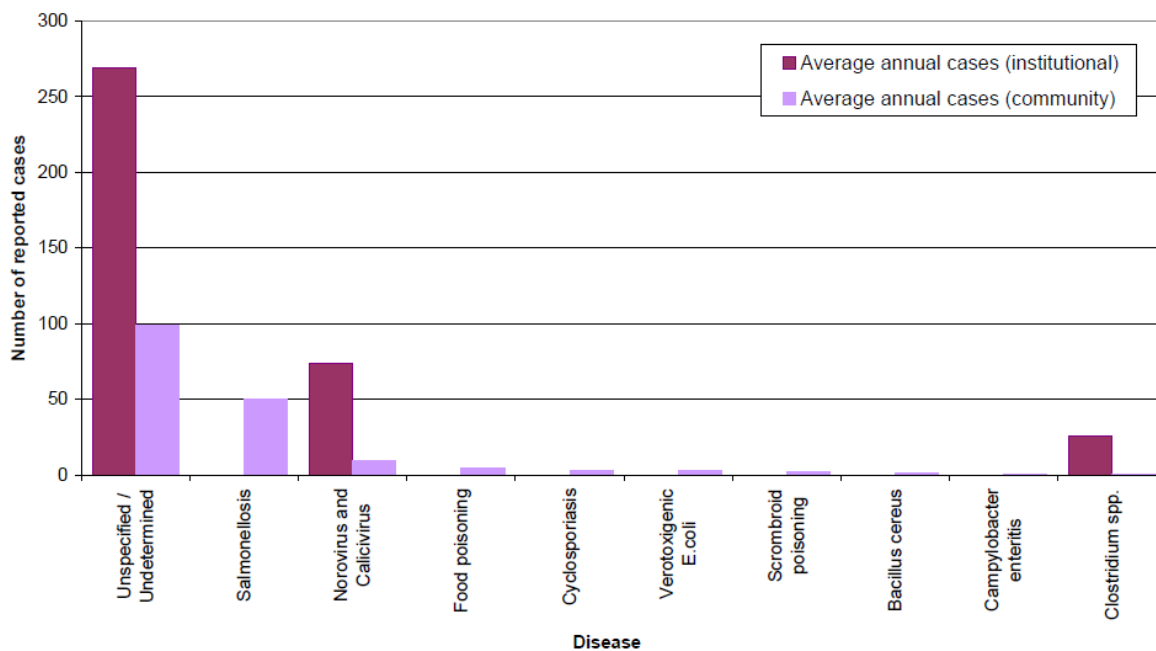


Figure 2: Average annual number of sporadic cases of foodborne illness and incidence rates, by age group. Toronto, 1998 to 2007 [6]

## Sanitation Issues with Toronto Street Food Vendors



*Figure 3: Average annual number of outbreak-associated cases of foodborne illness in institutional and community settings, by disease. Toronto, 2003 to 2007 [6]*

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