



## **Plan Review Guidance Document:**

### **Plan Review for Food Service Operations, Retail Food Establishments, Mobiles, and Micro Markets**

**As of January 1, 2020, Lorain County Public Health will be storing all approved plans electronically. One printed set of plans is still required for the review process. Plans will be accepted in the following formats:**

- 1. Professionally drawn, no smaller than 12" x 18" and no larger than 24" x 36". After review, and prior to the approval letter being sent, plan reviewer will request an electronic copy with all pertinent changes. Format must be a flattened PDF with no tags, web links, or colors.**
- 2. Drawn by hand. Hand-drawn plans must be submitted on sheets of 12" x 18" graph paper. These will be scanned by the plan reviewer after approval. No other sizes or formats will be accepted for hand-drawn plans.**

**Note: Electronic plans or updates will not be accepted unless requested by the plan reviewer.**

#### **Frequently Asked Questions:**

**Q:** Where do I start when I want to open a food business?

**A:** A great place to start is by contacting the sanitarian assigned to the area where you would like to open a food business. You can schedule an on-site meeting for a walkthrough prior to submitting plans or after plans have been submitted and approved. It is highly encouraged to schedule at least one walkthrough with the sanitarian during the construction phase to point out any discrepancies or unforeseen issues.

**Q:** When is plan review required?

**A:** There are many instances that plan review is required prior to operating a food business.

- 1. New construction of a food business.**
- 2. A change of business from an existing building to a food business.**
- 3. A change of business from one restaurant to a different restaurant.**
- 4. If a food business has been closed longer than one year.**
- 5. If significant upgrades are required upon change of ownership.**

**Q:** Why must I go through plan review if the previously licensed place was approved?

**A:** A lot can happen in a food business between routine inspections. The plan review process is to ensure that your new food business will meet the minimum standards of the Ohio Uniform Food Safety Code.

**Q:** Why do I need so many sinks in my food business?

**A:** In a food business, each sink has a designated purpose and function. In a typical restaurant, you will have at least one hand washing sink, a warewashing 3-compartment sink, a culinary food preparation sink, a floor-mounted mop sink, and sinks in the restrooms. Depending on the layout, your business may have multiple hand washing sinks in the kitchen.



**Q:** What do we do if plans have been approved by Lorain County Public Health and we want to make a change to our food business before opening?

**A:** Before making any physical changes to your food business, you must contact the plan reviewer to discuss the extent of the changes. Any changes deemed significant may require going through the entire plan review process again. This will delay your business from opening. Please do not assume that any deviation from the approved set of plans will be approved by the plan reviewer. ***Significant changes would include moving or deleting plumbing fixtures, adding several pieces of equipment, rearranging the layout, adding equipment that would change the license risk level, or otherwise making the drawing not match up to the finished buildout. Non-significant changes would include changing the brand or model of a like-for-like piece of equipment, surface finish color, décor changes in the dining area, and similar changes. If it is determined at a pre-licensing inspection that changes from the approved plans were made without the approval of the plan reviewer, plans may need to be re-submitted, un-approved equipment be removed, or items that are shown on the approved plans but subsequently deleted be re-established. This may significantly delay your business from opening.***

**Q:** Can I have my plans expedited?

**A:** We do not offer expedited plan review. All plans are reviewed in the order they are received.

#### **Plan Review Explanation and Basic Requirements:**

Any new food service, retail food establishment, mobile FSO/RFE, or micro market will be required to submit a full plan review to ensure all aspects of the operation meet the Ohio Food Code prior to operating and serving food to the public. A significantly remodeled facility or a facility that changes business will be required to submit plan review as well. No work should begin until plans have been approved by Lorain County Public Health. We cannot be responsible if significant work has been completed prior to the plan review submission and something major has to be changed.

Food facilities are licensed based on the types of activities that will take place at that particular location. Equipment requirements will vary based on the types of food activities, but there are a few items that will be required for each licensed facility. Licensed food facilities must also comply with all other State and Local codes and ordinances. Contact your local building, fire, and zoning officials for further clarification.

#### **Plan Review Process – Opening a New Food Business**

Plans must be provided prior to building out the proposed food location. By law, the local health department is allowed up to 30 days from the day the plans are received to act on the plans. This means plans should be submitted more than 30 days before you want to open. If any information is missing from the plan review, opening a new facility can be delayed significantly. In the event of missing information, the plan reviewer will contact the architect or listed contact by email, in order to provide a list and to improve turnaround time.



Permits must be obtained at the local building or zoning departments as well for any building, plumbing, electrical, fire suppression work, etc. A food license will not be issued until at least a temporary occupancy is issued.

**Explanation of 3717-1-09 Criteria for reviewing facility layout and equipment specifications**

**The facility layout and specifications shall be legible and be drawn reasonably to scale**

A professional drawing is not required, but it is highly recommended. If creating the drawing by hand, please use graph paper and a ruler, with ¼ inch representing 1 foot. Create a legend with numbers and list out equipment names, and place the numbers on the drawing to correspond with each piece of equipment. This will keep the drawing neat and organized, and will make it much easier to read.

**The type of operation or establishment proposed and foods to be prepared and served**

Provide a menu so the plan reviewer can ensure you have adequate equipment to prepare, cook, and store the food in your establishment. This will also be how the food license risk level is determined.

-If you will be a retail market, please provide basic explanations such as canned grocery, whole produce, deli meat, and any items cooked or prepared on site.

-If you are a child care facility that will be receiving food from a caterer, please indicate this on the plans, and list the caterer if that information is available.

-If you will offer a raw menu item for consumption, such as fish for sushi or sashimi, you will need a consumer advisory on your menu. You will also need to provide proof of parasite destruction.

-If you will be using time in lieu of temperature control, please indicate on the menu which items will use this process.

-If you will be using a process such as acidifying rice, sous vide, cook chill, vacuum packaging, reduced oxygen packaging, or other non-typical process, we will need additional information about your HACCP plan, employee training, and other documentation.

**The total square footage to be used for the food service operation or retail food establishment**

Provide the total square footage somewhere on the plan. Facilities with food operations greater than 25,000 square feet are charged more for the plan review and the food license. Typically, only large grocery stores will fall into this category.

**A site plan that includes location of business in a building such as a shopping mall or stadium; location of building on site, including alleys, streets, and location of any outside support infrastructure such as dumpsters, potable water source, sewage treatment system; and interior and exterior seating areas.**

This was a new official requirement starting March 1, 2016. The site plan allows us to see the facility in relation to everything around it. We will also need to see the location for garbage



dumpsters, used grease dumpsters, compactors, loading docks, septic systems, etc. It is acceptable to use online mapping software to provide the overhead site plan, as long as all required information is easily readable.

### **Entrances and exits**

Indicate all entrances and exits, including garage-style doors, dock doors, serving windows, etc. If a section of an outdoor patio or other area will be intended for smoking, please be aware that the proposed area must comply with the Ohio Smoke-Free Workplace Act. This can become an issue with roll-up doors or windows, plastic walls, structures attached to the building, vinyl tents, etc. It is best to design the smoking area ahead of time to be in compliance. Also be aware that smoke is not permitted to infiltrate back into the building, so door type and layout is critical.

### **Location, number and types of plumbing fixtures, including all water supply facilities**

Sinks must be for designated, task-specific uses. A basic kitchen will need at least one hand washing sink, a vegetable washing or food prep sink, a 3-compartment dish washing sink with drainboards, and a commercial mop sink. There must also be a separate hand sink in each restroom.

Hand sinks must be accessible and located so that they will be used by employees. More than one may be required, depending on the size and setup of the kitchen.

A curbed mop sink is used to dispose of liquid wastes from mopping the floor, as these may not be dumped into the dish sink, hand sink, prep sink, storm drain, or on the ground outside.

Plans must indicate the hot and cold water supply as well as the location of the sanitary sewer pipes. The food prep sink must have a 2" air gap on the waste line, ideally draining into a floor sink. Equipment such as ice machines and soda fountains must also be air gapped. An air break is not acceptable.

Machines hooked up the water lines, such as coffee machines, must each have a backflow device installed inline.

A grease interceptor or grease trap is an integral part of the 3-compartment sink system. The size is based on the sink sizes and flow rate of the 3-compartment sink. Local ordinances may require a large grease interceptor installed outside the facility instead of one under the 3-compartment sink. The grease interceptor or trap is designed to slow the flow of dissolved fats, oils, and greases from the dish washing process. These are not designed for pouring out spent cooking oil or waste grease into the sinks. A grease dumpster or grease disposal system is needed to dispose of spent cooking oils and waste grease.

### **Plan of lighting**

A lighting level of 50 foot candles is required on food preparation surfaces, such as in the kitchen. Plans should indicate the number of fixtures and the type of bulbs used. Light bulbs such as fluorescent tubes, compact fluorescent bulbs, and incandescent bulbs will need to be covered, shielded, or coated. LED bulbs are generally shatter-proof by design.



### **A floor plan showing the fixtures and equipment**

This is an overhead view of the facility, drawn to scale, with equipment drawn in and listed. Plans will be approved as drawn, and additional equipment will not be permitted to be used if not on the approved plans.

### **Building materials and surface finishes to be used**

Floors, walls, and ceilings must be smooth, easily cleanable, non-absorbent, and commercial-grade. Washable ceiling tiles and coved base are required in food areas. Carpet and carpeted rugs are not permitted in the kitchen or restrooms.

### **An equipment list with equipment manufacturers and model numbers**

Equipment must be commercial-grade, NSF-approved (or equivalent) equipment. Residential equipment is not permitted. Providing equipment specification sheets will greatly expedite the plan review process.

### **Micro Markets**

A micro market must provide information about auto-shutoff and NAMA-approved equipment, if time/temperature controlled for safety food will be sold.

### **Mobile Food Service**

**Q:** How do I start a food truck business?

**A:** Food trucks are in the mobile food service license category. The same basic principles apply to mobiles as brick-and-mortar food businesses. All equipment must be commercial-grade. Interior surface finishes must be commercial-grade. Potable water must be available, either via a storage tank or fresh water hookup. An approved backflow device will be required for fresh water connections. Wastewater storage tanks must be at least 15% larger than any fresh water tanks. A separate handwashing sink, warewashing sink, and possibly culinary sink must be on the mobile unit. Preparation must take place on the mobile unit, unless proof of an agreement with a registered commissary is provided.

**Q:** How much is plan review for a mobile?

**A:** There is no fee for mobile plan review.

**Q:** Where do I get a mobile license?

**A:** A mobile license is valid throughout the State of Ohio. You will obtain the mobile license from the health district where your business headquarters is located. All equipment, restrictions, and approved menu will be placed on the back of the mobile license. The original license must accompany the mobile unit at all times. Be aware that restrictions based on equipment will be placed on the mobile license, and the mobile operator is subject to removal from events and locations if all restrictions are not met. These restrictions can be anything from requiring a generator, only operating when a potable water hookup is available, equipment trailer must accompany, etc.



### **Temporary Food Service**

There is no formal plan review for a temporary food service, as the plan is part of the temporary food license application. This must be submitted at least 10 days prior to the event start. Temporary food licenses will only be given to food vendors at an organized event. Fair-weather vendors at flea markets, front yards, and street corners will not be given temporary food licenses. A mobile food license should be obtained for those activities.