



## **Environmental Health Division**

### **Basic Requirements for Food Service Establishments**

This document is not intended to be a complete listing of all food service establishment requirements. Specific questions can be directed to the Environmental Health Division of the Durham County Health Department.

#### **Permits**

A permit to operate is issued to the owner of the establishment once all construction requirements have been satisfied. The first grading inspection will occur within four weeks of an establishment's opening and the first grade card will be posted at that time.

#### **Inspections**

Once permitted the establishment is inspected on a regular basis determined by the risk categorization determined through the plan review process. Regular inspections and visits are not announced or scheduled. Compliance or educational visits will be scheduled on an as needed basis.

#### **Existing establishments**

Permits are not transferable. If an establishment is sold, the new owner must obtain a new permit prior to opening. Any non-compliant items must be corrected, repaired or replaced before a new permit can be issued. Under limited circumstances a transitional permit may be issued that remains valid for a maximum of 180 days. This is not intended to be a complete listing of all requirements. If you have any questions, please contact the Environmental Health Division of the Durham County Health Department.

#### **Plan review submittal**

The plan review submittal must include the following a set of plans drawn to a minimum scale of 1/4" to one foot, including a site plan, menu, equipment layout, equipment schedule, finish schedule for all floors, walls and ceilings, plumbing and electrical diagrams, hot water heater specifications and cut sheets on the dishwashing machine prior to obtaining a building permit. Fees associated with plan review must be paid prior to the plan review being completed. A plan submittal guide is available from the division upon request.

#### **Water and sewer**

Site should be selected where municipal water and sewer are available, if possible. When considering a site without access to municipal water and / or sewer the site must be evaluated by this office for the well and / or septic system before drawing plans.



### **Equipment requirements**

All equipment must be commercial quality and National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) listed or equivalent. Installation must comply with NSF standards. Water heaters, hoods, microwaves, toasters and mixers are exempt from NSF standards. No other domestic (home-style) equipment is allowed, including crock pots and freezers.

### **Sink requirements**

Separate sinks are required for utensil washing, hand washing, and bar glass washing. In addition a separate sink may be required for each of the following; vegetable preparation, raw meat, poultry, and seafood preparation (if these foods are washed or thawed in a sink prior to cooking) depending on volume and frequency. All establishments must have a utensil washing sink and at least one hand washing sink. The size and layout of the kitchen will determine how many hand washing sinks are required. The type of service and the menu will determine the other sink requirements. Sinks must comply with NSF standards, including one-piece construction with splash back protection. Sink vats must have rounded corners. The standard utensil washing sink has three compartments, with each compartment measuring at least 18 inches wide by 21 inches front to back by 14 inches deep.

This may not be adequate for larger facilities. The utensil washing sink bowls must be large enough to submerge the largest pot, utensil, or pan to be washed, excluding pans used for baked goods only. A minimum 24 inches of drain board space is required on each end of the sink. Installation must comply with the NC State plumbing code.

### **Can wash**

A can wash facility is required for washing out garbage cans, cleaning mop heads, drawing and disposing of mop water. The can wash pad should measure 3 feet by 3 feet, slope to drain and have a 4 inch curb. The can wash must be equipped with a combination faucet. The drain must be connected to the sanitary sewer.

### **Sneeze guards**

Sneeze guards are required to protect open food and ice adjacent to customer areas from contamination. Sneeze guards are required for cafeteria style and self-serve counters. No open displays of food are allowed. Installation must comply with NSF standards.

### **Toilets**

Toilets must comply with the N.C. state building code as to the number of fixtures and handicap requirements. Doors must be self-closing. Any establishment that seats customers (including picnic tables on the grounds) must provide a minimum of two public toilets.



### **Ventilation**

All ventilation, including hoods, must comply with current N. C. Building code requirements. Contact the mechanical inspector at (919) - 560-4144 for more information.

### **Lighting**

Lighting at all work surfaces must be a minimum of 50 foot candles; service counters, inside equipment, hand washing and toilet areas must have at least 20 foot candles of light and all other areas must have a minimum of 10 foot candles 30 inches above the floor.

### **Grease traps**

Grease traps must comply with the plumbing code. Contact the plumbing inspector regarding grease trap and toilet requirements (919)-560-4144.

### **Finishes**

Floors, walls, baseboards, and ceilings in food preparation, and dish washing areas must be of approved materials, smooth, non-absorbent and washable. Floors and walls in toilets must also meet these requirements. Walls should be finished in a light color. Fiberglass Reinforced Panel (FRP) is recommended as a wall covering in food preparation and dish washing areas.

North Carolina food service rules are available from:

<http://ehs.ncpublichealth.com/rules.htm>

Food Service Establishment plan review guides can be found:

<http://ehs.ncpublichealth.com/food/planreview/index.htm>