

The Guide – Applying for Food Premises Approval

Purpose

The information provided in this guide will assist you in submitting a complete application package for Food Premises approval or obtaining a Permit to Operate for a restaurant and other food service establishments. Follow the steps in this document to ensure the information you provide is complete. This will help to avoid potential delays in the application approval process. Applications need to be submitted to your local [Environmental Public Health](#) office well in advance of anticipated opening, as timelines will vary by workload, season and completeness of your application.

Steps:

1. Complete and submit the following documentation:
 - A. [Floor/Building Plans](#) for the facility (prior to construction)
 - B. Completed [Application](#) form
 - C. [FOODSAFE](#) Certification
 - D. [Food Safety Plan](#) and Proposed Menu (Not applicable to Food Stores/Retail)
 - E. [Sanitation Plan](#) (Not applicable to Food Stores/Retail)
 - F. [Permit Fee](#) (After approval is received; Not applicable to Food Store/Retail or Food Processing)
2. Once the above noted documents are provided, reviewed, and approved, the Environmental Health Officer (EHO) will conduct an inspection prior to opening to ensure the facility was constructed in accordance with the [Food Premises Regulation](#) and the previously approved plans.

If you have any questions, or require further information, contact your local [Environmental Public Health](#) office and ask to speak with an Environmental Health Officer (EHO).

Resources:

Documents referred to in this guide and other links to required forms, resources, and agencies can be found on the Interior Health website www.interiorhealth.ca (click on – [Information For > Businesses > Food Premises](#)) or your local [Environmental Public Health](#) office.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have met all the applicable requirements of other government agencies, for example, fire inspectors, building inspectors, planners, business license issuers and liquor inspection officers.

Step 1 - Complete and Submit the Required Documents for Approval

A. Floor/building plans for the facility

A person must not construct or make alterations to a food premises unless the plans and specifications for the construction or alterations have received written approval by an Environmental Health Officer (EHO).

A floor plan approval is required for all new premises or renovations to existing food premises. The floor plan must identify the layout of the establishment and include the location of all areas and rooms, their purpose and dimensions, and the location of all equipment. If you have purchased an existing facility, with no planned renovations or changes to the facility layout, submission of floor/building plans may not be required.

For details on what is required in a floor plan, refer to the document: [HP-FS-9042 Requirements for Floor/Building Plan](#).

B. Application form

A completed application form must be submitted to your local [Environmental Public Health](#) office indicating:

- Business Name (common name as it appears on your sign) and contact information
- Legal Owner Name (the name of the individual, partnership, society, or corporation who owns the business) and contact information
- Operator/Manager name and contact information
- Intended Date of Opening
- Months of Operation
- Type of Business
- Billing Information (if fees apply)

For details on what and how to fill out the application form please refer to the document: [HP-FS-9041 Application for Food Premises Instructions](#). For mobile food premises, include the vehicle licence plate number with the application.

C. FOODSAFE certification:

Confirmation of FOODSAFE Certification or proof of equivalent training is required for the operator and staff of the establishment.

- This includes the manager, the operator and the owner of the food service, and
- While the operator is absent from the food service establishment, at least one employee present in the establishment with FOODSAFE certification (or have proof of equivalent training).

Does my FOODSAFE certificate expire?

All FOODSAFE Level 1 certificates issued in British Columbia have a five-year expiry date.

For details on FOODSAFE Certification courses, refresher courses, expiry, or to reprint a certificate, go to the BC [FOODSAFE](#) website or refer to: www.interiorhealth.ca (click on – [Information For > Businesses > Food Premises > Food Safety Education](#)).

For details on equivalent certification, refer to the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control website (BCCDC): [Food Handlers Training Courses Equivalent to BC FOODSAFE Level 1](#).

D. Writing a food safety plan*

In British Columbia, all food service establishments and food processors are required under the [Food Premises Regulation](#), to have written food safety procedures. These written procedures are known as food safety plans, and must:

- Outline procedures for safe food handling and preparation
- Identify potentially hazardous foods and critical control points associated with them during receiving, storage, preparation, cooking, hot holding, cooling and reheating
- Set out critical limits, monitoring procedures and corrective actions when critical limits are not met
- Include a copy of menu(s)

For details on how to complete a Food Safety Plan, refer to the document: [HP-FS-9040 Writing a Food Safety Plan](#). Resources are also available from the Ministry of Health [website](#).

***Note:** Not applicable to Food Stores/Retail.

E. Writing sanitation plan*

In British Columbia, all food service establishments and food processors are required under the BC [Food Premises Regulation](#), to have written sanitation procedures. These written procedures are known as sanitation plans, and must include:

- The cleaning and sanitizing requirements, including the frequency for the premises, equipment and utensils
- A list of all cleaning and sanitizing agents, including their intended uses, mixing procedures, and final concentrations
- The identification of all pesticides in the establishment, including their usage and storage requirements
- Procedures for testing sanitizer residuals and final rinse temperatures on warewashing equipment, including corrective actions, when standards are not met

For details on how to complete a Sanitation Plan, refer to the document: [HP-FS-9039 Writing a Sanitation Plan](#). Resources are also available from the Ministry of Health [website](#).

***Note:** Not applicable to Food Stores/Retail. Contact your EHO regarding plans for Food Processors.

F. Operating permit fees (Not applicable to Food Store/Retail or Food Processing)

Payment of operating permit fees for food service establishments (including but not limited to restaurants, concessions, take-out, catering, delicatessens, and/or mobile units) will be collected once the premises is approved by the EHO and must be received before the permit is issued. Fees are based on the number of seats in the food service establishments.

- Fees are pro-rated based on the date of opening and the number of months operating during the fiscal year (April 1st to March 31st)
- You may qualify for a Reduction of Fees if:
 - You own more than one fee required service at the same address
 - You are a Charitable or Non-Profit organization whose purpose is the relief of poverty by providing food to the poor/hungry
 - A Declaration for Reduction of Fees must be completed: [820041 Reduction of Fees Record](#)

For details on permit fees refer to the document: [HP-AD- 9005 Fee Schedule](#) or contact your local [Environmental Public Health](#) office. Please note that fees must be paid before an operating permit will be issued.

Step 2 – Approval Process

You've submitted your application and all supporting documentation to your local [Environmental Public Health](#) office. Now what?

- Administrative staff will review the application. If information is missing, they will contact the Owner Contact. The application package is then forwarded to the EHO for your area.
- The EHO reviews the application package for approval, and may request additional information. Once the floor/building plans are approved by the EHO you may start construction. An initial inspection must be arranged prior to approval to operate. Follow up inspection(s) may also be required before receiving approval to operate. Once the premises is approved by the EHO, the permit fees will be collected.
- The Permit to Operate will be processed and mailed (using the mailing address) along with a decal for that fiscal year. This may take a few weeks from the date approved to operate; however, as long as you have a copy of your inspection report indicating approval or written approval by the EHO you may open your doors to the public.
- Each fiscal year invoices are forwarded to the billing address. Payment is a condition of continued operation. Once payment has been processed, a new decal will be sent to you. Attach the new decal to the permit. Non-payment of fees may result in a closure order as operating permits are not valid without the new decal.