

FORT WORTH CODE COMPLIANCE DEPARTMENT  
CONSUMER HEALTH DIVISION  
PLAN REVIEW FOR FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS & PERMITTING REQUIREMENTS

Section 16-114 – Submission of Plans:

When a food establishment is newly constructed or extensively remodeled, when a food establishment has a change of ownership, or when an existing structure is converted to use as a food establishment, properly prepared plans and specifications for such construction, remodeling, or conversion shall be submitted to the Department of Development for review and approval before construction, remodeling or conversion is begun.

The plans and specifications shall indicate the proposed layout, arrangement, mechanical plans, type of construction materials in work areas and the type and model of proposed fixed equipment to be installed. The Director of Development shall give the Code Compliance Department the opportunity to review and approve the plans and specifications to determine if they meet the requirements of this Article. No food establishment shall be constructed, extensively remodeled or converted except in accordance with plans and specifications approved by the Consumer Health Division. Food facility owners/operators shall ensure during plans review, construction, and operation that their facilities comply with all applicable City Plumbing, Mechanical, Electrical, Building, Zoning, and Fire Prevention and Protection Codes.

The Director shall inspect the food establishment prior to the start of operations to determine compliance with the approved plans and specifications, the requirements of this Article and the regulations of the Texas Department of Health.

The attached requirements represent minimal health code requirements, but are not to be considered as totally inclusive of all requirements. Any alteration of the plans may result in non-compliance with Fort Worth Consumer Health Division codes, and shall first be discussed with this office.

1. **Submission of Plans:** (For applicants that do not have a building permit.)

\_\_\_ Two sets of properly prepared plans and specifications are required by the Department of Planning and Development, Plans Examination Section, at 1000 Throckmorton, Lower Floor, (817) 392-2222. Notations will be made on both sets of plans. Comments will be made on review forms and provided to the person whose plans are being reviewed. The Consumer Health Division Plans Reviewer may be contacted at (817) 392 -7255.

2. **Certificate of Occupancy:**

\_\_\_ A Certificate of Occupancy from the Planning and Development Department shall be obtained before Health Permit will be issued. Call the Department of Planning and Development for details at (817) 392-2222.

3. **Time Limitations on Construction/Remodeling:**

\_\_\_ Remodeling or new construction shall begin and end in accordance with the time limits of the project's building permit.

\_\_\_ If the proposed remodeling or new construction is not initiated or completed and approved by the Department of Development before the expiration of the project's building permit, then the plans must be resubmitted with the then-existing plan review fee.

4. **Inspections of Facilities by Code Compliance Department:**

\_\_\_ Contact the plan reviewer to schedule a pre-operational inspection at least seven days before construction is completed at (817) 392-7255.

\_\_\_ Contact the plans reviewer to schedule a permit inspection for immediately after you receive the Certificate of Occupancy.

\_\_\_ A health permit must be issued by Consumer Health prior to beginning any food preparation for the establishment.

5. **Permit Fees**

\_\_\_ Starting January 1, 2014, the facility may not operate until **all permit fees have been paid** and the health permit has been issued. This includes all new construction and change of ownerships.

6. **Alterations to Plans:**

\_\_\_ Before any alterations are made to the submitted and approved plans, the plan reviewer must be contacted and approval must be obtained.

\_\_\_ Failure to obtain approval for any changes may prevent the issuance of a health permit.

7. **Water Supply:**

\_\_\_ A connection shall be made to a public water system or an approved individual source that meets State drinking water requirements.

8. **Sewage Disposal:**

\_\_\_ All sewage and wastewater shall be disposed into a public sewage system or an approved individual sewage disposal system that meets state and local requirements.

9. **Living Areas:**

\_\_\_ A private home may not be used for conducting food establishment operations.

## 10. Outer Opening/Insect and Rodent Control/ Pet Friendly Patio:

\_\_\_ Are there are any exterior and/or overhead doors or windows designed or intended to be left opened?

- If yes, an Outer Opening Variance is required. Print the variance application to review with the client. The variance will not be granted to open kitchens or buffet style applications.
- If the variance is to be granted, all access to the kitchen must be tightly sealed (i.e. self-closing kitchen doors with sweeps and/or gaskets; no open pass-thru windows, etc.).

\_\_\_ Outside openings shall be effectively protected by tight fitting, self-closing doors, closed windows, screening, or other means to prevent entry of insects and rodents.

\_\_\_ Air curtains or plastic thermal curtains are strongly recommended on exterior service doors and may become a requirement if insect control problems are noted during any future operation of the establishment.

\_\_\_ Insect control devices that are used to electrocute or stun flying insects shall be designed to retain the insects within the device.

\_\_\_ Insect control devices shall be installed so that: devices are not located over food preparation areas; dead insects and fragments are prevented from being impelled onto or falling on exposed food, clean equipment, utensils, linens and unwrapped single-service and single-use articles.

\_\_\_ Does the establishment have an outdoor patio that will be considered “dog friendly”?

- If yes, a Dog on Patio Variance is required. Print the variance request application to review with the client.
- The variance will have final approval once the establishment is built and all cleaning processes are observed by CHS on opening inspection.
- Please note that if the establishment has open outer doors on the patio dogs will not be allowed.

## 11. Walls and Ceilings:

\_\_\_ Walls and wall covering shall be designed, constructed, attached, and installed so they are smooth and easily cleanable.

\_\_\_ Exterior walls, windows, and doors that remain open will be protected in a manner as to prevent the entry of all pests. A variance approved by the Director will be required. (See Request for Variance – Unprotected Outer Openings)

\_\_\_ Except in areas used only for dry storage, concrete, porous blocks, or bricks used for indoor wall construction shall be finished and sealed to provide a smooth, nonabsorbent easily cleanable surface.

\_\_\_ Ceilings in all food preparation areas shall be designed, constructed, attached, and installed so they are smooth and easily cleanable. This includes self-service areas, bars and server areas.

\_\_\_ Attachments to walls and ceilings such as light fixtures, mechanical room ventilation system components, vent covers, wall mounted fans, decorative items, and other attachments shall be easily cleanable.

- \_\_\_ In a consumer area, wall and ceiling surfaces and decorative items and attachments that are provided for ambiance need not meet the above requirement if they are kept clean.
- \_\_\_ Studs, joists, and rafters may not be exposed in areas subject to moisture.

## 12. **Floors**

- \_\_\_ Exposed horizontal utility service lines and pipes may not be installed on the floor.
- \_\_\_ In food establishments in which cleaning methods other than water flushing are used for cleaning floors, the floor and wall junctures shall be coved and closed to no larger than one millimeter.
- \_\_\_ The floors in food establishments in which water flush cleaning methods are used shall be provided with drains and graded to drain, and the floor and wall junctures shall be coved and tightly sealed.
- \_\_\_ Carpeting may not be installed as a floor covering in food preparation areas, toilet rooms, refuse storage rooms, or other areas subject to moisture, flushing or spray cleaning methods.
- \_\_\_ If carpeting is installed as a floor covering in areas other than those specified in the above paragraph, it shall be: securely attached to the floor with a durable mastic and installed tightly against the wall with the edges of the carpet secured.
- \_\_\_ Floor coverings, mats, and duckboards shall be designed to be removable and easily cleanable.

## 13. **Shelving and Cabinetry:**

- \_\_\_ Unfinished construction is not allowed anywhere. Interiors of all cabinetry and shelving shall be finished with a smooth, non-absorbent, easily cleanable surface.
- \_\_\_ Shelving and racks shall store food and food-related items a minimum of six inches off the floor and provide an easily cleanable area between the floor and lowest shelf.
- \_\_\_ Wooden shelves or racks are not permitted in refrigerated storage areas. Stainless steel or other non-corrosive metal shelving will be used in refrigerators, freezers, and walk-ins.

## 14. **Hand Washing Lavatories:**

- \_\_\_ Lavatories designed only for hand washing are required if any type of food/drink preparation or ware washing is conducted within the establishment.
- \_\_\_ Lavatories shall be conveniently accessible in food/drink preparation, food serving, ware washing areas, and toilet rooms. Appropriately spaced hand sinks shall be within 15 feet of any and all food preparation and dishwashing areas. Hand sinks are not considered conveniently accessible in another room, example, walking through a doorway, or not being visible.
- \_\_\_ Lavatories shall be equipped with hot (100 degrees F) and cold water supplied through a mixing valve or combination faucet.

\_\_\_Lavatories shall be located to avoid contamination of food and food-related items and areas. Splashguards may be used to meet this requirement.

15. **Ware Washing Facilities:**

\_\_\_A minimum three compartments, stainless steel sink is required for the manual washing, rinsing, and sanitization of equipment and utensils when preparing any potentially hazardous food.

\_\_\_All ware washing sinks shall be sized to submerge the largest piece of portable equipment.

\_\_\_Separate drain boards or other suitable equipment must be used for soiled and clean equipment and utensils shall be attached or adjacent to all ware washing fixtures.

\_\_\_All mixed-drink type facilities or those using any glassware resulting in the need for a “dump sink” must have an adequate four-compartment sink with double drain boards or a three compartment sink and a separate dump sink.

\_\_\_Automatic dish washing machines may *supplement* the installation of sinks for manual ware washing *but not replace* this minimum requirement.

\_\_\_Ware washing machines that use a chemical for sanitization shall be equipped with a device that indicates audibly or visually when more chemical sanitizer needs to be added.

16. **Food Preparation Sink:** (required for processing of fruits and vegetables)

\_\_\_If provided, food preparation sinks shall have a separate basin from ware washing sinks and shall be drained with an indirect waste connection, with a minimum air gap of 1 ½ times the pipe diameter of the waste line.

17. **Utility Service Sink:**

\_\_\_At least one utility sink or curbed cleaning facility shall be provided for the cleaning of mops and similar floor cleaning tools and the disposal of mop water or other wastewater.

\_\_\_The utility service fixture shall be located to avoid the contamination of food and food related items and areas.

\_\_\_The utility service fixture shall be provided with hot (100 degrees F) and cold water.

\_\_\_A vacuum breaker or approved vacuum breaker device shall be installed if a hose is connected.

18. **Plumbing:**

\_\_\_Soda machines shall have an adequate backflow prevention device when connected to a potable water supply.

- \_\_\_ Approved backflow prevention devices shall be installed on devices connected to the potable water system, such as: chemical injectors, attached hoses, spray wands and other similar instances where there is a direct connection between the potable water system and non-potable water. This includes the outside faucets. (Water Department (817) 392-7980)
- \_\_\_ Except for properly trapped open sinks, there shall be no direct connection between the sewage system and any drains originating from equipment in which food or utensils are placed. Such fixtures shall be drained through an indirect waste with a minimum one-inch air gap, where applicable. Examples would include, but not limited to, ice machines, food preparation sinks, floor drains in walk-in boxes, steam tables, salad bars, jockey boxes, etc.
- \_\_\_ The Consumer Health Division does **NOT** regulate the installation of grease traps. **Owner/operators must contact the Pre-Treatment Services Division of the Water Department 817-392-8305 regarding the need, size, and proper plumbing installation of grease traps.**
- \_\_\_ As a general rule grease traps should be located outside. If a G. T. has to be installed indoors, the top of the trap shall be flush with the floor. An exception to this rule may apply when the grease trap is located above another floor. Grease traps shall be accessible for cleaning and be maintained as required.
- \_\_\_ Water heaters shall be adequately sized to provide a constant and ready flow of hot water to all supplied fixtures.
- \_\_\_ Water heater shall be behind a door or otherwise enclosed if it is located in the kitchen.

19. **Equipment Design and Installation:**

- \_\_\_ Only equipment designed and constructed for commercial use is allowed in food establishments. Residential, home-type freezers, ranges, ovens, etc. are not permitted.
- \_\_\_ If *immobile*, the installation of freestanding equipment such as: refrigerators, fryers, tables, shall be:
  - 1) Sealed to the floor
  - 2) Installed on a raised platform of sealed concrete; or
  - 3) Elevated on legs to provide a minimum six-inch clearance between floor and equipment.
- \_\_\_ Sufficient space shall be provided for easy cleaning between and behind each unit of floor-mounted equipment, or the space between it and adjoining equipment units and adjacent walls shall be closed and sealed.
- \_\_\_ A minimum three-foot working space/aisle shall be maintained throughout the establishment in food preparation, food serving, ware washing and storage areas.
- \_\_\_ The tops of all walk-in boxes and vent-hoods shall be extended to the ceiling and properly sealed.
- \_\_\_ Jockey boxes and ice bins must be equipped with proper lids (no flat, one-piece lids).

20. **Ventilation:**

- \_\_\_ A vent-hood system is required when any operation within the kitchen produces excessive heat, steam, condensation, grease-laden vapors, obnoxious odors, smoke and/or fumes and shall meet the requirements of the City Mechanical Code (817) 392 -2222.

\_\_\_ Easily removable, easily cleanable filters are required in vent-hoods and ventilation systems and shall be maintained clean.

21. **Toilet Rooms:**

- \_\_\_ Toilet rooms shall conform to all building, plumbing, and health code requirements.
- \_\_\_ Toilet facilities shall be conveniently located and shall be accessible to employees at all times.
- \_\_\_ Toilet rooms shall be completely enclosed and have tight-fitting self-closing solid doors.
- \_\_\_ Toilet rooms shall have forced-air ventilation to the outside of the establishment.
- \_\_\_ The women's toilet room shall be provided with a covered trash receptacle.

22. **Lighting:**

- \_\_\_ Adequate artificial illumination shall be provided in accordance with the following minimum requirements.
- \_\_\_ At least 110 lux (10 foot candles) at a distance of 75 centimeters (30 inches) above the floor, in walk-in refrigeration units and dry storage areas and in other areas and rooms during periods of cleaning is required.
- \_\_\_ At least 220 lux (20 foot candles) at a surface where food is provided for consumer self-service such as buffets and salad bars or where fresh produce or packaged foods are sold or offered for consumption, inside equipment such as reach-in and under counter refrigerators, The light shall be installed at a minimum distance of 75 centimeters (30 inches) above the floor in areas used for hand washing, ware washing, and equipment and utensil storage, and in toilet rooms.
- \_\_\_ At least 540 lux(50 foot candles) at a surface where a food employee is working with food or working with utensils or equipment such as knives, slicers, grinders, or saws where employee safety is a factor.
- \_\_\_ In areas where food or food-related items are handled, stored, or displayed all lighting shall be equipped with break-resistant, plastic shielding.

23. **Garbage and Refuse Disposal:**

- \_\_\_ Garbage and refuse containers, dumpsters, and compactor systems shall be stored on a smooth surface of nonabsorbent material, such as concrete or machine laid asphalt.
- \_\_\_ Discharges of liquid waste from compactor units should be diverted to the sanitary sewer in accordance with guidance provided by Pretreatment Services division of the Water Department (817) 392-8305.

24. **Laundry Facilities:**

- \_\_\_ Laundering shall be restricted to washing and drying items necessary to the operation of the establishment.
- \_\_\_ If a washer is provided, a dryer must also be provided for the drying of washed items. (Exception: Washing of only soiled wiping cloths placed directly into sanitizer solution and stored does not require a dryer.)

\_\_\_ Washers and dryers may be located in dry storage areas containing only prepackaged items, otherwise separate rooms shall be provided for laundry facilities.

25. **Employee Locker Areas and Dressing Rooms:**

\_\_\_ Enough lockers or other suitable facilities shall be provided and used for the storage of employee's clothing and belongings.

\_\_\_ If employees routinely change clothes within the establishment; rooms shall be designated and used only for that purpose.

26. **Toxic Material Storage:**

\_\_\_ All poisonous or toxic materials shall be stored in cabinets or in similar physically separated compartments or facilities used for no other purpose. Such materials shall not be stored above or immediately adjacent to or in areas where food or food-related items are handled, prepared, washed, or stored.

27. **Dry Storage Areas:**

\_\_\_ Food storage shall be adequate for the operation of the establishment. Food shall be protected from contamination by storing the food in a clean, dry location where it is not exposed to splash, dust, and is at least 6 inches above the floor.

28. **Self-Service Areas:**

\_\_\_ Areas designated for customer self-service shall have smooth, easily cleanable, nonabsorbent flooring which shall extend at least three feet from the perimeter of the self-service area.

\_\_\_ Properly installed and effective sneeze guards shall protect self-service food displays.

\_\_\_ At self-service displays where customers are allowed second portions of food, a sign shall be posted advising the customers that clean tableware is to be used upon their return to the self-service area.

29. **Smoking Requirements in Fort Worth:**

\_\_\_ Smoking is be banned in all restaurants, including their bar area; bowling alleys; business offices/buildings and within 20 feet of **any primary** entrance or exit of a regulated facility. The revised smoking ordinance provides for exemptions to the requirements. Smoking is allowed in the following establishments:

- **Bars** – defined as “establishments that are licensed by the State and that have more than 70 % of their annual gross sales in alcoholic beverages for consumption by guests on the premises. Calculation of gross sales shall be made from the combined sale of food and beverages.
- **Hotel/Motel Rooms** – but only up to 25% of the total number of rooms in the hotel/motel rented to guests may be designated as smoking rooms.



- **Private Clubs** – to mean an associated group of persons that are members governed by a board of representatives, and the facility which the club owns, leases or rents **is utilized solely** for the benefit of its members and guests.
- **Private Meeting Rooms** – as long as the entire room remains private and is not open to the general public such as hotel/motel conference or meeting rooms and public facilities while being used for a private function (**with the exception of restaurants**).
- **Outdoor Dining Areas** – as long as the area is more than 20 feet from a primary entrance or from operable windows.
- **Retail Tobacco Stores** – if the store is a stand-alone facility and its primary business is the sale of tobacco products and accessories.
- **Bingo Parlors** – operated under the Bingo Enabling Act Chapter 2001 of the occupations code provided no one under the age of 18 years is allowed in the smoking area and the facility provides an enclosed designated non-smoking area.
- Private residences, except when used as a child care, adult day care or health care facility.
- A private or semi-private room in a nursing home or long-term care facility that is occupied by persons who smoke and have requested in writing to be placed in a room where smoking is permitted
- Any facility which is primarily used for exhibiting any stage, drama, lecture, musical recital or other similar performance, when smoking is part of a stage production

Prior to an establishment attaining exempt status, confirmation of their exemption must be documented by Code Compliance Department staff. For example, all bars must provide appropriate documentation to verify alcohol sales total 70% of total sales (this will be confirmed annually). Additionally, State issued licenses, *i.e. alcohol license*, will be verified during the confirmation phase.

### **Auxiliary Requirements for Food Establishments**

#### **A. Food Handler and Food Manager Certification:**

\_\_\_ All establishments that handle open food are required to have (a) and (b).

- a. All employees must obtain and maintain current Food Handler Certificates from the Fort Worth Consumer Health Division. The Food Handler class is offered by the Fort Worth Consumer Health Division and training must be obtained by employees within seven (7) days of starting work. Cost is \$16 per person.
- b. At least one **on-duty, on-site** manager shall obtain and maintain current Food Manager Certification from the Fort Worth Consumer Health Division.

\* Please note the Food Manager Certification in Fort Worth is in addition to the successful completion of a state approved manager's certification program. (Certificate + \$15.00)

#### **B. Thermometers:**

\_\_\_ Refrigerators, freezers and hot holding units used for the storage of potentially hazardous food shall have accurate, readily visible thermometers. Range of thermometer shall be 0 to 220 degrees Fahrenheit.

\_\_\_Stem thermometers are required for the monitoring of food temperatures. Stem thermometers shall be accurate and available to the staff.

C. **Chemical Test Kits:**

\_\_\_Chemical test papers for the appropriate sanitizer are required for the testing of sanitizer solutions used in the food establishment. For example, bleach test strips, T-Strips or a waterproof thermometer for testing heat sanitizing dish machines.