



# **STARTING A FOOD BUSINESS**

## **IN CLERMONT COUNTY**

An overview for those who want to  
operate a food business



**Clermont County**  
**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

# PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

Clermont County Public Health has developed this guide to help you and your business succeed. A well-planned facility sets your business up to produce and sell safe food. Since a plan review may involve multiple agencies, we have provided contact information to assist you in contacting the other offices that are involved in reviewing plans for your facility. Each agency that is involved in reviewing your plans will have different requirements, so contacting them early in your planning stage is crucial. All other agencies must have approved your plans and issued the necessary permits before Clermont County Public Health can issue a food license.

Office	Service	Contact Information
<b>Clermont County Public Health</b>	Plumbing and Food: Plan Review and Inspections	513-732-7499
<b>Clermont County Building Department</b>	Building Plan Review and Inspections	(513)732-7213
<b>City of Milford Building Contractor</b>	Building Plan Review and Inspections	(513)248-5097 plans@natinspect.com
<b>Ohio Department of Commerce/Division of Liquor Control</b>	Liquor License	614-644-2360
<b>Ohio Department of Taxation</b>	Vendor's License Online Application	<a href="http://business.ohio.gov">http://business.ohio.gov</a>
	Tax ID #	www.irs.com
<b>Ohio Department of Agriculture</b>	Licenses Wholesale Operations and home bakeries	614-728-6250 www.ohioagriculture.gov
	Retail Food Establishment Variances	
<b>Ohio Department of Health</b>	Food Service Operation Variances	614-644-7416 www.odh.ohio.gov

## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is intended to assist you planning your facility as a general overview and is not all-inclusive. Additional requirements and details can be found in the Ohio Uniform Food Code or applicable food rules, which can be found online on Ohio Department of Health, as well as, Ohio Department of Agriculture's websites.

### ZONING:

Contact the appropriate zoning department to ensure that your food business meets zoning requirements, which may vary by political subdivision.

# Beginning the process

## **Who needs to go through plan review with Clermont County Public Health?**

Most new and substantially altered food facilities go through plan review with Clermont County Public Health (CCPH) to ensure that the facility is designed to promote safe food practices. Once you contact CCPH, an Environmental Health sanitarian will be assigned to your facility and can help you determine whether or not you need to go through food plan review. Additionally, plumbing permits may be required depending on your facility's needs.

## **What are the requirements for my facility based on?**

The menu will determine the requirements of your facility. CCPH licenses a wide range of food businesses, ranging from a small convenience store that only sells pre-packaged milk and non-perishable items to large full-service restaurants. The plan review requirements for these facilities are different because the structure, space, and equipment needed to store, prepare, and serve these foods safely would be different.

# About the Process

## What do I need to include on my plans?

- The scale you are using on your plans. For example, ¼" may indicate one foot on your plans.
- Four sets of detailed, scaled facility plans. Please remember to include:
  - a. The overall layout of the entire facility, which shows each separate area of the operation.
  - b. A detailed floor plan of the food operation itself, noting all equipment to be used.
  - c. A menu or list of foods offered.
  - d. Plumbing.
  - e. Electrical.
  - f. The cooking ventilation system, including all specifications and distances.
  - g. Drawings of any custom built equipment.
  - h. A schedule of finishes to be used on floors, walls, and ceilings.
  - i. A site plan that shows the location of the business, the building on site including alleys and streets, dumpsters, utilities, potable water source, sewage system, interior and exterior seating areas.
  - j. Any other items you think might assist us in the timely review of your plans.
- Information on each piece of equipment including the manufacturer and model number to be used in your food business. If you are remodeling and using any of the existing equipment, or purchase used equipment, the manufacturers and model numbers are needed for these items, along with a statement indicating existing items. Existing equipment will be evaluated on an individual basis to ensure that they meet our construction standards and are in good repair. All equipment must meet minimum standards of the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) or an equivalent standard. This means that equipment must be of commercial grade, meet certain design, construction, and material criteria to ensure durability and ease of cleanability and maintenance.

## How long does this process take?

CCPH will review plans within 30 days. If information is missing, CCPH will notify you in writing, and the plans will be put on hold until further information is received. If we approve your plans, we will notify you in writing.

## When can I begin construction or work on my facility?

Construction of the facility may begin when all approvals have been obtained.

# A FLOW CHART

## Initiation

- New facility, new owner, or a facility undergoing substantial alterations contacts CCPH.

## Submission and Review

- Plans are submitted to CCPH.
- Submitted plans are then reviewed by CCPH.

## Approval or Denial

- Approval: If plans are approved, applicant can begin making changes or constructing their facility.
- Denial: If plans are denied, you will be notified with the reason of the denial and need to resubmit plans with appropriate changes to be approved.

## Pre-licensing inspection

- Contact CCPH to schedule a pre-licensing inspection once the work on your facility is complete.
- The pre-licensing inspection will evaluate if your facility is ready to license.
- CCPH cannot do pre-licensing inspections until you have approvals from all other regulatory agencies.

## Obtain a Food License and Operate your Food Business

- Submit completed license application and payment to CCPH and receive your food business license.
- Once you have your food license, you may operate your food business.
- Within the first 30 days of being licensed, an Environmental Health Inspector will inspect your facility.

# Elements of a Food Business

## Finishes

Impervious and easily cleanable finishes in food businesses are vital to ensuring ease of cleanability and maintenance in a facility. A “finish schedule” is a list of finishes to be used on the floors, walls, and ceilings of all areas of the food facility. Finishes should be appropriate to the room or area where they are used. Additionally, appropriate finishes can help pest-proof your facility. If paint is to be used in any food preparation, storage, dishwashing, utility, or restroom area, it must be non-toxic and high gloss. Surfaces behind cooking appliances should be of a heat and grease-resistant material and easily cleanable, such as glazed tile or stainless steel. Wall and ceiling surfaces must be smooth and impervious and may be glazed tile, stainless steel, aluminum, smooth sealed plaster, smooth tight wood, vinyl clad panels, or some easily cleanable surface. When wood or plaster is used, the surfaces should be finished with a light-colored washable and durable paint. Soft wood, absorbent wallboard, wallpaper, and other similar materials do not make satisfactory finishes. For example, an acoustical panel ceiling can be absorbent and is therefore not allowed in kitchens. Floors in storage, food preparation, and utensil cleaning areas as well as restrooms should be marble, terrazzo, linoleum, grease resistant asphalt tile, quarry tile, or other equally impervious material. Terrazzo and marble are considered especially appropriate, since they do not absorb grease and moisture. Concrete is acceptable only when it has been treated to minimize porosity. Wood flooring is the least desirable material. All floor coverings should be laid on a firm foundation, and floor to wall joints should be covered.

## Baseboard

Baseboards protect the junction between the floor and the wall, covering uneven edges to allow for easy cleaning. Cove base molding must be provided for all food preparation, dishwashing, and restroom areas.

## Equipment and utensils in a food business

Equipment in a food business must be able to handle a much more strenuous environment than household food equipment is designed to handle. For this reason, all equipment in a food business must be commercial grade and certified by a recognized testing agency (for example, NSF international). Labels and specification sheets can provide you with information about the equipment you may be purchasing. You will want to include on your plan all equipment and specifications and a statement, when applicable, that equipment meets the standards of a recognized testing agency. Utensils must be easily cleanable.

### Equipment for food storage:

On your plans, you will want to indicate how you will store hot foods (135°F or above), cold food (41°F or below), frozen food (0°F or below), dry food and food on display.

### Refrigeration space:

The amount of refrigerated space needed depends on the number of meals served, type of service, marketing practices and delivery schedules. The following scale can be used to estimate the space needed in an average full-menu restaurant; it does not provide for beverage cooling or frozen foods.

# Meals Served Daily	Recommended Capacity
75 -150	16-32 cubic feet
150-250	32-53 cubic feet
350-500*	74-106 cubic feet

\* A walk-in refrigerator is usually recommended for food operations this size and larger. It is in addition to the reach-in refrigerator needed in all operations.

### Cooking facilities and exhaust generating equipment

All rooms must have sufficient ventilation to keep them free of excessive heat, steam, condensation, vapors, obnoxious odors, smoke and fumes. For example, a high-temperature dishwasher or a grill line would require a **ventilation hood**. When you submit your plans, you will want to include detailed drawings and specifications for the cooking ventilation system, including the positioning of equipment under your hood, if applicable. If gas appliances are used and are mobile, the use of quick-disconnects along with casters that are approved by a recognized commercial food equipment testing agency are required. All gas equipment requires some sort of ventilation hood. Some facilities require a **fire suppression system** for food equipment that generates grease-laden vapors. There are different types of fire suppression systems, for example, type I and type II hoods. The Clermont County Building Inspections Department can assist you in determining what type of system is appropriate for your facility. For more guidelines on submitting plans for cooking exhaust ventilation systems, please contact the Clermont County Building Inspections Department at (513)732-7213.

## Planning equipment placement for cleanability

Equipment must be installed so that the area under, over, behind, and between pieces of equipment and walls are easy to clean. All equipment must be on casters, installed on 6" legs (NSF-approvable or equivalent), or sealed to the floor, walls, and adjacent equipment with rubber silicone for cleanability.

The following table can be used as a guide for spacing equipment:

Equipment Length	Space from Walls and Equipment
4' or less	6"
4'-8'	12"
8' or more	18"

## Lighting

Lighting is important to ensuring safe working conditions as well as making sure that employees can see well enough to clean. At least 50 foot-candles of light must be provided on work surfaces. At least 20 foot-candles must be provided on self-service bars, buffets, inside equipment, and above handwashing and dishwashing equipment, and in utensil and toilet rooms. All storage areas must have at least 10 foot-candles of light. Lighting must be shielded, or shatter-proof bulbs must be used. For this reason, you must indicate what kinds of lighting fixtures will be used, and their locations.

## Menu

The menu will determine what kind of equipment and facilities will be required of your food business. You will need to submit a menu, or, if it has not been printed, indicate the general types of foods that will be served.

## Employee accommodations

Designated areas where employees may take breaks or store their personal belongings helps prevent the accidental contamination of food or equipment. Personal items should not be kept in food areas. Eating, drinking (except as specified in 3717-1-02.3(A)), and using tobacco should only be done in designated areas where contamination of food, equipment, and utensils will not result.

# A FOCUS ON CLEANING

Casters can promote optimum cleaning because you can move the piece of equipment easily, giving you full access to underneath.

## Restrooms

Include the number and location of restrooms on your plans. The Clermont County Building Inspections Department can help you determine how many fixtures must be provided. All hand sinks must be provided with soap, and either disposable paper towels or an air drying device. Waste containers must be provided for disposal of trash. If the restroom is used by females, a covered waste container must be provided. The doors of the restrooms must be self-closing if they open into a food preparation, equipment and utensil washing, or storage area. Each restroom must be adequately ventilated.

## Chemical storage

Cleaning compounds, toxic materials, and flammables must be stored in a safe manner in your facility. Each of these three general classes of chemicals must be stored physically separate from each other. They must be stored away from, and not above any food, food equipment, utensils and single service items, or dishwashing facilities. Additionally, chemicals cannot be stored on the floor.

## Dry storage

The dry storage area of a food business is the area where packaged food, dishes, equipment, bulk foods, canned goods, and other items may be stored. To ensure that the area can be cleaned properly and to prevent the contamination of foods or equipment, items must be stored 6" off of the ground. This includes in walk-in coolers and freezers. Shelving must be nonabsorbent, smooth, and easily cleanable. Foods must always be stored in food grade containers to ensure that they do not become contaminated.

### **UTENSIL STORAGE:**

On your plans, include how all utensils will be stored to protect them from dirt, dust, splash, and overhead leakage.

Utensils and equipment should be reasonably well protected from contamination. Otherwise, the effect of cleaning and bactericidal treatment is erased.

Storage of utensils will vary, depending upon the type and size of food service operation planned. In general, here are some tips:

1. Provide a definite storage space for each type of utensil, so that the rule "a place for everything and everything in its place" can be followed.
2. Provide adequate storage areas for utensils. The utensils should be convenient to the area where they will be used.
3. Do not store the utensils on the floor.
4. Provide hooks for large utensils such as pots and pans. Hooks should be well away from splash and spray.
5. For frozen dessert scoops, provide a dipper well with running water.

## Dining area

In general, the guidelines applying to floors in other parts of the operation, also apply in the dining room. However, when carpeting is used, provisions must be made for electrical outlets for cleaning equipment. The outlets must be included on the plans. There are a wide variety finishes that would be appropriate for dining area ceilings and walls.

## Sinks and plumbing

### SINKS AND DISHWASHING EQUIPMENT:

Consider the following sinks and dishwashing equipment that may be necessary for your facility:

- A. A **dishwashing sink** with double integral drainboards (built-in drainboards on either side) is a sink that is used for manual washing, rinsing, sanitizing, and air drying of utensils and equipment. At least three compartments will need to be provided, but a fourth can be added to presoak dishes. A sanitizer and appropriate test kit for checking the strength of the sanitizer must be provided. Sinks for manual washing of utensils (including pots and pans) must meet NSF Standard No. 2, or the equivalent. **Utensil washing machines** are optional, but must meet the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) Standard No. 3, or equivalent. Provisions must be made for a soiled utensil counter of proper design, large enough to permit proper sorting, scraping, and pre-washing. Drainage from the counter must not go back into the washing equipment. Clean utensil counters should be large enough to allow air drying of utensils.
- B. A **utility sink** also referred to as a mop, service, or janitor sink, is used for disposing of mop water and cleaning mops and cleaning tools. It should be located conveniently to the kitchen to ensure ease of use and equipped with a drain and faucet. Some examples of acceptable utility sinks include single compartment fiberglass unit or shower stall type floor sink. You may want to consider the ease of dumping mop water when you select a sink. A lower sink or floor sink may allow you to dispose of mop water more easily. If a hose is to be attached to the faucet of the utility sink, the faucet must be provided from back-siphonage (contaminated water flowing backwards) with a hose bib vacuum breaker or a similar back flow protection device. The sink should be located so that handwashing, utensil washing, and food preparation areas will not be contaminated by splashes. Mops should be hung up to dry when not in use, so hooks above your utility sink could provide storage and catch drips from the mop.
- C. A **handwashing sink** must be accessible for all food preparation areas as well as equipment and utensil washing areas. For example, a server station where employees handle ice would require a handwashing sink. Handwashing sinks must not be blocked by equipment or food preparation tables, so it is important to consider accessibility to handwashing sinks when planning your facility layout. Handwashing sinks must not be used for any other purpose besides handwashing. Each handwashing sink must be equipped with soap, a hand drying device, waste container, and sign reminding employees to wash hands.
- D. A **food preparation sink** is used for washing fruits and vegetables, soaking foods, thawing foods under cold running water, cooling food by ice bath, or otherwise preparing

foods. Depending on the menu of the facility and methods used to prepare foods, a food preparation sink may be required. For example, a facility that sells produce may opt to use prewashed produce and limit food preparation if they do not wish to install a food preparation sink. The sink may be a single or multi-compartment unit and must be used strictly for food preparation purposes. Some sinks have integral drain boards which can be used to prepare foods processed in the sink. For example, it is not acceptable to wash hands, utensils, or equipment in this sink, because it could result in the contamination of food. All sinks and equipment used for preparation, processing, or storage of food must have drains which are indirectly connected to the sanitary sewer system. This prevents the backwards movement of waste water into the food preparation sink.

### **Water heater:**

A water heater must be properly sized to handle the maximum hot water needs of the operation.

### **Floor drains:**

The number of floor drains required depends upon the type of the floor, size of the room, and the phase of the operation to be conducted in the room. Grading of the floor to the drains is important.

## **Utilities and site plan**

**Trash, garbage, and solid waste:** Frequent removal and proper collection of solid waste is essential to preventing pest harborage conditions that may become a health hazard. If stored, garbage must be kept in water-tight metal or approved plastic containers. These must have tight-fitting lids and should be kept above the ground. In addition, garbage and refuse storage sheds or enclosures may be used. Dumpsters must be kept on impervious surfaces and sloped to drain. They must be insect and rodent proof.

- In your plans you will need to describe:
  - Method of disposing of solid waste
  - Frequency of pick up
  - Types of containers that will be used
  - Hauler that will be used
  - Storage area
  - Bulk grease disposal, if applicable (See sewage section below for “Grease Traps”)
  
- **Potable water:** An approved, potable water source must be provided at your food business. If the system is a private water supply, the installation must be approved by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency. For information on their requirements and procedures, contact:

Public Water Supply Unit  
Ohio Environmental Protection Agency  
401 East Fifth Street  
Dayton, Ohio 45402-2911  
(937)285-6257.

- **Sewage:** The type of sewage disposal system that will be used for the facility must be specified in your plans.
  - A **grease interceptor** prevents grease from building up in the sewer system. They are placed between a grease collecting drain or sink and the sewer. They are most commonly connected to dish facilities, but may be placed between other grease collecting items and the sewer system. If you have questions regarding grease interceptors, please contact your design professional.
  - If the sewage system will not be municipally treated (for example, a septic system), depending on the volume of sewage, the installation must be approved by either the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (larger volumes) or Clermont County Public Health's Water and Waste Division (smaller volumes). For information on their requirements and procedures, contact:

Public Waste Water Group  
Ohio Environmental Protection Agency  
401 East Fifth Street  
Dayton, Ohio 45402-2911  
(937) 285-6257

Water and Waste Division  
Clermont County Public Health  
2275 Bauer Road Suite 300  
Batavia, Ohio 45103  
513-732-7499

## **Site plan and outside of your facility:**

The layout of your facility site is important to consider in the planning stages your facility. Planning for the location of business in a building, for example a shopping mall or stadium and location of building on site helps ensure that your facility has the support infrastructure your facility needs to thrive. This includes considering alleys, streets, and location of any outside support infrastructure such as dumpsters, potable water source, sewage treatment system, and interior and exterior seating areas. The site selected must be well drained. The walking and driving surfaces must be surfaced with concrete, asphalt, or with gravel or similar material effectively treated to facilitate maintenance and minimize dust. These surfaces must be graded to prevent pooling of water, and must be kept free of litter.



# Pre-licensing Inspection

The following list of equipment is not required to be reviewed at the time of the approval of plans. However, the equipment is required prior to the issuance of a food license. The following items will be checked at the time of the pre-licensure inspection:

1. Thermometers, graded in 3°F intervals, for all refrigeration units.
2. Thermometer, for checking internal hot and cold food temperatures, within range of 0°F -220°F. If your facility plans on preparing thin cuts of meat, you will be required to get a thin-probe thermometer. This is a thermometer that is capable of measuring the temperature of thin cuts of meat. Commonly, these thermometers taper at the tip.
3. Chemical sanitizer for the three compartment sink for sanitizing multi-use utensils.
4. A test kit for checking the strength of the sanitizer.
5. Wiping cloths, if in use, must be stored in sanitizing solution between uses.
6. Soap, hand drying device or disposable towels, and waste bin for all handwashing sinks.
7. A covered waste receptacle in toilet facilities used by females.
8. Approved trash facilities inside and outside.
9. All equipment adjoining other equipment walls, floors, counters, etc. must be sealed together if not spaced apart sufficiently so that routine cleaning between the equipment and other surfaces may be performed. All annular openings must be sealed, closed, or have escutcheon plates.
10. Mops and brooms must be stored elevated.
11. Chemicals and other cleaning supplies must be stored in an area separate from food and utensils. Cleaning compounds, toxic materials and other chemicals which have been placed in containers or dispensers other than the original containers must be prominently labeled as to its contents. For example, a spray bottle of a cleaner must be labeled.
12. Hot water supplied to the handwashing sinks in the men's and women's restrooms must not exceed 120°F. This can be achieved by providing an appropriate tempering device.

# Licensing

Once you have successfully completed your pre-licensing inspection and have occupancy, you may apply for your food license on an application supplied Clermont County Public Health.

You may only operate your Food Service Operation or Retail Food Establishment when you have a valid food license. Every year, food licenses expire on March 1<sup>st</sup>, so it is important to make sure that you have renewed your license and submitted payment prior to that date in February to avoid paying a late fee. Your license fee and category will be determined on the size of your facility and the highest risk food activity conducted in your facility.

Your food license is a way for customers to recognize that you have a regulated and inspected food establishment, so you should post it in a place where they can see it.

After you are licensed, you can begin to operate your food establishment. Within 30 days of obtaining a license, your assigned Environmental Health Sanitarian will conduct a Thirty Day Inspection. This will cover food safety principles and applicable regulations to your facility.

# Food Safety Education and Certification

Food safety education of managers and employees ensures that the people operating your food business understand key food safety practices and principles that allow them to control food safety risks. For example, an employee who is responsible for cooking chicken will need to know all task specific food safety principles and practices. Proper training provides employees with the tools they need to safely do their jobs. Employees and managers will be asked to demonstrate their food safety knowledge during inspections as well.

In Ohio, there are two levels of **Food Safety Certification**.

- **Level I Certification** also known as person-in-charge training is required of at least one person per shift of each new food service operation or retail food establishment at all hours of operation. To get a Level I Certification, an employee must complete an approved Level I course.
- **Level II Certification** also known as food safety manager training is a more extensive training than the Level I Certification. At least one person in a risk class III or IV food service operation or retail food establishment in a supervisory role must have Level II Certification. Level II Certification requires the employee to complete and pass an approved Level II course and exam. For employees that already have taken a Level II course, there is a reciprocity form that can be submitted to Ohio Department of Health if the employee has a valid certificate and the course curriculum.

For your convenience, CCPH provides approved Level I and Level II Certification and the [registration forms](#) can be found on our website.



<b>Key</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Model</b>
A	Three Compartment Sink	Sink Co. Equipment #Wa123
B	Refrigerator	Frig Co. #RA46
C	Hand Sink	Custom
D	Stainless Steel Work Table	Table Works
E	Deep Fat Fryer	Fryer Co. #F35
F	Range	Range Co. #R45
G	Range	Range Co. #R45
H	Stainless Steel Work Table	Custom
I	Food Preparation Sink	Custom
J	Dish Machine w/hood	Wash co. #D345
K	Waitress Station	Custom
L	Reach-in Refrigerator	Frig Co.#RA34
M	Hand Sink	Custom
N	Coffee Maker	Coffee Com. #CC356
O	Dish Storage Cabinet	Custom
P	Grill	Grill Co. #GC267
Q	Broiler	Range Co. #BR345
R	Dish Storage Cabinet	Custom
S	Ice Machine	Ice Co. #IM390
T	Soda Fountain	Soda Co.#SC467
U	Refrigerator	Frig Co. #RA123
V	Steam Table	Custom
W	Paper Storage	Custom
X	Serving Case	Custom
Y	Shelf	Custom
Z	Serving Case	Custom
AA	Coffee Maker	Coffee Com. #OC356
BB	Slop Sink	Custom

# SAMPLE MENU

## *THE DISTRICT INN*

### *Appetizers*

<i>Potato Skins.....</i>	<i>\$3.50</i>
<i>Fried Cheese Sticks.....</i>	<i>\$3.50</i>
<i>Chicken Noodle Soup (Bowl).....</i>	<i>\$3.00</i>
<i>Chicken Noodle Soup (Cup).....</i>	<i>\$2.50</i>
<i>*Raw Oysters.....</i>	<i>\$5.00</i>

### *Lunch and Dinner Menu*

<i>*Hamburger and French Fries.....</i>	<i>\$5.50</i>
<i>*Cheeseburger and French Fries.....</i>	<i>\$5.50</i>
<i>Tuna Salad Sandwich with Chips.....</i>	<i>\$4.75</i>
<i>Club Sub with Pasta Salad.....</i>	<i>\$5.00</i>
<i>Lasagna with Salad and Garlic Bread.....</i>	<i>\$7.50</i>
<i>*T-Bone Steak with Choice of Potato.....</i>	<i>\$9.50</i>
<i>*Baked Fish with Choice of Potato.....</i>	<i>\$10.75</i>

*Ask your server about our fine selection of desserts.*

**\*Consuming raw or undercooked meats, poultry, seafood, shellfish, eggs or unpasteurized milk may increase your risk of foodborne illness.**