

## FOOD SAFETY APPROVAL PROCESS IN CHILD CARE FACILITIES

This document provides guidance to child care facility operators wishing to get approval to include a wider variety of fresh foods as part of learning activities, snacks or meals. Many fresh foods can be offered with an approval by an Environmental Health Officer (EHO); other foods more commonly part of a meal, will require a permit. See the tables located in the **HP-CF-9016 Food Service in Child Care Facilities** document to help determine if you need to apply for an approval or a permit.

- Facilities that offer only foods from Table 1, or have parents supply meals/snacks for their own child are exempt from the *BC Food Premises Regulation*.
- Facilities that offer foods from Table 2 will require an approval from Interior Health. For food preparation involving higher risk food products, an approval may take the form of a permit.

This document is not intended to be all inclusive; it provides basic information to get you started. Not all facilities will have the same needs, so minimum requirements may vary.

What doesn't change is the outcome – foods being served must be safe and nutritious.

If after reviewing this document you need further information, please contact the local environmental health office. Please note that an approval of your plans is required before starting a meal/snack program or for learning activities that involve foods which may pose an increased food safety risk.

**Be sure to start the food service application process well in advance** of the time you wish to include these foods at your site. You are advised to contact other agencies having jurisdiction such as your local building inspection office, as they may have additional requirements.

### **What you will need to send in for review:**

#### **I. Food Service Application (with permit fee payment, if applicable - a nominal fee applies to permits only; a facility approval is free)**

- Complete the application form and include with the other documents listed below as part of your application package. Note this process is separate from the Child Care License application. The form is available on the Interior Health website at <http://www.interiorhealth.ca/YourEnvironment/FoodSafety/Documents/820286.pdf>
- Permit fees for child care facilities are typically \$12.50 per month. Fees can be pro-rated for facilities that do not operate year round. The full list of fees is located at <https://www.interiorhealth.ca/YourEnvironment/FoodSafety/Documents/Fee%20Schedule.pdf>

## 2. Facility Floor Plan

Facilities need to include equipment and supplies to ensure good personal hygiene can be maintained. The set up should allow for sanitary food preparation, as well as proper dish and utensil washing.

- Show the layout of all the rooms, with more details provided for the food service (prep and storage areas, serving areas, and any other relevant parts of the building).
- Describe the equipment (e.g. refrigerator, stove, sinks, etc.) and show their locations. Include details about the surface finishes (floors, walls, countertops, etc.). Commercial grade equipment is preferred, but not necessarily required. Ultimately, the equipment must be suitable for the intended purpose. For smaller child care facilities or those with a limited menu, good quality domestic equipment may work just fine.
- If the facility is on a private water supply and/or septic system, include details about these systems for the review. For private water supplies, provide results of bacteriological testing to show the water is safe to drink.
- If the facility is on a septic system, include details about the system for review.

Consider the proposed menu when looking at layout and capacity. Complex menus with many food handling steps often mean more space and better flow will be needed.

If you are newly constructing or renovating, plan to use materials that are durable and easy to clean. Consider the layout and capacity of the kitchen – does the ‘flow’ work well? Is there a good separation between ‘clean’ and ‘dirty’ areas? Will there be enough counter space for preparation? Is the refrigerator space sufficient? The BCCDC booklet “**Food Protection, Vital to Your Business**” is intended for restaurant style food services, but is a good review of some areas to consider in the design and operation of your facility. It can be viewed at [http://www.bccdc.ca/NR/rdonlyres/29845061-1E80-4768-B278-A245E70368BE/0/FoodProtectionVitaltoBusiness\\_Mar2010.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/NR/rdonlyres/29845061-1E80-4768-B278-A245E70368BE/0/FoodProtectionVitaltoBusiness_Mar2010.pdf)

Make sure the plans are reviewed and approved  
before starting any construction or renovation work.

## 3. Menu/Sample Food Activities

- The menu should fit with the capacity of the kitchen space. If you only have basic equipment available, the menu should be kept fairly simple – not too many foods and not too many complicated food handling steps.
- Include a sample menu / food activities in your application package so it can be reviewed along with your floor plan. Even if the menu has not been finalized, the types of foods being considered will be helpful as part of the review of the application package.

## 4. Food Safety Training (e.g. FOODSAFE)

- Completion of a recognized food safety training course is required for the facility operator and at least one other person on-site for those facilities requiring a food permit. Include copies of certificates for the operator and all relevant staff.
- FOODSAFE Level 1 is the most common course taken to meet the requirements. Other courses may be considered equivalent. See the full list on the BCCDC website <http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Guidelines%20and%20Manuals/EH/FP S/Food/FoodHandlerTrngCourseEquivtoFS.pdf>

- Other, less detailed, food safety courses are available. While they do not meet the training requirements for operators, content may be valuable for staff that are involved in minimal food handling activity. An example course is the Ministry of Health’s “Caring About Food Safety” (<http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/protect/food-safety-module/files/home.htm>).

## 5. Food Safety Plan and Sanitation Plan

- The Food Safety Plan should outline the safety control steps for the more hazardous foods that will be served at your facility. This plan should go beyond the normal handling processes to include specific controls such as when hazardous foods need to be checked, how they will be checked and what to do if the control step is not achieved. The plan should be a practical and useful document for staff and reflect how food handling is being done. It can be in your chosen format (e.g. recipe-based, flow chart-based, etc.) as long as the basic details are included. The format should be one that works best for you and your staff. Contact your EHO if you need further details.
- The Sanitation Plan outlines the cleaning and sanitizing steps for the facility and equipment; the products being used, and when and how they are used. In addition to a list of the cleaners and sanitizers and the proper concentrations, a cleaning schedule is helpful to define what is being cleaned and when it is to be done. Many facilities use a “daily, weekly and monthly” format for their schedule, but the format should be one that works best for you and your staff.
- Documents to help you write your Food Safety and Sanitation Plan can be found on the Interior Health - Health Approval and Permits page: <https://www.interiorhealth.ca/YourEnvironment/FoodSafety/Pages/Permits.aspx>

### What happens next?

Once the EHO reviews the application package, questions may arise or some details may need to be confirmed. Again, be sure to start the application process well in advance of the time you wish to start the meal or snack program, or begin including food as part of learning activities.

#### *If your kitchen needs modifying:*

Get your plans in for review. If all is satisfactory, the EHO will approve the plans and give permission to proceed with any necessary kitchen modifications.

Once you are nearing completion of the kitchen modifications or construction work and the equipment is in place, contact your EHO to arrange for an inspection. This inspection is normally required prior to opening to allow the EHO to confirm the construction and finishing work meets what was originally approved. It also provides the opportunity for the EHO to check the proper operation of the equipment, review any updated documentation and check on any final issues.

Once you have your final approvals in place, you can start the food service. The EHO will return periodically to check on the operation. In the interim, if you plan on making substantial changes to the facility, menu or other parts of the operation, contact your local EHO to advise.

### **Need more info?**

Check out our web page or give us a call. Our numbers are on the Interior Health website and in the blue pages of the phone book under “Health Authorities”.

Interior Health Food Safety web page

<http://www.interiorhealth.ca/YourEnvironment/FoodSafety/Pages/default.aspx>

Environmental Health Officers – phone list by office

<http://www.interiorhealth.ca/YourEnvironment/AirQuality/Documents/Health%20Protection%20Offices%20Contacts.pdf>