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. See Rule 5K-4.004(8), F.A.C.

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: 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. More information regarding water and sewer requirements can be found at https://www.freshfromflorida.com/Business-Services/Food-Establishment-Inspections/Food-Establishment-Permit
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.

![Diagram of air gap and backflow prevention device](image)

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.

Rev 11/18