



# ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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## OPENING A FOOD SERVICE ESTABLISHMENT IN FORT BEND COUNTY

Every food establishment in the unincorporated area of Fort Bend County is required to hold a valid food establishment permit with this Department. Fort Bend County Environmental Health also permits food establishments in Fulshear, Needville, Beasley, and Kendleton. Contact these Cities for more information. A food establishment includes, but is not limited to restaurants, schools, day care centers, icehouses, bars, and convenience stores.

Obtain a Development Permit number at [www.mygovernmentonline.org](http://www.mygovernmentonline.org). The Fort Bend County Fire Marshal and the Fort Bend County Engineering Department will have plan review and permitting requirements. The local Municipal Utility District (MUD) will also review plans and inspect the facility.

**A Food Service Plan Review** must be conducted and approved **prior** to starting construction, remodeling, or renovations. All required information and forms must be submitted as a complete package in a .pdf format on a USB drive. Incomplete submittals will not be accepted. The USB drive shall be delivered to our office with the required fee. **\*If your establishment is utilizing a septic system or water well, additional permits are required.**

### **The following items shall be submitted to this Department in .pdf format on a USB drive:**

#### **1) Facility Floor Plans**

Submit a set of blueprints or contractors drawings in a .pdf format, **drawn to scale**, for new construction or renovations of an existing structure **PRIOR** to **ANY** construction or remodeling. Include the layout and finish construction materials for the entire proposed food establishment including: food preparation areas, food storage areas, hand sinks, utensil sinks, food preparation sink, mop sink, food equipment; restrooms, service areas, dining areas, and outside garbage storage areas. Include lighting, venting, mechanical, and plumbing plans. Contact other Municipal and State Departments for additional requirements (water wells, sewer, plumbing, building, electrical, fire, zoning, etc.).

#### **2) Description of Operation Form:** Completed in its entirety (leaving NO blanks) & signed.

#### **3) Application for Food Establishment Permit:** Completed in its entirety and signed.

#### **4) Risk Assessment Form:** Completed in its entirety and signed

#### **5) Menu** and list of all foods, beverages, and desserts to be served **with level of preparation.**

Example: lasagna made from scratch, hamburger patties cooked from frozen, French fries cut on site, cheesecake made from scratch, etc.

#### **6) Equipment Specification Sheets:** Submit specification sheets (cut sheets) for all equipment (large & small) such as refrigerators, freezers, steam table, ice machine, cooking equipment, sinks, tables, shelves, etc.

#### **7) Color Samples:** Light colors required; provide samples or labeled pictures.

#### **8) Inspection Fees:** Two advisory inspections shall be paid for at the time of plan review submittal. This fee is non-refundable. Fees are payable by check, money order or cash only. Make checks payable to Fort Bend County Environmental Health. **No credit or debit cards accepted.** Refer to the current fee schedule.

#### **9) A copy of the owner's driver's license or ID must be submitted.**

#### **10) On-site Sewage Facility Design:** Provide the septic system design if a municipal utility district (MUD) is not available at the facility.

**Only upon receipt of a written authorization can construction or remodeling begin.**

**The pre-opening procedure includes two inspections\*:**

**Pre-Opening Inspection:** A Pre-Opening Inspection must be conducted by this Department once all construction is 95% completed and equipment is in place. An appointment for this inspection must be scheduled. Allow approximately 5 business days to get an inspection. This inspection will list corrections required prior to the final inspection.

**Final Inspection:** A Final Inspection must be conducted once corrections have been completed from the Pre-Opening Inspection, and the establishment is in compliance with the Texas Food Establishment Rules (all clean up work etc., must be done). An appointment for this inspection must be scheduled. Allow approximately 5 business days to get an inspection.

**Note:** We suggest that you do not advertise an opening date until after the final inspection has been conducted and a permit issued. **Foods and beverages of any kind shall not be stored on the premises until your establishment has been approved for a Food Establishment Permit.**

\*Additional inspections may incur a re-inspection fee.

**Change of Ownership of Existing Food Establishment**

Any change to the legal ownership of a business (i.e. a new sales tax number) is considered a change of ownership. Food establishment permits are not transferable. **Do not start operating a food establishment without contacting this Department.** The new owner must obtain their own food establishment permit. You can do an open records request to obtain the information we have on file for the facility to help expedite the process. An advisory inspection can be arranged, for a fee.

**Note: Existing food service establishments are not “grandfathered” and must meet current health codes.**

**FOOD ESTABLISHMENT PERMITS**

Only after the Food Establishment Permit, Water Utility Service Agreement (signed by the MUD), Certificate of Compliance (from the Fire Marshal, and OSSF Permit (if needed) are issued, may you operate your establishment. The Food Establishment Permit must be posted in a conspicuous location. The Food Establishment Permit is a yearly permit and must be renewed annually. Failure to obtain the permit before the expiration date will result in closure of the business.

**WATER and WASTEWATER REQUIREMENTS**

**All food service establishments must obtain water from a certified public water supply (PWS). If your facility is receiving water from a water well the following is required:**

\* All water wells must be registered by the TCEQ. For all State and Federal water system requirements, contact the TCEQ at (713-767-3650). A copy of the TCEQ’s approval to use letter for the well must be submitted to this Department before a food establishment permit will be issued.

**All On Site Sewage Facilities for food establishments must be designed by a Professional Engineer.**

**If your establishment is utilizing a public water or sewage system the following is required:**

- \* Contact the local Municipal Utility District servicing your area for plan review and inspection requirements.
- \* Grease interceptor sizing, approval, and final connection inspections are conducted by the MUD.
- \* A signed Water Utility Service Agreement must be submitted to this Department prior to final approval.

## **INSPECTIONS**

Agents of the Fort Bend County Environmental Health Department shall enter any food service establishment at any reasonable time during normal operating hours, for the purpose of conducting inspections. The agents shall be permitted to examine the records of the establishment pertaining to food, supplies or employees.

## **HELPFUL PHONE NUMBERS**

Fort Bend County Fire Marshal	281-238-1500
Fort Bend County Engineering	281-633-7500
Southwest Water	713-405-1750
Inframark	281-578-4242
Texas Alcohol Beverage Commission	281-341-4647
Texas Dept. Of State Health Services	713-767-3240
City of Needville	979-793-4253
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality:	
Air	713-767-3700
Water	713-767-3650
Municipal Solid Waste	713-767-3600

## **Guidelines for Food Establishment Operators**

<p><b>1. Floors:</b> The floors of all food preparation, food storage, utensil washing areas, dressing rooms, locker rooms and toilet rooms shall be constructed of smooth, durable materials. Floor drains shall be provided in floors that are water-flushed for cleaning or in areas where pressure spray methods of cleaning equipment are used. Such floors shall be constructed only of sealed concrete, terrazzo, ceramic tile, or similar materials and shall be graded to drain. In all new or remodeled establishments, installation of exposed utility lines and pipes on the floor is prohibited. Floors shall be light in color.</p>	<p><b>2. Walls and Ceilings:</b> The walls and ceilings of food/beverage preparation areas, food/beverage storage areas, equipment and utensil washing areas, toilet rooms and vestibules shall be light colored, smooth, non-absorbent and easily cleanable. Studs, joists and rafters shall not be exposed in those areas listed above. Utility service lines and pipes shall not be exposed on walls or ceilings in those listed above.</p>
<p><b>3. Toilets:</b> Toilet facilities shall be conveniently located and shall be accessible to employees at all times. Toilet rooms shall be completely enclosed and shall have tight fitting, self-closing solid doors. Toilet rooms shall not open directly into any room in which food, drinks or utensils are handled or stored. Walls to a height of 4 feet shall have a smooth hard nonabsorbent surface. Toilet facilities shall be mechanically vented to the outside.</p>	<p><b>4. Lavatories:</b> Lavatories shall be located to permit convenient use by all employees in food preparation areas and utensil washing areas. Lavatories shall be accessible to employees at all times. Lavatories shall also be located in toilet rooms. Each lavatory shall be provided with hot and cold water tempered by means of mixing a valve or combination faucet. Each lavatory shall provide soap, sanitary towels or drying devices.</p>
<p><b>5. Cleaning and Sanitization:</b> A Three compartment sink shall be provided for washing, rinsing and sanitization of equipment. Sinks shall be large enough to permit the complete immersion of the utensils and equipment. Each compartment of any sink shall be not less than 15"x15"x14" (LxWxD). Drainboards of adequate size shall be provided. A left side drainboard is required. Cleaning and sanitation may also be done by spray type or immersion dishwashing machines as an additional method.</p>	<p><b>6. Plumbing:</b> The potable water system shall be installed to preclude the possibility of backflow. A hose shall not be attached to a faucet unless a backflow prevention device is installed. Except for properly trapped open sinks there shall be no direct connection between the sewerage system and any drains originating from equipment in which food or utensils are placed.</p>

<p><b>7. Dressing Rooms and Locker Areas:</b> If employees routinely change clothes within the establishment, rooms shall be designed and used for that purpose. These rooms shall not be used for food preparation, service, or for utensil washing or storage. Lockers or other suitable facilities shall be provided and used for the storage of employees personal items. Lockers may be located in food storage rooms containing only completely packaged food or packaged single service articles.</p>	<p><b>8. Equipment:</b> Equipment shall be located in a way that facilitates cleaning the establishment and prevents food contamination. Floor mounted equipment, unless readily movable, shall be: sealed to the floor; or installed on a raised platform of concrete; or elevated on legs to provide at least a six-inch clearance; between the floor and equipment. Unless sufficient space is provided for easy cleaning between and behind each unit of a floor mounted equipment, the space between it and adjoining equipment units and between it and adjacent walls shall be closed or, if exposed to seepage, the equipment shall be sealed to the adjoining equipment or adjacent walls. Aisles and working spaces between units of equipment and walls shall be unobstructed and of sufficient width to permit employees to perform their duties without contamination of food or food contact surfaces.</p>
<p><b>9. Utility Facilities:</b> In new or remodeled establishments at least one curbed cleaning facility with a floor drain shall be provided. Provide adequate storage shelving for cleaning equipment and supplies. The utility facility shall not be installed inside food storage or food preparation areas, or utensil areas.</p>	<p><b>10. Ventilation:</b> All rooms shall have sufficient ventilation to keep them free of excessive heat, odors, smoke, and fumes.. Ventilation hoods and ventilation equipment shall be equipped with effective, easily removable, easily cleanable filters. Provide a mechanical exhaust fan in all restrooms, at the mop sink, and at cleaning chemical storage areas.</p>
<p><b>11. Lighting:</b> Provide a minimum of 50 foot-candles of light at all food/beverage prep areas and utensil wash areas. Provide a minimum of 30 foot candles in all food/beverage storage areas, at the mop sink, and in walk-in coolers/freezers. Protective shielding shall be provided for all lighting fixtures located over food storage, preparation service, and display facilities where utensils and equipment are cleaned and stored.</p>	<p><b>12. Garbage:</b> Garbage and refuse containers, dumpsters, and compactor system shall be stored on a smooth surface of non-absorbent material, such as concrete or machine laid asphalt with a drain going into the sanitary sewer. Provide an enclosure and a pad.</p>

<p><b>13. Laundry Facilities:</b> Laundry facilities, if provided, shall be restricted to washing and drying of items necessary to the operation. If a washer is provided, then a dryer must also be provided. Separated rooms shall be provided for laundry facilities.</p>	<p><b>14. Insect and Rodent Control:</b> Openings shall be effectively protected against the entrance of insects by tight-fitting, self-closing doors, closed windows, screening, controlled air currents, or other means. Screen doors shall be self-closing.</p>
<p><b>15. Poisonous or Toxic Materials:</b> Each of the three categories of poisonous or toxic materials shall be stored and located to be physically separated from each other. All poisonous or toxic materials shall be stored in cabinets or in similar physically separated compartments or facilities used for no other purpose. To preclude potential contamination poisonous or toxic materials shall not be stored above food, food equipment, utensils or single service articles.</p>	<p><b>For more information, please contact . . .</b></p> <p><b>The Fort Bend County Environmental Health Department at:</b></p> <div> </div> <p><b>(281) 342-7469</b></p>

For all requirements, please refer to the **Texas Department of State Health Services: Texas Food Establishment Rules** and the **Texas Health and Safety Code Chapters 341 and 437**.

**\*This equipment checklist is for your use as a starting point for your facility:**

- \_\_\_ Three Compartment Sink with indirect drain, large enough to immerse largest item to be sanitized
- \_\_\_ Food Preparation Sink with indirect drain
- \_\_\_ Hand sink(s)
- \_\_\_ Mop sink, must be floor mounted, utility sink with legs not allowed
- \_\_\_ Mechanical vent fan above mop sink and chemical storage
- \_\_\_ Mop rack above mop sink
- \_\_\_ Wire or louvered shelves for air drying utensil
- \_\_\_ Refrigerator(s), adequate in size to support proposed operation
- \_\_\_ Freezer(s), adequate in size to support proposed operation
- \_\_\_ Dry storage shelving, adequate in size to support proposed operation
- \_\_\_ Water heater sized to handle all hot water demands
- \_\_\_ Grease trap, as required and approved by the local utility district, exterior to the facility
- \_\_\_ Appropriate cooking equipment for proposed operation
- \_\_\_ Ventilation hood, contact the Fire Marshal for specific details
- \_\_\_ Work tables, adequate to support proposed operation

\*Specific or additional equipment requirements are evaluated for each individual operation.