



Plan Review Guidance Document:

Plan Review for Food Service Operations, Retail Food Establishments, Mobile Operations, and Micro Markets

One printed set of plans is required for the plan 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".**
Electronic PDF drawings may be submitted on a flash drive in addition to the printed drawings.
2. **Drawn by hand: Hand-drawn plans may be submitted on any standard size paper (8.5" x 11" or 11" x 14").** Drawings must be neat and to scale. Graph paper is suggested, but not required.
3. **A hand-drawn sketch with supplemental photos.** This is suitable when a business changes hands and the physical facilities are existing and will not change significantly.

In an effort to reduce paper, a PDF containing equipment cut sheets and specifications, menus, supplemental photos, and other documents may be sent with the printed drawings.

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 a walkthrough or consultation before submitting the plan review packet. This is helpful when moving into an existing space or a previously-licensed location.

Q: How do I know my plans have been reviewed and approved?

A: Plans must be acted upon within 30 days of receipt of a completed plan review packet and fee. The plan reviewers will contact the responsible party listed on the application with any questions. A plan approval letter will be sent to the parties listed on the application via email. The plan reviewers will not give a verbal approval for plans or otherwise.

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 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 if I have a commercial dish machine – do I still need a 3-compartment sink?

A: Lorain County Public Health requires a 3-compartment sink for operations needing to wash/rinse/sanitize equipment and utensils. A commercial-grade dish machine may be approved in addition to the 3-compartment sink, but a dish machine alone will not be approved.

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: Contact Lorain County Public Health as soon as possible if changes are made after the plans have been approved. Significant changes to the plans will delay your business from opening. Deviations from the approved plans may not necessarily be approved.

Significant changes would include moving or deleting plumbing fixtures, adding several pieces of equipment, rearranging the layout, or adding equipment that would change the license risk level. Non-significant changes would include changing the brand of a like-for-like piece of equipment, surface finish color, or décor changes in the dining area

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. Plans must be acted upon within 30 days of receipt of a completed plan packet with fee.

Q: My plans have already been approved by the local building department and/or plans examiner. Do they send those to LCPH?

A: Plans submitted to other agencies are not forwarded to Lorain County Public Health. It is the responsibility of the operator or designee to submit plans to all local agencies, where necessary. Updates after plan approval must also be sent to each local agency to ensure compliance.

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 responsible party listed on the application 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 $\frac{1}{4}$ 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. The food license risk level is determined by the food activity conducted at the food facility.

- Retail Market - provide basic explanations such as canned grocery, whole produce, deli, raw meat/seafood, and any items cooked or prepared on site
- Child care facility – if not cooking food but receiving food from a meal provider, please provide a copy of the meal provider's ODA registration with the plans
- Sashimi/Sushi/Raw Fish – Provide a parasite destruction letter from the supplier, and include a consumer advisory on the menu
- 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, you must provide a copy of your HACCP plan

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. Micro Markets must provide the linear feet of the market.

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, and serving windows. 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. Installing roll-up doors, windows, plastic walls, vinyl tents, and similar features after plan approval could result in a violation of the Ohio Smoke-Free Workplace Act. It is best to design a proposed outdoor smoking area ahead of time and include it on the plans. 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 culinary 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

Micro-Markets must adhere to NSF and NAMA standards. Micro-Markets may not exceed 250 linear feet.

Mobile Food Service

Q: How do I start a food truck business?

A: Food trucks are in the mobile food service license category. Mobile food service operations are licensed from the jurisdiction where the business headquarters is located, if based in Ohio. Equipment must be commercial-grade, NSF-approved (or equivalent). Food trucks, concession trailers, knock-down tent setups, and other mobile setups must also comply with local fire codes and ordinances. Mobile units must prepare food on the mobile unit itself, unless using a registered central kitchen.

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: You will obtain the mobile license from the health district where your business headquarters is located. Lorain County Public Health requires plan review for all new mobiles. Lorain County Public Health will not issue a mobile license without reviewing plans and inspecting the mobile unit. New mobiles include out-of-state mobiles getting licensed the first time in Lorain County. A mobile relocating their business headquarters from another jurisdiction to Lorain County will also need to go through the plan review process.

A mobile license is valid throughout the State of Ohio. 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.

The high-risk or low-risk designation will be determined through the plan review process. Any new high-risk mobile operation will be required to have Person-In-Charge training.



Temporary Food Service

There is no formal plan review process to obtain a temporary food license. The temporary food license application contains all of the requirements necessary to obtain a temporary food license. This completed application must be submitted at least 10 days prior to the event start. There is a separate per-day fee for commercial and non-commercial operations. Proof of non-commercial status will be required to pay the non-commercial fee.

Temporary food licenses cannot be issued for longer than 5 consecutive days per vendor per event. The exception to the 5-day limit is the County Fair.

Temporary food licenses will only be issued 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.