

FOOD ESTABLISHMENT MINIMUM CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS

The following is intended as basic guidance and does not replace all the applicable laws and regulations concerning construction and food establishment requirements. These standards apply to all food establishments regulated by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) for preparing, processing, storing or selling food for human consumption. All food establishments are required to have an initial inspection for permitting prior to beginning operation.

Plan Review: Food establishments regulated by the Florida Department of Agriculture (FDACS) are encouraged to take advantage of Voluntary Plan Review prior to purchasing an existing business, conversion, construction or remodeling plans of food establishments prior to opening to evaluate conformance with the established requirements. Details can be found at [Plan Review Information Guide and Application](#) and can be found on the Department's website at www.FreshFromFlorida.com.

Before making financial commitments, such as signing a lease, construction contracts, or purchasing an existing business, contact the Occupational License, Zoning and Building/Plumbing authorities for your location for their requirements. Other agencies may also require approval, including:

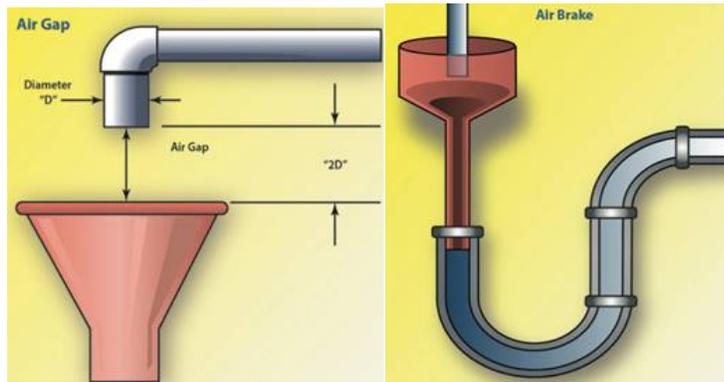
- The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for drinking (potable) water supply, sewage disposal systems, and storm water runoff;
- The Department of Health (DOH), County Health Departments for well water systems and onsite sewage disposal systems;
- Local Building and Plumbing Departments, Local Zoning Boards;
- Local Business/Occupational License Office.

1. **Water Supply:** The water supply must be adequate, clean, safe, and approved by either the Department of Environmental Protection through a licensed water provider, or the Department of Health, County Health Department, for onsite well water systems. Fire sprinkler systems may use a non-drinking (non-potable) water supply. The lines must be clearly marked so they are not mistaken for and connected to the drinking water supply.
2. **Sewage and Waste Water Disposal:** Sewage and waste water must be disposed of as follows:
 - In a public (municipal) sewage disposal system regulated by the Department of Environmental Protection, or
 - In an onsite sewage disposal system (e.g., a septic tank) regulated by the Department of Health, County Health Department.
 - Grease traps or grease interceptors must be installed when required by the public sewerage system serving your establishment or by the Department of Health, County Health Department, if you are served by an onsite sewage disposal system.

NOTE: The permitting process and inspection will occur only when the required documentation of approved water and sewage disposal is provided. A copy of a bill or application for service is required if on a public (municipal) water or sewage disposal system. A written approval from the Department of Health is required for food establishments using a water and or sewage disposal system that is under the regulatory requirements of the Department of Health before being permitted for operation by this Department. The Department of Health Interagency Evaluation Form at the end of this document may be used and additional instructions can be found in the information cover sheet for the form at the end of this document.



3. **Plumbing:** All plumbing must be sized, installed, and maintained according to the Florida plumbing code as written in section 553.73, Florida Statutes. The drinking (potable) water supply must be protected from contamination. Installing and maintaining devices to prevent backflow and back siphonage at all fixtures and equipment is necessary if there is no air gap. An air gap must be at least twice the diameter of the water supply inlet between the water supply inlet and the fixture's flood level rim. If hoses are used, the faucets must have a backflow prevention device.



4. **Toilet Facilities:** Toilet facilities and fixtures must be installed according to the Florida building and plumbing code as written in section 553.73, Florida Statutes.
- Toilet fixtures must be designed to be easily cleaned and in good repair.
 - Toilet rooms must be well lighted and adequately ventilated, and free of offensive odors.
 - Toilet rooms must be completely enclosed and have tight fitting, self-closing doors.
 - Access to toilet rooms is not permitted by customers through food preparation, processing, food storage, or warewashing areas. Compliance may be achieved by physical separation such as a wall to prevent contamination.
 - Toilet rooms cannot open directly into a food preparation, food processing, or warewashing areas.
5. **Construction Materials and Finishes:**
- Floor surfaces must be smooth, nonabsorbent and easy to clean.
 - Floor drains are necessary in all rooms receiving flush or flood type cleaning and where normal operations release water or other liquid waste on the floor. These floors must be graded to drain effectively and the wall and floor junctures must be coved.
 - Carpeting is allowed only in customer accessed non-processing areas and is never allowed in toilet rooms.
 - Installing utility lines and pipes on the floor is not allowed.
 - Walls and ceilings must be constructed of easily cleanable surfaces, and washable up to the highest level reached by splash or spray in: food preparation, processing, utensil washing, walk-in refrigeration/freezer, garbage and rubbish storage areas, dressing rooms, locker rooms and toilet rooms.
 - Ceilings must be smooth and easily cleanable in all processing areas including the warewash sink area.
 - Unnecessarily exposed utility service lines and pipes on walls or ceilings are not allowed. Where there are exposed utility service lines and/or pipes; they must not obstruct or prevent cleaning of the walls and ceilings.
 - The building must be constructed to prevent the entrance of vermin by using methods like: sealing walls, floors, ceilings; tight fitting doors and windows; proper screening (at least 16 mesh to an inch),

protecting air vents, and other similar preventive techniques to make the establishment insect and rodent proof. Insect control devices must not be installed over food preparation or processing areas.

6. Food Processing Equipment and Utensils:

- Equipment and utensils must be made from safe and durable materials; smooth and easy to clean; corrosion resistant and nonabsorbent.
- Equipment must be installed to allow aisles and enough space so employees can work without contaminating food or food-contact surfaces by their clothing or personal contact.
- Floor mounted equipment must have a clearance of 6 inches from the floor for cleaning purposes or be sealed to the floor.
- Table or counter mounted equipment must have a 4-inch clearance from the table or counter for easy cleaning. All equipment including movable equipment must be installed with adequate space for cleaning.
- Appliances must be installed to manufacturers' specifications and according to national standards.
- Food protection equipment such as sneeze guards or other similar guards must be installed where applicable.
- Raw wood or pegboard is **not** allowed in areas where food is prepared, processed, displayed, stored, or in warewashing areas.

7. Sinks: all sinks in the food establishment require hot and cold water under pressure and must be dispensed through a mixing valve.

Handwash sinks:

- Handwash sinks must be conveniently located and easily accessible for use by employees in all food preparation, food dispensing, processing, warewashing and ice bagging areas, and in or immediately next to toilet rooms.
- Hand soap and sanitary hand drying devices like single service towels, hot-air dryers, etc. are required.
- Hand wash signs must be present at each of the hand wash sinks.

Warewash sinks:

- At least one three-compartment sink is required in food preparation and processing areas for retail food establishments.
- Warewashing sink compartments must be large enough to hold the largest piece of equipment or utensil.
- Manufactured food establishments may have alternative equipment, including but not limited to, high-pressure detergent sprayers, low or line pressure spray detergent foamers, and specialized Clean in Place (CIP) equipment.
- Warewashing sinks may also be used to prepare foods if they are cleaned and sanitized before use, however, a separate prep sink may be more appropriate to use for food preparation.
- All three compartment sinks and culinary (prep) sinks must be indirectly plumbed to a sewage outlet pipe by either an air gap or air break.
- Required drainboards, utensil racks, or dish tables must be large enough to hold all soiled and cleaned items that may accumulate during hours of operation. Clean and soiled utensils and equipment must be adequately separated. All equipment and utensils must be air dried. Drain boards must drain properly.
- Mechanical warewashing machines must be equipped with temperature gauges and a data plate that is easy to read and attached by the manufacturer that shows the machine's design and operating instructions.

- A mechanical warewash machine does not substitute for sinks if the equipment or utensils used by the establishment are larger than the warewash machine is designed to handle

Mop Sink:

- At least one mop sink, utility sink, or curbed can wash facility must be provided. Additional mop sinks may be required in large food establishments.
8. **Storage Facilities:** Containers of food must be stored a minimum of 6 inches above the floor to protect from splash and contamination, and to allow for easy cleaning of the storage area. Pallets in good repair are allowed for food storage if there is equipment on the premises to move them for cleaning. Metal pressurized beverage containers, cased food packaged in cans, glass, or other waterproof containers need not be elevated when the floor is clean and the food container is not exposed to floor moisture. Food must not be stored under exposed water or sewer lines. Poisonous or toxic materials must be stored so they will not contaminate food, equipment, utensils, linens, and single-service or single-use articles by spacing or partitioning. Toilet rooms and rooms specifically designed to house electrical panels must not be used for storage.
 9. **Lighting:** Required and adequate lighting must be provided in retail food establishments and food processing areas.
 - All lights must be shielded where food, clean equipment, utensils, un-wrapped single service articles are exposed, and where clean linens are stored. Shields are not required if food is stored in unopened packages, and the integrity of the package keeps falling glass from tearing the packaging materials.
 - Heat lamps must have a shield surrounding and extending beyond the bulb so only the face of the bulb is exposed.
 10. **Ventilation:** Adequate ventilation is required throughout the establishment. Equipment that produces steam, smoke, or grease laden vapors must be properly vented. A hood system with fire suppression equipment is required where **grease laden vapors** are produced. The local building department will provide requirements and issue approval on these systems.
 11. **Garbage and Refuse Disposal:** All garbage and refuse are required to be disposed of in a sanitary manner.
 - Leak proof trash containers with tight fitting lids are required.
 - Dumpsters must be in good repair with proper drain plugs installed and lids and doors kept closed.
 - Dumpsters, compactors, and grease containers must be placed on non-absorbent surfaces such as a concrete pad or machine laid asphalt.
 - Liquid waste from cleaning or from garbage must be disposed of as sewage into a drain connected to the proper sewage disposal system
 12. **Premises:** Outside walking and driving surfaces must be adequately graded to prevent pooling of water. Dust must be minimized. Grass and other vegetation must be kept mowed and maintained to prevent the harborage of rodents. Doors that open to the exterior must be self-closing. Roll type receiving doors must be kept in good repair and closed except during deliveries.

WATER AND SEWAGE REQUIREMENTS FOR ISSUANCE OF A FOOD PERMIT

All food establishments are required to provide documentation to meet the requirements for approved water source and waste water (sewage) disposal before initial permitting inspection. Documentation as proof of the source of water and/or sewage could be a water/sewage bill, an application for service, written documentation from the Municipal/Public system provider, a well permit, or the signed Interagency Form (attached at the end of this document) indicating an approved source (special circumstances for onsite wells and septic as below).

Municipal Water and/or Sewage Systems

An application for service or a copy of the water and /or sewage bill is acceptable. A bill is not required o have the new food establishment name listed as long as the address is the same and the bill is no more than 3 months old.

Onsite Well

A new food establishment operating with an onsite well must provide a valid onsite well permit or a signed Interagency Form (attached at the end of this document) signed by the Florida DOH or Florida DEP. Onsite well permits must be in the food establishment's name.

Septic Systems

The interagency form or other DOH written documentation of an approved septic system must be provided for:

1. A new food establishment with a septic system*
2. An existing food establishment with a significant change in food service operations

*Existing FDACS permitted food establishment changing owner need to request a new permit but -new permits will not need to provide documentation of an approved septic system if there is no significant change in the food service operation AND/OR there are no signs of septic system failure.

If using the Interagency Form (attached), complete as indicated below:

Section 2 - Water is to be completed for water approvals by the Department of Health (DOH) or Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) depending on who regulates the water supply. Food establishments can locate a DOH contact at <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/chdsitelist.htm#A> and a DEP contact at <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/mainpage/contact.htm>. Food establishments operating from a Municipal/Public Water system can have the supplier sign off on Section 2 in lieu of a bill or application.

Section 3 – Wastewater is to be completed for wastewater approval. New food establishments operating on as Onsite Wastewater Disposal System (septic) must have Section 3 completed by the Department of Health. Only the Department of Health, the county health department, or the municipal utility company is authorized to sign section 3 indicating approval of your wastewater disposal system. Food establishments operating from a Municipal/Public Wastewater system can have the supplier sign off on Section 2.

1-800- HELP FLA
www.FreshFromFlorida.com

**INTERAGENCY COORDINATION OF REGULATED ESTABLISHMENTS - DOH/DACS/DBPR/DCF/AHCA/APD
EVALUATION OF ONSITE SEWAGE (SEPTIC) AND WATER SUPPLY CAPACITY**

This evaluation is to ensure certain regulated facilities/businesses are evaluated for adequate water and sewage services before opening or expanding operations. If the facility/business is on a DOH regulated onsite well or onsite septic system, completion of this evaluation will facilitate and expedite the approval process. Please return to the appropriate licensing agency when complete.

Completed by Applicant	Section 1 - EVALUATION REQUEST FOR/LICENSING AGENCY		
	<input type="checkbox"/> New (new building or structure)	<input type="checkbox"/> Expansion / Remodeling (increase in seating/residents/other)	<input type="checkbox"/> Change in Occupancy/Tenancy
	Licensing Agency: <input type="checkbox"/> DBPR <input type="checkbox"/> DACS <input type="checkbox"/> DCF <input type="checkbox"/> AHCA <input type="checkbox"/> APD		License Number:
	Contact Person:		Phone: FAX:
	Comments:		
	ESTABLISHMENT INFORMATION		
	Establishment Name:		Type of Establishment:
	Address:		Contact Person / Phone#:
	City:		County: Zip:

Section 2 – WATER			
The above named facility/business uses the following water supply (choose one type), and complete evaluation:			
Completed by DOH/CHD, DEP or Utility Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Municipal/Public Water System	Name of Supplier:	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Onsite Well System	Permit Number:	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Establishment served by a 64E-8, F.A.C., Limited Use Public Water System, DOH Regulated <input type="checkbox"/> Establishment served by a Florida Safe Water Drinking Act (DEP or DOH) regulated public water system		
	SYSTEM EVALUATION RESULT: <i>(this section below normally only completed by DOH if on a DOH water system)</i>		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	Comments:	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Denied (see comments)		
	Name & Title (Printed)		County Health Department/DEP/Utility
	Signature		Date
	Address		Phone

Section 3 – WASTEWATER			
The above named facility/business uses the following wastewater disposal system (choose one type), and complete evaluation:			
Completed by DOH/CHD, DEP or Utility Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Municipal/Public Sewer	Name of Supplier:	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Septic System (Onsite Wastewater)	Permit Number:	
	SYSTEM EVALUATION RESULT: <i>(this section below normally only completed by DOH if on a septic system)</i>		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Single-Service Utensils Only <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Number of Residents/Students <input type="text"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/> Number of Seats Permitted <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Number of Beds/Clients <input type="text"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Denied (see comments)	<input type="checkbox"/> Hours of Operation <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Conditions (see comments) <input type="text"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/> Food Service Yes <input type="text"/> No <input type="text"/>	
	Comments:		
	Name & Title (Printed)		County Health Department/DOH/Utility
	Signature		Date
Address		Phone	

Instructions/Explanations for Interagency Coordination of Regulated Establishments /Evaluation of Onsite Sewage and Water Supply Capacity

As indicated on the evaluation page, the evaluation is to ensure facilities/businesses regulated by the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR), Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS), Department of Children and Families (DCF), Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) and Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) are evaluated for adequate water and sewage services before opening or expanding operations. When the evaluation form is completed, it is returned to the licensing agency to indicate whether or not the water and sewage services are adequate and have been approved by the appropriate agency or utility authority. The evaluation form is used to facilitate and expedite the approval process. The evaluation form is not intended to be used for existing or failing systems not associated with any changes to the operation. *If the business/facility is served by onsite water or onsite septic system (one or both), the evaluation form must be completed by the Department of Health/County Health Department (DOH/CHD) in sections 2 and/or 3 and the regulating agency must not complete licensing until the DOH/CHD has approved the onsite septic and/or water system.*

Section 1 – Evaluation Request For/Licensing Agency

This section should be completed by the applicant. Ensure correct information regarding the applicant and facility is provided. Indicate by checking the appropriate box if this request is for a new facility, expansion/remodeling, or change in occupancy/tenancy.

- New – A newly constructed business/facility
- Expansion/remodeling – a business/facility that is being remodeled or upgraded. This could be due to an increase in seating (food service establishment), change in food operation (e.g., single service to full service, an increase in operation hours, addition of a deli or food preparation in a convenience store, etc.), in increase of the food preparation in a food outlet or bakery, increase in the residents in a adult living facility and increase in students in a childcare facility and more.
- Change in Occupancy/Tenancy – an existing business that has changed occupancy or tenancy resulting in changes to the business operation.

Indicate the appropriate licensing agency, permit number (if available), contact person with the licensing agency, phone number and any comments. In addition, complete the establishment information. Clearly indicate the name and physical address of the business/establishment, the type of business (i.e., restaurant, convenience store, bakery, childcare, adult living facility etc.) Provide the name of a contact person and phone number.

Section 2 – Water

This section is to be completed by the DOH/CHD, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) or the Utility Authority.

If served by a Municipal/Public Sewer:

Indicate the name of the supplier. You may provide the appropriate documentation requested by the licensing agency to validate this or have the Municipal/Public Sewer provider complete the evaluation section.

If served by an Onsite Water System regulated by DOH:

The entire portion of Section #2 should be completed by DOH/CHD. In this section list the permit number if a permit has been issued. Indicate the type of water system. List the result of the evaluation as either approved or denied. In comments section list any conditions of approval or disapproval that may be necessary. At the bottom of the form indicate the name and title of the Health Official reviewing or approving the evaluation including a signature, date, office address and phone number. The licensing agency needs this information for reference, questions and any validation that may be necessary.

Section 3 - Wastewater

This section is to be completed by the DOH/CHD, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) or the Utility Authority.

If served by a Municipal/Public Sewer:

Indicate the name of the supplier. You may provide the appropriate documentation requested by the licensing agency to validate this or have the Municipal/Public Sewer provider complete the evaluation section.

If served by a Septic/Onsite Wastewater System:

This entire portion of Section #3 should be completed by the DOH/CHD. In this section list the permit number if a permit has been issued. List the result of the evaluation as either approved or denied. If approved, list the conditions of approval. The conditions include; food service establishments that are designed for single service utensils only, the number of seats approved, the hours of operation, in group care/institutional facilities the number of residents or students, in adult living facilities the number of bed or clients, other conditions and whether or not food service is provided. In the comments section, other details or conditions of permitting/approval can be listed. At the bottom of the form indicate the name and title of the Health Official reviewing or approving the evaluation including a signature, date, office address and phone number. The licensing agency needs this information for reference, questions and any validation that may be necessary.