



HARDIN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT PLAN REVIEW FOR FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS & PERMITTING REQUIREMENTS

§228.244 (a) §228.244 (c) (1) (A) Facility and Operating Plans.

(a) When plans are required. A permit applicant or permit holder may be required to submit to the regulatory authority properly prepared plans and specifications for review and approval before:

- (1) the construction of a food establishment; Pf [25]
- (2) the conversion of an existing structure for use as a food establishment; Pf [25] or
- (3) the remodeling of a food establishment or a change of type of food establishment or food operation as specified under Subchapter L of the Chapter (pertaining to License/Permit Application), or under the conditions set by the regulatory authority, if the regulatory authority determines that plans and specifications are necessary to ensure compliance with this code. Pf [25]

(b) Contents of the plans and specifications. The plans and specifications for a food establishment, including a food establishment specified under §228.244(c) of this title, shall include, as required by the regulatory authority based on the type of operation, type of food preparation, and foods prepared, the following information to demonstrate conformance with code provisions:

- (1) Intended menu;
- (2) Anticipated volume of food to be stored, prepared, and sold or served;
- (3) Proposed layout, mechanical schematics, construction materials, and finish schedules;
- (4) Proposed equipment types, manufacturers, model numbers, locations, dimensions, performance capacities, and installation specifications;
- (5) Evidence that standard procedures that ensure compliance with the requirements of this rule are developed or are being developed; and
- (6) Other information that may be required by the regulatory authority for the proper review of the proposed construction, conversion or modification, and procedures for operating a food establishment.

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 Hardin County and the Texas Food Establishment Rules, and shall first be discussed with this office.

1. **Submission of Plans:**

___ One set of plans to be delivered or mailed to: Hardin County Health Department, (Courthouse Annex Building) 1135 Redwood, Kountze, Texas 77625. Comments will be made on review forms and provided to the person whose plans are being reviewed. The Health Department Regulatory Authority (Health Inspector) may be contacted at (409) 209-5359.

___ One set of plans to be delivered to the Floodplain Administrator at 300 Monroe, Kountze, TX 77625. This is for permits outside the city limits.

2. **Certificate of Occupancy:**

___ A Certificate of Occupancy from the city shall be obtained before Health Permit will be issued. Outside city limits will only need the Fire Marshall to sign off prior to the Health Inspection.

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 Health Inspector 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:**

___ Contact the Health Inspector to schedule a pre-operational inspection at least seven days before construction is completed at (409) 209-5359.

___ A health permit must be issued by the Health Inspector prior to beginning any food preparation for the establishment.

___ Final inspection will be on opening day of the food establishment.

5. **Permit Fees**

___ All permit fees (plan review and inspection permit) will be paid in advance prior to the pre-operational inspection. This includes all new construction and change of ownerships. County fees please call Floodplain for more information at 409-246-5251.

6. **Alterations to Plans:**

___ Before any alterations are made to the submitted and approved plans, the Health Inspector 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. Private wells will require a test be submitted to the Health Department every six months.

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. County permits for those with no public works access for sewer and water will need to contact TCEQ at 409-898-3838.

9. **Living Areas:**

___A private home may not be used for conducting food establishment operations.

10. **Outer Opening/Insect and Rodent Control**

___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.

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.

___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.
- ___ 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.
- ___ 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 Health Department does **NOT** regulate the installation of grease traps. **Owner/operators must contact TCEQ at 409-898-3838 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 Fire Marshall.

___ 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.

___ Toilet rooms must have a paper towel dispenser to keep employee hands from getting recontaminated.

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 TCEQ.

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.

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 an accredited Food Handler Program. The Food Handler class is offered by the Health Department or can be taken on line. Cost is \$15 per person.

b. At least one **on-duty, on-site** manager shall obtain and maintain current Food Manager Certification from the Hardin County Health Department. Classes can be taken at statefoodsafety.net or a class is offered at the Health Department quarterly. The cost is \$125 and is good for 5 years.

* Please note the Food Manager Certification must be certified by the Health Inspector if the Certificate was not purchased through Statefoodsafety.com. To certify a Food Manager with an existing valid certificate not purchased in Hardin County, the cost is \$20.

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.

D. First Aid Kits:

___ First Aid Kits are required and a list of the kit ingredients can be found on the Hardin County Health Department website.