

County of Santa Clara

Department of Environmental Health

Consumer Protection Division

1555 Berger Drive, Suite 300, San Jose, CA 95112-2716

Phone (408) 918-3400 www.ehinfo.org



OFFICIAL INSPECTION REPORT

Facility FA0202187 - LA ESQUINA		Site Address 551 N SANTA CRUZ AV, LOS GATOS, CA 95030		Inspection Date 03/11/2026		Placard Color & Score GREEN 75			
Program PR0303845 - FOOD PREP / FOOD SVC OP 0-5 EMPLOYEES RC 3 - FP11			Owner Name BENJAMIN ROMERO MARTIN		Inspection Time 10:10 - 11:50				
Inspected By PRINCESS LAGANA		Inspection Type ROUTINE INSPECTION		Consent By JESUS FLORES				FSC Not Available 10/28/2029	

RISK FACTORS AND INTERVENTIONS		IN	OUT		COS/SA	N/O	N/A	PBI
			Major	Minor				
K01	Demonstration of knowledge; food safety certification	X						S
K02	Communicable disease; reporting/restriction/exclusion	X						
K03	No discharge from eyes, nose, mouth	X						
K04	Proper eating, tasting, drinking, tobacco use	X						
K05	Hands clean, properly washed; gloves used properly	X						
K06	Adequate handwash facilities supplied, accessible	X						S
K07	Proper hot and cold holding temperatures	X						S
K08	Time as a public health control; procedures & records					X		
K09	Proper cooling methods		X		X			N
K10	Proper cooking time & temperatures					X		
K11	Proper reheating procedures for hot holding	X						
K12	Returned and reservice of food	X						
K13	Food in good condition, safe, unadulterated	X						
K14	Food contact surfaces clean, sanitized	X						
K15	Food obtained from approved source	X						
K16	Compliance with shell stock tags, condition, display						X	
K17	Compliance with Gulf Oyster Regulations						X	
K18	Compliance with variance/ROP/HACCP Plan						X	
K19	Consumer advisory for raw or undercooked foods	X						
K20	Licensed health care facilities/schools: prohibited foods not being offered						X	
K21	Hot and cold water available	X						
K22	Sewage and wastewater properly disposed	X						
K23	No rodents, insects, birds, or animals			X				

GOOD RETAIL PRACTICES		OUT	COS
K24	Person in charge present and performing duties		
K25	Proper personal cleanliness and hair restraints		
K26	Approved thawing methods used; frozen food		
K27	Food separated and protected		
K28	Fruits and vegetables washed		
K29	Toxic substances properly identified, stored, used		
K30	Food storage: food storage containers identified	X	
K31	Consumer self service does prevent contamination		
K32	Food properly labeled and honestly presented		
K33	Nonfood contact surfaces clean		
K34	Warewash facilities: installed/maintained; test strips		
K35	Equipment, utensils: Approved, in good repair, adequate capacity	X	
K36	Equipment, utensils, linens: Proper storage and use	X	
K37	Vending machines		
K38	Adequate ventilation/lighting; designated areas, use		
K39	Thermometers provided, accurate		
K40	Wiping cloths: properly used, stored	X	
K41	Plumbing approved, installed, in good repair; proper backflow devices	X	
K42	Garbage & refuse properly disposed; facilities maintained		
K43	Toilet facilities: properly constructed, supplied, cleaned		
K44	Premises clean, in good repair; Personal/chemical storage; Adequate vermin-proofing	X	
K45	Floor, walls, ceilings: built, maintained, clean	X	
K46	No unapproved private home/living/sleeping quarters		
K47	Signs posted; last inspection report available		

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K48	Plan review	
K49	Permits available	
K58	Placard properly displayed/posted	

Comments and Observations

Major Violations

K09 - 8 Points - Improper cooling methods; 114002, 114002.1

Inspector Observations: *In the walk in cooler, frijoles in deep metal container measured at 45F. Per Manager, frijoles were cooked then cooled down last night.*

[CA]: *Potentially Hazardous Foods shall be cooled from 135F to 70F within 2 hours and then from 70F to 41F within 4 hours (6 hours total).*

Approved cooling methods include;

1. *Placing the food in shallow, heat-conductive pans.*
2. *Separating the food into smaller or thinner portions.*
3. *Using rapid cooling equipment (no plastic bins or containers).*
4. *Adding ice as an ingredient.*
5. *Using ice paddles.*
6. *Placing containers in an ice bath, stirring food frequently.*
7. *In accordance to an approved HACCP Plan*

[COS]: *Frijoles voluntarily discarded.*

Minor Violations

K23 - 3 Points - Observed rodents, insects, birds, or animals; 114259.1, 114259.4, 114259.5

Inspector Observations: *Old rodent droppings observed on floor underneath deep fryer. Per Manager, Terminix comes once/week. Most recent pest control report provided from august 2025. Proof of pest control invoice for service on 02/13/26 provided. Glue traps observed no activity. No other evidence of vermin found after thorough inspection of facility.*

[CA]: *The premises of each food facility must be maintained free of vermin. Eliminate evidence of vermin in a safe, effective and legal manner. Ensure food and food contact surfaces are protected from possible contamination at all times. Continue to follow pest control service recommendations and monitor for vermin activity. Seal all cracks, crevices, and gaps under any exterior doors to prevent entry and harborage of vermin.*

Maintain pest control service report available upon request.

K30 - 2 Points - Food storage containers are not identified; 114047, 114049, 114051, 114053, 114055, 114067(h), 114069 (b)

Inspector Observations: *Tub of chips stored directly on the floor at cook line. No contamination at the time of inspection.*

[CA]: *Food shall be stored at least 6 inches elevated from the floor on approved shelving that is easily cleanable (ex. Dunnage racks)*

[COS]: *Tub of chips relocated off the floor.*

K35 - 2 Points - Equipment, utensils - Unapproved, unclean, not in good repair, inadequate capacity; 114130, 114130.1, 114130.2, 114130.3, 114130.4, 114130.5, 114132, 114133, 114137, 114139, 114153, 114155, 114163, 114165, 114167, 114169, 114175, 114177, 114180, 114182

Inspector Observations: *Bowls used as scoops in bulk storage dry food.*

[CA]: *Discontinue storage of handle-less food equipment not approved for use as scoops. Provide food-grade scoops with handles for scooping.*

Propane gas tank stored at back storage area.

[CA]: *Propane gas tank is not an approved equipment. Remove unapproved equipment from facility.*

K36 - 2 Points - Equipment, utensils, linens: Improper storage and use; 114074, 114081, 114119, 114121, 114161, 114178, 114179, 114083, 114185, 114185.2, 114185.3, 114185.4, 114185.5

Inspector Observations: *Scoop handles within bulk storage dry food items such as sugar were in direct contact with food.*

[CA]: *Ensure that scoops which are stored in food containers for portioning are always stored in a manner which prevents the handle of the scoop from coming into direct contact with food (for ex: handles facing up).*

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K40 - 2 Points - Wiping cloths: improperly used and stored; 114135, 114185.1 114185.3(d,e)

Inspector Observations: *REPEAT VIOLATION*

Soiled wet wiping cloths stored on work surfaces without being placed back into their sanitizer buckets in between uses.

[CA]: Wiping cloths used for sanitizing work surfaces must be stored inside their sanitizer buckets containing at least 100ppm chlorine or 200ppm Quat sanitizer when not actively being used.

K41 - 2 Points - Plumbing unapproved, not installed, not in good repair; improper backflow devices; 114171, 114189.1, 114190, 114192, 114193, 114193.1, 114199, 114201, 114269

Inspector Observations: Mop sink's hot and cold water valves in disrepair.

[CA]: Repair valves and maintain in good condition.

K44 - 2 Points - Premises not clean, not in good repair; No personal/chemical storage; inadequate vermin-proofing; 114067(j), 114123, 114143 (a,b), 114256, 114256.1, 114256.2, 114256.4, 114257, 114257.1, 114259, 114259.2, 114259.3, 114279, 114281, 114282

Inspector Observations: Entry door propped open throughout inspection. No active delivery.

[CA]: Facility shall be fully enclosed.

K45 - 2 Points - Floor, walls, ceilings: not built, not maintained, not clean; 114143(d), 114266, 114268, 114268.1, 114271, 114272

Inspector Observations: *REPEAT VIOLATIONS*

1. Accumulation of grease and debris on floor underneath equipment at front cook line.

[CA]: Clean noted area. Maintain floors clean.

2. Hole on floor observed near chest freezer.

[CA]: Repair hole. Maintain floors in good condition.

Performance-Based Inspection Questions

Needs Improvement - Proper cooling methods.

Measured Observations

Item	Location	Measurement	Comments
caritas	stove top	182.00 Fahrenheit	final reheating for hot holding
pico de gallo	prep lin cooler	41.00 Fahrenheit	
raw chicken	prep line cooler	38.00 Fahrenheit	IR
water	3 comp sink	124.00 Fahrenheit	
frijoles	walk in cooler	41.00 Fahrenheit	
rice	walk in cooler	41.00 Fahrenheit	
water	restroom hand sinks	100.00 Fahrenheit	
cooked green pepper	prep table	127.00 Fahrenheit	active cooling bean ~20 mins prior
cut tomatoes	prpe line cooler	41.00 Fahrenheit	
red salsa	prep line cooler	38.00 Fahrenheit	
frijoles	stove top	193.00 Fahrenheit	final reheating for hot holding
water	front cook line hand sink	100.00 Fahrenheit	
ambient temp	1 door reac in	38.00 Fahrenheit	

Overall Comments:

When required to determine compliance, a single reinspection will be conducted without additional charge. If subsequent reinspections are required, an hourly fee (minimum one hour) at the current rate approved by the Board of Supervisors will be assessed for each and every reinspection until the necessary changes or corrections are made. Unless otherwise noted by the inspector, all violations are to be corrected no later than **3/25/2026**. Any major change in menu or any change in ownership must have prior approval by this Department. This may require structural and/or equipment changes or remodeling to accommodate new operations.

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Legend:

[CA]	Corrective Action
[COS]	Corrected on Site
[N]	Needs Improvement
[NA]	Not Applicable
[NO]	Not Observed
[PBI]	Performance-based Inspection
[PHF]	Potentially Hazardous Food
[PIC]	Person in Charge
[PPM]	Part per Million
[S]	Satisfactory
[SA]	Suitable Alternative
[TPHC]	Time as a Public Health Control



Received By: Jesus Flores
Manager

Signed On: March 11, 2026