



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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OPENING A FOOD SERVICE ESTABLISHMENT IN FORT BEND COUNTY

If you are considering opening a food service establishment in the unincorporated areas of Fort Bend County, the following procedures are required by the Fort Bend County Health Department.

The first step is to contact the Fort Bend County Engineering Department to obtain a Permit Trak number. Call 281-633-7500 for additional information.

A Food Service Plan Review must be conducted and approved **prior** to starting construction, remodeling, or renovations. All required information and forms must be submitted as a complete package. Incomplete submittals will not be accepted. Appointments may be made in advance or the plans and paperwork may be delivered to the receptionist. ***If your establishment is utilizing a septic system or water well, an additional permit is required.**

The following items shall be submitted:

1) Facility Floor Plans

Submit one set of blueprints or contractors drawings, **drawn to scale**, for new construction or renovations of an existing structure, for review **PRIOR** to any construction. Include the layout and finish construction materials for the entire proposed food service establishment including: food preparation areas, food storage areas, hand sinks, utensil sinks, food preparation sink, mop sink, food equipment; restrooms, service areas, dining areas, and outside garbage storage areas. Include lighting, venting, mechanical, and plumbing plans. Contact other municipal and State departments for additional requirements (water wells, plumbing, building, electrical, fire, zoning, etc.).

Copies of water well and septic approvals must be submitted during the review process.

- 2) Description of Operation Form:** Completed and signed.
- 3) Application for Food Establishment Permit:** Completed and signed.
- 4) Risk Assessment Form:** Completed and signed
- 5) Plan Review Information Sheet:** completed with contact information
- 6) Menu** or list of all foods and beverages to be served.
- 7) Equipment Specification Sheets:** Refrigerators, freezers, steam table, ice machine, cooking equipment, sinks, tables, shelves, etc.
- 8) Color Samples:** Light colors required.

Once your floor plans, water, and sewage disposal systems have been approved, a written Authorization to Construct will be issued. Only then can construction begin.

The plan review includes two inspections*:

- **Pre-Opening Inspection:** A Pre-Opening Inspection must be conducted by the Health Department once all construction is 95% completed and equipment is in place. An appointment for this inspection must be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance. Inspections are performed on Monday, Wednesday, or Friday. This inspection will list all corrections to be made prior to the final inspection.
- **Final Inspection:** A Final Inspection must be conducted once all corrections have been completed from the Pre-Opening Inspection, and the establishment is in compliance with the Texas Food Establishment Rules (all clean up work etc., must be done). All applications, fees, water utility service agreements and other permits (if required) must be paid, submitted or approved prior to this inspection. This inspection must be scheduled in advance on a Monday, Wednesday, or Friday.

Note: We suggest that you do not advertise an opening date until after the final inspection has been conducted. **Food and beverages shall not be stored on the premises until your establishment has been approved for a Food Establishment Permit.**

***Additional inspections may incur a re-inspection fee.**

Change of Ownership of Existing Food Establishment

Note: Older food service establishments are not “grandfathered” from meeting current health codes when ownership changes. We suggest, before signing any contracts, leases, or agreements, that you contact this department. Anyone desiring to rent, lease, purchase, or reopen an existing establishment may request a file review of the operating history of the business. Feel free to ask the Health Department personnel to come out and look at an existing building and/or establishment before you make a purchase or sign a contract. This process may provide a general idea of how much repair work may be required. A Requested Inspection Fee is required.

If the food establishment has no structural or equipment deficiencies, it may be possible to obtain a Food Establishment Permit to reopen. An inspection must be conducted by a Sanitarian to confirm that the establishment complies with all applicable rules and regulations.

If the Food Establishment Inspection Report documents a history of violations, including structural or equipment defects, it may be necessary to submit plans and specifications for remodeling in order to bring the building up to all current code standards.

Anyone desiring an inspection of an existing food establishment must call in advance and arrange for an appointment. A Sanitarian will perform and inspect the entire premises and list all violations on an inspection report. **Do Not Start Operating the Business Yet.** The Health Department **MUST** perform a re-inspection to verify that all corrections have been made. After all corrections have been completed, call the Health Department for a re-inspection. If corrections have been made and all documentation and fees have been submitted, the Health Department Sanitarian may issue the Health Permit.

HEALTH PERMITS

Only after the Food Service Permit, Water Utility Service Agreement and Sewage Disposal Permit (if required) are issued, may you operate your establishment. The Food Service Permit must be posted in a conspicuous location. The Food Service Permit is a yearly permit and must be renewed annually. See the attached fee schedule.

No person can operate a food establishment without a valid Food Service Permit. Permits are not transferable. If purchasing an existing food service facility, a change of ownership inspection must be conducted and a new permit and applicable fees must be processed. Permits must be renewed on an annual basis. Failure to obtain the permit before the expiration date may result in a temporary closure of the business. It is the responsibility of the permit holder to contact the Health Department before the expiration date of the current Food Establishment Permit.

WATER and WASTE WATER REQUIREMENTS

All food service establishments must obtain water from an approved source. If your facility is receiving water from a water well the following is required:

* All water wells must be registered by the TCEQ. For all State and Federal water system requirements, contact the TCEQ at (713-767-3650)

* A copy of the TCEQ's final approval of the water system must be submitted to this department prior to opening.

Note: The establishment will not be permitted by this department until the TCEQ approval is submitted.

* TCEQ requires all commercial water wells be tested for bacteria once every 4 (four) weeks. Records of these test results must be kept on site and available for review by all regulating authorities.

* Water wells utilizing chlorine as a disinfectant shall maintain a minimum chlorine residual of 0.2 Mg /L at all times during normal operating hours. Failure to maintain the minimum chlorine residual will result in the immediate closure of your establishment.

* An approved chlorine test kit is required and shall be on establishment site at all times of operating hours. (A pool test kit is NOT appropriate).

The following is required for all establishments utilizing private (On-Site) sewage systems:

* All commercial establishments using more than 5000 gallons of water per / day must be approved and permitted by the TCEQ. For all State requirements contact the TCEQ at 713-767-3650. A copy of TCEQ's On-Site Operating permit must be submitted prior to the Final Health Inspection.

* Commercial establishments using 5000 gallons or less must obtain an On Site Sewage Permit from this department.

* All On Site Sewage Facilities for food establishments must be designed by a Professional Engineer.

Note: The establishment will not be allowed to open until the On-Site Sewage Permit To Operate is issued.

If your establishment is utilizing a public water or sewage system the following is required:

- * Contact the local Municipal Utility District servicing your area.
- * Grease trap sizing, approval, and final connection inspections are required by the MUD.
- * A signed Water Utility Service Agreement must be submitted to this department prior to the Final Inspection.

Note: The establishment will not be permitted or allowed to open until these approvals are submitted.

INSPECTIONS

Agents of the Fort Bend County Health Department shall enter any food service establishment at any reasonable time during normal operating hours, for the purpose of conducting inspections to determine compliance with the adopted regulations. The agents shall be permitted to examine the records of the establishment pertaining to food, supplies or employees.

Submittal Checklist

- ____ Completed Application (signed)
- ____ Completed Plan Review Information Sheet
- ____ One set of plans (drawn to scale): Floor plan with equipment list
 - Mechanical drawing
 - Plumbing drawing
 - Lighting drawing
 - Finish Schedule (details materials for and colors of walls, floors, ceiling, and cove base)
- ____ Completed Description of Operation Form (signed)
- ____ Menu
- ____ Equipment Specification Sheets
- ____ Color Samples
- ____ Completed Risk Assessment form (signed)

A plan review must be conducted for the purpose of approving floor plans **prior** to starting construction. If changes or revisions are made to the initial floor plans during construction, these changes must be resubmitted for review. If additional information is required please call our office. Thank you for your cooperation.

HELPFUL PHONE NUMBERS


Fort Bend County Fire Marshal	281-238-1500
Fort Bend County Engineering	281-633-7500
Southwest Water	713-405-1750
Severn Trent	281-578-4242
Texas Alcohol Beverage Commission	281-341-4647
Texas Dept. Of State Health Services	713-767-3240
City of Fulshear	281-346-2556
City of Needville	979-793-4253
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality:	
Air	713-767-3700
Water	713-767-3650
Municipal Solid Waste	713-767-3600

Please refer to the following pages for Guidelines

Guidelines for Food Establishment Operators

<p>1. Floors: The floors of all food preparation, food storage, utensil washing areas, dressing rooms, locker rooms and toilet rooms shall be constructed of smooth, durable materials. Floor drains shall be provided in floors that are water-flushed for cleaning or in areas where pressure spray methods of cleaning equipment are used. Such floors shall be constructed only of sealed concrete, terrazzo, ceramic tile, or similar materials and shall be graded to drain. In all new or remodeled establishments, installation of exposed utility lines and pipes on the floor is prohibited. Floors shall be light in color.</p>	<p>2. Walls and Ceilings: The walls and ceilings of food preparation areas, food storage areas, equipment and utensil washing areas, toilet rooms and vestibules shall be light colored, smooth, non-absorbent and easily cleanable. Studs, joists and rafters shall not be exposed in those areas listed above. Utility service lines and pipes shall not be exposed on walls or ceilings in those listed above.</p>
<p>3. Toilets: Toilet facilities shall be conveniently located and shall be accessible to employees at all times. Toilet rooms shall be completely enclosed and shall have tight fitting, self-closing solid doors. Toilet rooms shall not open directly into any room in which food, drinks or utensils are handled or stored. Walls within 2 feet of the front and sides of urinals to a height of 4 feet shall have a smooth hard nonabsorbent surface of a type which is not adversely affected by moisture. Toilet facilities shall be mechanically vented to the outside.</p>	<p>4. Lavatories: Lavatories shall be located to permit convenient use by all employees in food preparation areas and utensil washing areas. Lavatories shall be accessible to employees at all times. Lavatories shall also be located in toilet rooms or vestibules. Each lavatory shall be provided with hot and cold water tempered by means of mixing a valve or combination faucet. Each lavatory shall provide soap, sanitary towels or drying devices.</p>
<p>5. Cleaning and Sanitization: A Three compartment sink shall be used for washing, rinsing and sanitization of equipment or utensils done manually. Sinks shall be large enough to permit the complete immersion of the utensils and equipment. However, each compartment of any sink required shall be not less than 15"x15"x14" (LxWxD). Drainboards of adequate size shall be provided. Cleaning and sanitation may be done by spray type or immersion dishwashing machines.</p>	<p>6. Plumbing: The potable water system shall be installed to preclude the possibility of backflow. A hose shall not be attached to a faucet unless a backflow prevention device is installed. Except for property trapped open sinks there shall be no direct connection between the sewerage system and any drains originating from equipment in which food or utensils are placed. Grease Traps: Sizing approval required.</p>

<p>7. Dressing Rooms and Locker Areas: If employees routinely change cloths within the establishment. Rooms shall be designed and used for that purpose. These designed rooms shall not be used for food preparation, storage, service, or for utensil washing or storage. Enough lockers or other suitable facilities shall be provided and used for the storage of employees clothing and belongings.</p> <p>Lockers may be located in food storage rooms containing only completely packaged food or packaged single service articles.</p>	<p>8. Equipment: Equipment shall be located in a way that facilitates cleaning the establishment and prevents food contamination. Floor mounted equipment, unless readily movable, shall be: sealed to the floor; or installed on a raised platform of concrete; or elevated on legs to provide at least a six-inch clearance; between the floor and equipment. Unless sufficient space is provided for easy cleaning between and behind each unit of a floor mounted equipment, the space between it and adjoining equipment units and between it and adjacent walls shall be closed or, if exposed to seepage, the equipment shall be sealed to the adjoining equipment or adjacent walls. Aisles and working spaces between units of equipment and walls shall be unobstructed and of sufficient width to permit employees to perform their duties without contamination of food or food contact surfaces by clothing or personal contact.</p>
<p>9. Utility Facilities: In new or remodeled establishments at least one curbed cleaning facility with a floor drain shall be provided and used for the cleaning of mops and adequate storage of cleaning equipment. The utility facility shall not be installed inside food storage or food preparation areas.</p>	<p>10. Ventilation: All rooms shall have sufficient ventilation to keep them free of excessive heat, odors, smoke, and fumes. In all new or remodeled establishments, rooms from which obnoxious odors and vapors that ventilate to the outside, may result in the deposition of matters or liquids within the ventilation system. Ventilation hoods and ventilation equipment shall be equipped with effective, easily removable, easily cleanable filters.</p>
<p>11. Lighting: At least 50 foot-candles of light shall be provided to all working surfaces and at least 30 foot-candles shall be provided to all other surfaces and equipment in food preparation, utensil-washing, hand washing areas, and in toilet rooms. At least 20 foot-candles at a distance of 30 inches from the floor shall be provided in all other areas, protective shielding shall be provided for all lighting fixtures located over food storage, preparation service, and display facilities where utensils and equipment are cleaned and stored.</p>	<p>12. Garbage: Garbage and refuse containers, dumpsters, and compactor system shall be stored on or above a smooth surface of non-absorbent material, such as concrete or machine laid asphalt with a drain going into the sanitary sewer.</p>

<p>13. Laundry Facilities: Laundry facilities, if provided, shall be restricted to washing and drying of items necessary to the operation. If a washer is provided, then a dryer must also be provided. Separated rooms shall be provided for laundry facilities.</p>	<p>14. Insect and Rodent Control: Openings shall be effectively protected against the entrance of insects by tight-fitting, self-closing doors, closed windows, screening, controlled air currents, or other means. Screen doors shall be self-closing.</p>
<p>15. Poisonous or Toxic Materials: Each of the three categories of poisonous or toxic materials shall be stored and located to be physically separated from each other. All poisonous or toxic materials shall be stored in cabinets or in similar physically separated compartments or facilities used for no other purpose. To preclude potential contamination poisonous or toxic materials shall not be stored above food, food equipment, utensils or single service articles.</p>	<p>For more information, please contact . . .</p> <p>The Fort Bend County Environmental Health Department at:</p> <p> (281) 342-7469</p>

For all requirements, please refer to the **Texas Department of State Health Services: Texas Food Establishment Rules** and **the Texas Health and Safety Code Chapters 341 and 437.**

Equipment check list*:

- ___ Three Compartment Sink with indirect drain, large enough to immerse largest item to be sanitized
- ___ Food Preparation Sink with indirect drain
- ___ Hand sink(s)
- ___ Mop sink, must be floor mounted, utility sink with legs not allowed
- ___ Mechanical vent fan above mop sink and chemical storage
- ___ Mop rack above mop sink
- ___ Wire or louvered shelves for air drying utensils
- ___ Refrigerator(s), adequate in size to support proposed operation
- ___ Freezer(s), adequate in size to support proposed operation
- ___ Dry storage shelving, adequate in size to support proposed operation
- ___ Water heater sized to handle all hot water demands
- ___ Grease trap, as required and approved by the local utility district, exterior to the facility
- ___ Appropriate cooking equipment for proposed operation
- ___ Ventilation hood, contact the Fire Marshal for specific details
- ___ Work tables, adequate to support proposed operation

*Specific or additional equipment requirements are evaluated for each individual operation.