

Opening a food facility?

This is a step-by-step guide through the Santa Barbara County Environmental Health Services health permit process. Please keep in mind this handout is a guideline only. Complete requirements for food facilities are in the California Retail Food Code, a section of the California Health and Safety Code, which is posted on our website at: www.sbcphd.org/ehs.

Additional information regarding plumbing, and requirements for mechanical ventilation (hoods) over cooking surfaces is also found in the California Plumbing Code and the California Mechanical Code, which are also linked on our website.

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Dear Applicant:

Congratulations! We are pleased that you are planning to open a food facility in Santa Barbara County. At Santa Barbara County Environmental Health Services, we recognize that our first and legal responsibility is to ensure safe and clean food establishments, but we also take pride in providing excellent service to you, our customer.

It is our goal to help you become familiar with relevant state laws, and also to prepare you for the expectations of this agency. Enclosed you will find all the materials you need to get started. After going through this step-by-step guide, please let us know if you have additional questions or need additional information. We are continuously working to make the experience for our clients clearer and easier and welcome your comments.

Our offices are currently closed to the public due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but you can make an appointment to meet in-person or virtually with our staff. Please call us to set up an appointment, or with any questions. You can reach us by telephone in Santa Barbara at 805-681-4900 and in Santa Maria at 805-346-8460.

Sincerely,

Lars Seifert
Director, Environmental Health Services

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Step 1: Plan Check & Application

If you are conducting any type of construction or modification to your food facility, including a change of menu, or if you are the new owner of a food facility you may be required to go through the plan check process before making your planned changes. Start here, at Step One, with the plan check submittal requirements. You will need to successfully complete the plan check process, or confirm with EHS that no plan check is required, before you are able to apply for a health permit and operate your facility.

If you are taking over an existing operation (a change of ownership), that does not involve any construction, modification, or change of menu, you will need to complete a health permit application and pay the appropriate annual health permit fee. Your application will need be reviewed and approved by EHS before you can operate your food facility, and a site visit or change of ownership inspection may be required. See Step Two: Getting a Health Permit, for more information on how to apply for a Health Permit.

Plan Check Information and Requirements

What is plan check?

The plan check process allows EHS to verify that your proposed menu, type of operation, and equipment meet the requirements of the California Health & Safety Code before you start

construction or remodeling of your food facility. The California Health and Safety Code, sections 114380 and 114381, require that the County Health Department approve all food facility plans before any new construction or remodeling. The plan check process may also include other city and county departments such as Planning and Development, Building and Safety, Sanitation Districts and the Fire Department.

What will I need to begin Plan Check?

To begin the plan check process, you will need to submit to EHS:

- A completed Application for Permit to Construct/Remodel a Food Facility; and
- One (1) copy of clear and legible plans drawn to a minimum scale of 1/4 inch per foot; and
- The initial plan check application filing fee (currently \$255).

How much time will it take to get through the Plan Check Process?

The time it will take to get your plans approved depends on the size and complexity of the project, the clarity and completeness of the plans you submit, as well as your knowledge of the construction standards. Your assigned plan checker will review your plans, notify you within 20 business days of approval or any correction required, and assist you with information you may need in order to revise the plans.

How are plan check fees charged and billed?

The plan check application fee that accompanies your application opens your plan check account with EHS. EHS staff will then charge time spent on your plan check to your plan check account. EHS staff bill time for activities including but not limited to plan review, emails, phone calls, research, inspections and meetings. Time is charged by the minute, and you will be invoiced and billed monthly for plan check time spent on your application.

Plan checks with past due billings will have work halted until the plan check fees are current. Please see the plan check application for the most current hourly billing rate.

What is required during the construction process?

When your plans are ready to be approved by EHS, your plan checker will contact you to request three final copies, which will each be stamped by EHS with our approval stamp. An approved set of plans must be kept at the construction site until the final construction inspection has been made by Environmental Health Services.

Please call your assigned plan checker at least two business days in advance to schedule required construction inspections. Your plan checker will discuss what inspections are necessary based on the specifics of your project. Examples of inspections include:

1. After the plumbing is roughed in;
2. After installation of floors, walls and ceiling materials are completed;
3. After major equipment is installed;
4. The final construction inspection, when all equipment is operating and hot water can be

verified.

Can I operate immediately after construction is completed?

Before you can open and operate, you must receive the final inspection approval from EHS (and all other applicable agencies), complete the plan check fee payment, and apply for an annual health permit from EHS.

How do I get a health permit after construction is complete and my plan checker has signed off on my plan check?

Once you have successfully completed the final construction inspection for your facility and your plan checker has approved your construction, you will need to do the following in order to apply for a health permit:

1. Pay all outstanding plan check fees. Please allow a business day for your plan checker to provide you with a current plan check invoice. You will need to pay all outstanding plan check fees in order to apply for a health permit.
2. Submit a complete health permit application form to EHS;
3. Pay the appropriate annual health permit fee, which generally depends on the square footage of your food facility.
4. Receive permission to operate, in writing, from EHS. Your health permit will be mailed in a couple of weeks. While you are waiting for your health permit to arrive, written approval to operate on your final inspection report and receipt for payment of fees will serve as your temporary permit.

What will my plan check inspector require during the final construction inspection?

EHS will look for the following:

- The facility conforms to the latest set of Environmental Health Services approved plans; and
- The utilities (electric, gas) are in working order; and
- Both hot and cold water are available to all sinks (hot water must be at least 100°F minimum at hand sinks and at least 120 °F at other sinks); and
- All refrigeration is working properly and is capable of holding foods at or below 41 °F. Refrigerators must be equipped with accurate thermometers.
- There is a job card with permit number from designated agencies.

The next section has construction requirements for plan check. Remember, if in doubt, ask questions - we want to help you to get it right the first time!

Construction Requirements & Guidelines for Food Facilities

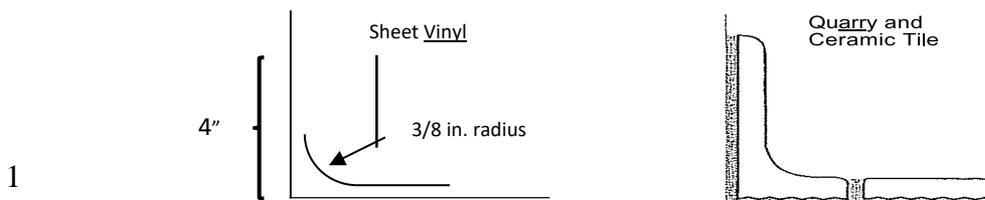
Your plans must clearly indicate compliance with the following requirements:

1. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- a. Submit complete and legible plans that are drawn to scale (H & SC114380)
- b. American National Standards Institute, (ANSI) certification standards for sanitation are used as a basis for approval in the evaluation of food equipment and its installation. Manufacturer's specifications for the proposed equipment are required. ANSI certification can be satisfied by NSF, UL, ETL or CSA sanitation standards (H & SC 114130)
- c. An equipment placement plan must be included in a numbered equipment schedule format to coincide with the proposed layout of equipment on the plans.
- d. An interior finish schedule of the materials proposed for the floors, cove bases, walls and ceilings must be included. Approved flooring* materials are listed below.
- e. Each food establishment must be fully enclosed in a building consisting of floors, walls and overhead structure. Exception: Outdoor barbecues/wood burning ovens, outdoor dining areas and produce stands. (H & SC 114266)

2. FLOORS

- a. Floor surfaces in all areas must be durable, slip resistant and easily cleanable (sample may be required).
- b. Flooring must continue up the wall at least four inches, in a seamless manner, forming a 3/8 inch minimum radius cove as an integral unit (see figure below)
 - a. Exception: No coving is required in the following areas:
 - i. dining areas;
 - ii. areas where food is stored in original shipping, unopened containers;
 - iii. customer areas in a retail market;
 - iv. guestroom and private accommodations of owners and operators in restricted food service facilities (H & SC 114266-114268).



*Approved flooring materials include: (1) Sheet vinyl with overall thickness gauge of 0.080 inches and wear layer gauge of .050 inches; or (2) Commercial quarry and ceramic tile; or (3) Epoxy resin.

Vinyl Composition Tiles (VCT), laminate flooring, non-waterproof floors and rubber bases are not acceptable.

- c. Floor drains are required in floors that are water flushed for cleaning and where pressure spray methods for cleaning equipment are used. Floor surfaces in areas pursuant to this subdivision shall be sloped 1:50 to the floor drains (H &SC 114269).

3. WALLS AND CEILINGS

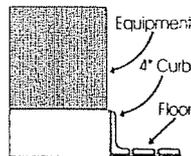
The walls and ceilings of all rooms must be of a durable, smooth, nonabsorbent, nonporous and cleanable surface.

- a. Wall areas adjacent to utensil sinks must have an **approved wall material such as fiberglass reinforced panels (FRP), ceramic wall tile, or stainless steel for the full height of wall from top of cove base.
- b. Wall areas in employee restrooms must have approved wall materials.
- c. All other areas in the food facility may be painted drywall. (H & SC 114271)
- d. EXCEPTION: Walls and ceilings of bar areas in which alcoholic beverages are sold or served directly to the consumers. (H & SC 114271 (b1))
- e. Acoustical paneling may be utilized if it is installed not less than six feet above the floor and meets the other requirements for wall surfaces. (H & SC 114271 (c))
- f. Conduits of all types shall be installed within walls as practicable. When otherwise installed, they shall be mounted or enclosed so as to facilitate cleaning. (H & SC 1142721 (d))

4. GENERAL EQUIPMENT INSTALLATION

- a. Equipment that is fixed in place and is not easily movable shall be installed so that it is:
 - i. Spaced to allow access for cleaning along the sides, behind, and above the equipment; OR
 - ii. Spaced from adjoining equipment, walls, and ceilings a distance of not more than (1/32") one thirty-second inch.
 - iii. Sealed to adjoining equipment or walls, if the equipment is exposed to spillage or seepage.
 - iv. Sealed to the floor (on a curb with a minimum height of four inches (4") or elevated on casters or sanitary legs that provide at least a six-inch (6") clearance between the floor and the equipment.

Raised Curb



Caster



- b. EXCEPTION: This section shall not apply to display shelving units, display refrigeration units, and display freezer units located in the consumer shopping areas of a food facility if the floor under the units is maintained clean. (H & SC 114169)
- c. Table-mounted equipment that is not easily movable shall be installed to allow cleaning of the equipment and areas underneath and around the equipment by being sealed to the table or elevated on legs that provide at least a four-inch (4") clearance between the table and the equipment.
- d. No fogging devices installed after July 1, 2007 shall use a reservoir for holding water for fogging, but shall employ (potable) water under pressure for fogging or misting of foods. Produce foggers shall be maintained in accordance with manufacturer's specifications and cleaned in accordance with manufacturer's specifications or according to the procedures specified in the California Retail Food Code. (H & SC 114180)
- e. Non-prepackaged food on display shall be protected from contamination by the use of containers with tight-fitting securely attached lids, display cases, mechanical dispensers, packaging, counter, service line, or sneeze guards that intercept a direct line between the

customer's mouth and the food being displayed (The average distance between a customer's mouth and the floor is usually 54 – 60 inches, measured from the floor). Detailed elevations for sneeze guards and the related equipment shall be submitted.

EXCEPTION: Nuts in the shell and whole raw fruits and vegetables that are intended for hulling, peeling, or washing by the consumer before consumption. (H & SC 114060)

- f. Equipment for cooling and heating food and for holding cold and hot food shall be sufficient in number and capacity to ensure proper food temperature control during transportation and operation as specified in Section 113996. (H & SC 114153)
- g. When used for cold-holding, cold-plates must be constructed integrally with an ice storage bin. Beverage tubing and cold-plate beverage cooling devices shall not be installed in contact with stored ice intended to be used for food or beverages. (H & SC114153)

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5. UTENSIL WASHING FACILITIES

- a. A three (3) compartment sink with dual integral, sloped metal drain boards, sound metal legs and metal backplash certified or classified for sanitation by an American National Standards Institute (ANSI) accredited certification is required for all food facilities that use multi-use utensils or food-contact equipment.
- b. An ANSI approved three (3) compartment sink is required in addition to any dish machine which is installed. Normally a three-compartment sink and dish machine must be indirectly plumbed to a floor sink via a minimum one-inch air gap. However, a local building department may require the three-compartment sink or dish machine to be plumbed directly to a grease trap or grease interceptor.

6. FOOD PREPARATION FACILITIES

- a. At least one food preparation sink, with hot and cold water provided by a mixing valve, shall be provided in the food preparation areas of all permanent food facilities that prepare foods for the washing, rinsing, soaking, thawing, or similar preparation of foods. The sink shall measure at least 18" long by 18" wide and 12" deep with integral drain board or adjacent table measuring at least 18" by 18". This sink must drain indirectly to a floor sink with a minimum one-inch air gap. (H & SC 114163)
- b. If dipping moist foods such as ice cream or mashed potatoes, the serving utensils must be stored in running water of sufficient velocity to flush particulates to the drain, such as a dipper well, which is indirectly connected to a floor sink with a minimum one-inch air gap. Other options may be reviewed and approved by EHS. (H & SC 114119)

7. DISH MACHINE INSTALLATION

- a. A mechanical ware washing may be installed in addition to a three-compartment sink. Mechanical

ware washing machines must be certified by an American National Standards Institute (ANSI) accredited sanitation certification program, and must be installed and operated in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications. A ware washing machine shall be provided with an easily cleanable, accessible, and readable data plate affixed to the machine by the manufacturer that indicates the machine's design and operating specifications, including: the temperatures required for washing, rinsing, and sanitizing; the pressure required for the fresh water sanitizing rinse; and the conveyor speed for conveyor machines or cycle time for stationary rack machines. It shall also be equipped with a temperature measuring device that indicates the temperature of the water as the water enters the hot water sanitizing final rinse manifold or in the chemical sanitizing solution tank. (H & SC 114401)

- b. Where an under-counter ware washing machine is used, there shall be two metal drainboards, one for soiled equipment and utensils, and one for clean equipment and utensils, located adjacent to the machine. This requirement may be satisfied by using the drain boards that are part of the manual ware washing sinks if the three-compartment sink is located adjacent to the ware washing machine. Walls behind the dish machine and integral drain boards in ware washing areas must be covered in waterproof material, such as FRP or tile, from the top of the coving up the full height of the wall. (H & SC 114403)
- c. High temperature ware washing machines must meet the Universal Mechanical Code (UMC) requirements for ventilation (Type II hood). (H & SC 114149)

8. HANDWASHING FACILITIES

Hand washing sinks are required in both the food preparation and ware washing areas.

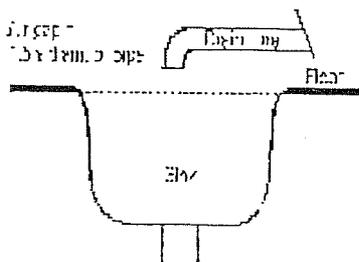
- a. Hand washing sinks in food and utensil handling areas must be certified by an American National Standards Institute (ANSI) accredited certification program.
- b. A food facility must have enough hand washing sinks in convenient locations in the food facility so that they are accessible at all times for use by food handlers. Depending on the size and layout of a food facility, multiple handwashing sinks may be required in a food preparation area.
- c. Additionally, hand washing facilities are required within or adjacent to all toilet rooms.
- d. Hand washing sinks shall provide warm water under pressure for a minimum of 15 seconds through a mixing valve or combination faucet. When the water temperature is not readily adjustable at the faucet, the temperature of the water shall be at least 100 degrees F and shall not exceed 108 degrees F.
- e. Hand washing sinks must be separated from ware washing sinks and other food or utensil preparation areas by a distance of at least 24 inches, or by the installation of a metal splashguard that is at least 6 inches in height that extends from the back edge of the drainboard to the front edge of the drainboard. (H & SC 113953)
- f. Permanently installed, wall-mounted single-service hand towels or hot air blower dispensers are required at all hand washing sinks. Single-service wall-mounted detergent or soap dispensers shall also be provided at all hand washing sinks. Since proper handwashing requires staff to turn off the sink faucet without touching it with their bare hands, please note that if you choose to use a hot air blower as a hand dryer, that you should also install a hand washing sink that does

not require touching handles to turn it on or off (for example, one that uses a pedal or knee activation, or that is motion-sensing). For hand sinks where paper towels are used to dry hands, staff can use paper towels to protect their clean hands when turning off the faucet.

9. PLUMBING AND WATER SUPPLY

- a. All sinks must be equipped with hot and cold running water dispensed from mixing faucets. Hot water must have a minimum temperature of 120°F; (as mentioned above, if the water temperature of a hand washing sink is not readily adjustable at the faucet, the hand washing sink shall have water that is at least 100 degrees F but not higher than 108 degrees F). A back-flow prevention device will be required on water supply lines to faucets with threaded spigots and other equipment (mop sinks/soda machines). (H & SC 114192)
- b. For water heaters, indicate the capacity of the proposed water heater (BTU, KW) on plans and submit specification sheets. If proposing tankless water heaters, submit a flow rate graph that shows the GPM at a 60 degree rise to meet the hot water demand in your facility. The water source and system shall be of sufficient capacity to meet the peak water demands of the food facility. Hot water generation and distribution systems shall be sufficient to meet the peak hot water demands throughout the food facility. (H & SC 114195)
- c. Food facilities that are required to provide a grease trap or grease interceptor shall not locate them in a food or utensil handling area unless specifically approved by the enforcement agency. The trap or interceptor shall be easily accessible for servicing. (H & SC 114201) (Note: EHS does not require grease traps or grease interceptors; these are usually required by sanitation districts or wastewater agencies to help reduce the amount of fats, oils and greases that enter the sewer system. Please contact your sanitation district for more information about these requirements).
- d. All plumbing and plumbing fixtures shall be installed in compliance with applicable local plumbing ordinances, shall be maintained so as to prevent any contamination, and shall be kept clean, fully operative and in good repair. No flex tubing or flex lines will be approved. All waste lines must be hard piped from the top of counter to floor sink (espresso machines, ice bins). (H & SC 114190)

10. FLOOR SINKS



- a. All equipment which generates condensate and liquid wastes from steam tables, ice machines and bins, espresso machines, utensil wash sinks, food preparation sinks, display cases, etc., shall be drained by means of indirect waste pipes into a floor sink or other approved indirect waste receptor. Floor drains are not to be used in lieu of floor sinks. (H & SC 114193a)

- b. All floor sinks shall be at least half exposed or otherwise readily accessible for inspection and cleaning. Floor sinks should not pose a tripping hazard. (H & SC 114193c)

11. GENERAL ELECTRICAL and LIGHTING REQUIREMENTS

- a. Electrical power shall be supplied at all times to operate the approved exhaust, lighting, electric water heaters and refrigeration units, and any other accessories and appliances that may be installed in a food facility. (H & SC 11482)
- b. Sufficient natural or artificial lighting required. Light intensity is measured at a distance 30 inches above the floor at: fifty {50} foot-candles in food preparation areas; twenty {20} foot-candles in utensil wash areas, bars, and restrooms; ten (10) foot-candles in dry storage areas and walk-in coolers. (H & SC 114252)
- c. Shatterproof shields or bulbs are required on lights located above food preparation areas, open food storage, utensil-cleaning areas and hoods. (H & SC 114252.1)

12. VENTILATION

- a. Mechanical exhaust ventilation is required at or above all equipment to effectively remove gases, odors, steam, heat, grease, vapors and smoke. Hoods and mechanical ventilation shall comply with all requirements set forth in the current edition of the Uniform Mechanical Code (UMC) as adopted by the local building department. If the hood you are proposing is not listed with an accreditation agency, you may be asked to provide information about the hood to your plan checker (see Mechanical Exhaust Ventilation System plan check data form for more details)

Canopy hoods shall extend at least six (6) inches beyond all sides of the cooking equipment, as measured from the inside edge of the grease trough if provided (H & SC 114149_ 1(a))

- b. Make-up air shall be provided at the rate of that exhausted and shall be electrically interconnected with the hood ventilation system_ (H & SC 114149_ 1(d))
- c. Every hood shall be installed to provide for thorough cleaning of all interior and exterior surfaces, including, but not limited to, the hood, filters, piping, lights, troughs, hangers, flanges, and exhaust ducts. (H & SC 114149.2)

13.WALK-IN REFRIGERATION/FREEZER UNITS

- a. Walk-in refrigeration or freezer units shall be certified or classified for sanitation by an American National Standards Institute (ANSI) accredited certification program. Provide information regarding the interior and exterior construction with your plans. Finishes on walk-in freezers and refrigerators must meet approved flooring*, wall and ceiling finish requirements. (H & SC 113885/114130d)

- b. All walk-in refrigeration units shall open into an approved food handling area. (H & SC 114266). Floor sinks may not be located inside walk-in refrigerators.

14. RESTROOM FACILITIES

- a. Restrooms for use by employees shall be provided within each food facility. The number of toilet facilities shall be in accordance with local building department codes and ordinances. (114250/114276(a))

- b. Amusement parks, stadiums, arenas, food courts, and fairgrounds which include food facilities and toilet facilities within their boundaries are not required to provide toilet facilities for employee use within each food establishment, but restroom facilities must be located within 200 feet of the food facility (measured by travel distance) and readily available for use by the employees. Food facilities subject to this section shall be provided with approved hand washing facilities for employee use. (H & SC 114250.1)

- c. A permanent food facility shall provide clean toilet facilities in good repair for patrons, guests, or invitees when there is onsite consumption of foods or when the food facility was

constructed after July 1, 1984, and has more than 20,000 sq. ft. of floor space. If the facility has more than 20,000 sq. feet of floor space, there shall be provided at least one separate toilet facility for men and one separate toilet facility for women.

For buildings less than 20,000 sq. ft. and constructed before January 1, 2004, that have been in continuous operation since January 1, 2004, and that provide space for consumption of food on the premises shall provide toilet facilities for patrons, guests or invitees, or prominently post a sign within the establishment in a public area stating that toilet facilities are not provided. (H & SC 114276)

d. Restroom doors shall be tight-fitting, equipped with self-closing devices and shall be kept closed except during cleaning and maintenance operations. (114276(c1))

e. All restrooms shall be provided with ventilation to the outside. If screened window openings or an airshaft cannot provide adequate ventilation, mechanical ventilation is then required to be interconnected with the light switch. (H & SC 114149(b))

15. CLOTHING CHANGE/STORAGE ENCLOSURES/DRY STORAGE

a. Lockers or other suitable facilities shall be provided and used for the orderly storage of employee clothing and other possessions.

b. Dressing rooms or dressing areas shall be provided and used by employees if the employees regularly change their clothes in the facility. (H & SC 114256.1)

c. Provide adequate storage for clean linens, including apparel, towels and cleaning cloths. (H & SC 114185)

d. Adequate and suitable space shall be provided for the storage of food. Floor space should be equal to 25% of food preparation area, minimum 100 square feet or 32 lineal feet of 4-tier storage racks. (H & SC 114047)

e. Food, equipment, clean linens, and utensils may not be stored in toilet rooms.

16. JANITORIAL AREA

a. Each food facility must have janitorial facilities with hot and cold water, backflow protection on faucets, and be in an area with approved floor,* wall and ceiling finishes**. (H& SC 114279)

b. A one (1) compartment, nonporous janitorial sink (i.e., stainless steel or cast iron/ porcelain) or slab, basin or floor constructed of concrete or equivalent material, curbed and sloped to a drain, shall be provided. Fiberglass or plastic sinks are not acceptable. (114165b)

c. Waste line is a direct -connect to the sanitary sewer. Note that the building department may require it to be plumbed directly to the grease trap.

d. Provide a rack, room, area or cabinet for the storage of mops and brooms and cleaning compounds separate from any food preparation, or storage area or utensil washing area.

17. VERMIN EXCLUSION

- a. Food facilities must be constructed, equipped, maintained and operated in a way that prevents the entrance and harborage of animals, birds and vermin, including, but not limited to insects and rodents. Air curtain devices provided at delivery doors shall be permanently wired and installed so that the device will automatically operate whenever the door opens and shall meet ANSI performance standards. All operable windows shall be screened with not less than 16-mesh screening. All exterior doors must be equipped with approved self-closing devices. Each door shall be tight-fitting and hinged to a solid wall, and no door stoppers shall be used. Where multiple sets of French doors/double doors are proposed, one door of each set must be permanently fixed in an approved manner such that the hinges are removed and the permanently fixed panel can no longer operate as a door, but may still retain the architectural look of a French door set from the exterior of the building for aesthetic reasons. (H & SC 114259)
- b. Dining areas are not required to be fully enclosed. However, when large open window banks or doors (such as garage-style roll-up doors, sliding doors, or accordion-fold doors are proposed that would open the dining room to the outside, the kitchen and food preparation areas must be located in a fully enclosed space, as described in item 17a, above (vermin exclusion).

18. SOLID WASTE STORAGE

- a. Each food facility must have adequate leakproof bins or containers for storing solid waste (trash, recycling, compostable materials, waste grease or oil) while waiting for disposal. Areas where solid waste is stored before disposal must be easy to clean and secure from rodents and vermin, and must not create a nuisance. Required waste storage includes but is not limited to (H & SC 114245-114245.7):
- b. A cleanable area (concrete, asphalt) for bin or trash container storage;
- c. A cleanable area and storage container (barrel) for waste cooking oil;
- d. Facilities and equipment necessary to store or dispose of all waste material.
- e. Containers used to store waste must be nonabsorbent, durable, cleanable, leakproof and rodentproof. Waste must be covered by the lid of the container or be sealed inside a tightly-closed impervious bag.

Step 2: Health Permit

A valid health permit is required for all food facilities to operate. (H&SC 114381)

General Health Permit Information

A health permit issued from Santa Barbara County Environmental Health Services is necessary for you to operate a food facility in this County_ You must prominently display the health permit in your establishment at all times.

Environmental Health Services' Health Permits are non-transferable_ Therefore, a change of ownership or location requires you to apply for a new health permit for your food facility.

Billing Cycle

Environmental Health Services recently changed from an annual billing cycle to an anniversary date billing cycle. While most of our food facilities have permits that are valid from January 1 to December 31 of the same year, food facilities that get new permits from Environmental Health will have a permit that is valid for twelve months from the month it is issued. For example, if your health permit is issued in March, it would be valid until April 1 of the next year.

For those businesses with multiple programs at one facility (such as a food facility and a pool), our consolidated billing approach will show both annual fees on one invoice.

EHS charges penalties for permit renewal fees that are not paid on time. The first penalty comes after the due date on the first invoice for your annual permit fee and is 10% of the permit fee. If the permit fee and penalty remain unpaid, , an additional 15% penalty is assessed. Failure to pay your health permit fee after the second penalty may result in your receiving a Notice of Violation requesting immediate payment. Facilities that do not pay their annual permit fees to EHS face closure of the facility and potentially further legal action.

How to Apply for a Health Permit

In order to apply for a health permit with EHS, you will need to complete the General Application, provide a current menu, and pay the appropriate annual permit fee, which is usually based on the square footage of your food facility.

Applicants who have completed a plan check and are applying for their health permit may do so once the plan checker has signed off on their plan check process and all outstanding plan check fees are paid.

Applicants for a catering permit must also provide Catering Standard Operating Procedures that describe their catering operations and how they will safely transport, store, and serve foods at off-site locations.

Food facilities that will use a shared commercial kitchen (such as caterers) must submit a shared kitchen permit application, signed by the operator of the proposed food facility and the owner/operator of the shared kitchen.

Applicants for a Mobile Food Facility permit must provide a schedule of planned stops, proof of vehicle registration and insurance, and a valid driver's license for the individual(s) who will be driving or towing the vehicle.

EHS will review your application and may contact you for additional information. Please be aware that submitting your application and paying your health permit fee does not mean you have a health permit. You may not operate your business until you are given permission to do so in writing by EHS.

Step 3: Operating. What you can expect from us, and what we'll expect from you.

Operational Information: why conduct routine inspections?

Environmental Health Services' top priority and main responsibility is to implement consistent, statewide health and sanitation standards for retail food facilities. Our goal is to ensure that food provided to the public at the retail level is pure, safe, and unadulterated. We think that education and diligence are the best ways to achieve this goal. We conduct regular visits with you and your staff to make sure that you are handling food in a way that protects the public's health. During these inspections, Environmental Health Services inspectors will evaluate important food safety elements at your business, and will often spend time answering questions, demonstrating safe food handling and preparation techniques, proper temperature holding practices, key personal hygiene activities (such as handwashing), necessary sanitization and cleaning methods, and efficient food safety management practices to help your business serve the public safely and successfully.

Inspection Frequency

Typically, our inspectors visit each food facility at least once per year for a routine inspection. Some food facilities may receive more than one inspection a year based on risk factors or observed violations at a previous inspection.

During an inspection, your inspector will do a thorough evaluation of your facility to determine if all state and local laws are being followed and also to ensure that your operation is safe and clean. At the end of an inspection, your inspector will discuss what they observed with you as well as a timeline for correcting any violations. Your inspector will email your inspection report to you after your inspection, usually within a couple of business days. Any violations observed during an inspection will require your thorough involvement to resolve them and make sure they do not happen in your facility moving forward.

Our inspectors may also visit your facility in response to a complaint or a foodborne illness outbreak. These are more specialized inspections and often focus on a more specific set of concerns or questions. Foodborne illness inspections may also involve taking samples of foods and interviewing your staff. Just like in a routine inspection, however, your inspector will share their findings with you and discuss next steps before they leave, and will provide you with a written inspection report within a couple of business days. Other teams from the Public Health Department, such as our Disease Control nursing staff and epidemiologists, may also be involved.

Re-Inspections

If routine or complaint-related inspections reveal any major violations, we will set up a re-inspection date with you. If more than one re-inspection is required, you may incur hourly inspection fees.

Restricting or Excluding Staff due to Foodborne Illness

It's important to keep foodservice workers who are ill, especially those with gastrointestinal symptoms (like vomiting or diarrhea) or diagnoses of foodborne illness (like E. coli, salmonellosis, or Hepatitis A) from working until they are no longer ill or until they have permission from their healthcare provider to return to work. Workers who are sick with these illnesses or symptoms must notify their manager or person in charge. The Person in Charge must notify EHS when a worker reports being diagnosed with a foodborne illness, and also when he or she is aware that two or more food employees are experiencing symptoms associated with an acute gastrointestinal illness, such as nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea at the same time.

Self-Inspection Checklist

This checklist will help you perform periodic reviews of your restaurant's operations. Food facilities that conduct regular self-inspections are able to find correct violations in a timely manner, and supports safe food handling in your facility.

To use this checklist, we suggest that you go through your facility and mark the items that are in compliance with the law, or that you are doing properly. Those items not marked would be considered violations and need to be corrected.

Food

- Food is purchased from an approved source (a company with the proper license, permit or registration from the county, state or federal government) and is labeled in an approved manner
- Food is inspected and found to be free from contamination, adulteration, and spoilage.
- All foods are stored a minimum of 6" off the floor on approved commercial shelving.
- Restrooms are not used for the storage of food, equipment, or supplies.
- All food storage containers have tight fitting lids and are properly labeled.
- Foods which have been served, or unpackaged food returned from the dining areas, are discarded and not re-served.
- Food and food related products are protected from dirt, unnecessary handling, overhead leakage, and other forms of contamination.
- Self-service foods are dispensed in a protected, approved way (sneeze guards, fresh plates, proper temperatures, etc.)
- All paper products such as single-use napkins, paper towels, etc. are protected from potential sources of contamination. .

Temperature Control

- Potentially hazardous foods are kept at or below 41°F or at or above 135°F (except during cooking or active cooling).
- Food products are thawed in one of the following methods: (a) in refrigeration units; (b) unwrapped and completely submerged under cold, running, potable water with sufficient water pressure to flush loose food particles; (c) in a microwave oven on defrost power just before being cooked; or (d) as part of the cooking process.

- Food held in a freezer must be maintained in the frozen state.
- Once thawed, frozen food items are not refrozen.
- Food handlers have access to an accurate, readily available probe thermometer, suitable for measuring the internal temperatures of food on a frequent basis.
- Each refrigerator or freezer has a thermometer, accurate to ± 2 degrees F. either as an integral part of the refrigerator or freezer (gauge outside), or is located inside of each unit at its warmest point.
- Thermometers inside the refrigerators are clearly visible.
- Cal Code approved cooling, cooking, and reheating practices are being utilized.
- Potentially hazardous foods are prepared in a timely manner and the amount of time that food is out of temperature control is minimized. Foods are not left out during preparation.

Personnel

- All employees wash their hands frequently and thoroughly, and in all of the following instances: (1) Immediately before engaging in food preparation, including working with non-prepackaged food, clean equipment and utensils, and unwrapped single-use food containers and utensils. (2) After touching bare human body parts other than clean hands and clean, exposed portions of arms. (3) After using the toilet room. (4) After caring for or handling any animal allowed in a food facility. (5) After coughing, sneezing, using a handkerchief or disposable tissue, using tobacco, eating or drinking. (6) After handling soiled equipment or utensils. (7) During food preparation to prevent cross-contamination when changing tasks. (8) When switching between working with raw food and working with ready-to-eat food. (10) Before dispensing or serving food or handling clean tableware and serving utensils in the food service area. (11) After engaging in other activities that contaminate the hands.
- Bare hand contact with any ready-to-eat food is kept to a minimum. Provide tongs, gloves, or other implements for handling food products.
- Employees are wearing clean outer garments.
- Employees do not smoke or chew tobacco inside the facility.
- Employees' hair is properly confined.
- Clothing and personal effects are stored away from food areas in a designated area.
- Employees are not showing sign of illness (gastrointestinal or respiratory), open sores, or lesions.

Water and Sewage

- All sinks are fully operational and have hot (120 degrees F minimum) and cold running water supplied under pressure through a mixing faucet. (hand washing sink faucets with water temperatures that cannot be adjusted by the user shall have water no hotter than 108 degrees F). Hot and cold water must be available during all hours of operation.
- All sinks drain properly. Floor drains and floor sinks are in good working order and cleaned routinely.

- Plumbing is in good repair. Pipes do not leak.
- Required sinks are present and available for use.

Equipment

- All food related equipment is ANSI approved, maintained clean, fully operative, and in good repair.
- Broken or inoperable equipment has been repaired, replaced or removed from the facility.
- No equipment has been replaced, moved, modified, or added without prior approval from Environmental Health Services.
- Any equipment requiring floor sinks are provided with approved air gap between the rim of the floor sink and the discharge pipe from the equipment. Fixed air gaps, if installed, are clean and fully operational. .

Utensils

- Multi service utensils are being washed by one of the following approved methods only: (a) manually washing, rinsing and sanitizing in a 3-compartment sink, then allowed to air dry.
- Washing in a dish washing machine with sanitizing completed in the final rinse with either an approved chemical sanitizer OR hot water.
- Staff washing dishes have testing materials available to adequately test sanitizing chemical concentrations and know how to use them.
- Utensils are properly protected during storage.

Floors/Walls/Ceilings

- Flooring materials are approved by EHS for use in a food facility and are clean, well maintained and in good repair.
- Walls, ceilings, and windows are clean, well maintained (screens) and in good repair.
- Single service soap and towel dispensers above all hand washing sinks are operable and full.
- Toilet tissue dispensers are full.
- Toilet rooms have self-closing doors that are working properly.
- Legible hand washing signs are properly posted at restroom handwashing sinks
- Ventilation is provided in each restroom and is in proper working order. Ventilation fans in restrooms are interconnected with the lights.

Lights and Ventilation

- Light fixtures have shatter proof safety covers installed.
- Adequate lighting and ventilation provided throughout facility.
- Exhaust hood is properly operating in conjunction with make-up air supply.
- Kitchen walls are free of smoke discoloration and/or grease buildup.

Vermin Control

- Facility is free from insect and rodent infestation.
- Live animals, birds or fowl are not allowed in the facility (except service animals).
- Outside doors and screen doors are self-closing and closing devices are in working order. No door stoppers in place to hold door open.
- Air curtains are operating properly.
- Windows that can be opened are properly screened with at least 16 mesh screening.
- Exterior doors have no gaps to permit vermin entry.

Refuse

- Trash containers are lined with disposable plastic bags at all times.
- Plastic bags are tied before placing in refuse containers so that they do not attract vermin.
- Outside trash bins are closed and well maintained. The trash area is clean and free of debris.
- Grease containers are tightly covered and are free of built up grease, grime or debris.

Operation

- Facility has a current EHS permit to operate.
- Hazardous substances (i.e. chemicals or cleaning supplies) are properly labeled and stored in a location away from food or utensils. .
- There are no living quarters within the food facility.
- No-smoking and first aid signs (choking) are posted.
- Cleaning equipment and soiled linens are properly stored.

- Damaged or unlabeled food products are properly stored for disposal or return to supplier.
- Food contact surface wiping cloths are stored in sanitizing solution with correct concentration of solution when not in active use.

**The following conditions are serious and require your immediate attention.
Your establishments may be closed by EHS if the following conditions exist:**

- Overflowing sewage (inside or outside the food facility)
- No potable water
- No hot water
- No electricity
- Severe rodent or insect infestation (contamination of food or food surfaces).
- Actual or potential threat to the public health and safety (food item(s) found out of temperature, inadequate sanitization, infected food handler).

Your staff may ask ...

Is washing my hands really that important?

The answer is absolutely, without a doubt-YES!

Frequently and properly washing your hands with warm soapy water is the best way to prevent the transmission of illness. Your hands come into contact with bacteria and viruses whenever you do tasks like use the restroom, take out trash, touch your face, body or hair, open or close doors, handle money, or use a phone. Some of these bacteria or viruses can make your co-workers and customers very sick, especially the elderly, children and people who have immune systems that do not work well (immune-compromised individuals).

It is necessary to wash your hands after you have handled any raw food, touched your face, hair or body, sneezed or coughed, after eating or drinking, taking out the garbage or touching anything that may contaminate your hands. (i.e. dirty rags, mop or broom handle). After washing, always dry your hands thoroughly with a clean paper towel or an air dryer, and turn off the faucet and open doors with a paper towel. Never wipe your hands on your apron, side cloth, or clothes!



Think ...wash your hands...wash your hands! It is hard to believe, but YOU can save a life by simply doing this.

Questions? Please call us in Santa Barbara at 805-681-4900 or Santa Maria at 805-346-8460