

**Q: Can I run a catering business out of my home?**

**A:** No. Florida law prohibits conducting food establishment operations in a private home, a room used as living or sleeping quarters, or an area directly opening into a room used as living or sleeping quarters.

**Q: Do I need a catering license if I run my business from a restaurant my friend owns?**

**A:** Yes. Separate, independent caterers using the equipment or premises of a licensed establishment are deemed operators (as defined by section 509.013, Florida Statutes) of such public food service establishment and subject to all applicable requirements of law and rule.

**Q: Will I need to go through a plan review if I use the facilities of an establishment licensed by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services?**

**A:** Yes. Since the establishment is not licensed by the Department of Business and Professional Regulation, a plan review is required.

**Q: Can I use my catering vehicle to drive around and sell food to the public?**

**A:** No. Any vehicle operating in this manner must be licensed as a Mobile Food Dispensing Vehicle.

**OTHER RESOURCES:**

**Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services**

<http://doacs.state.fl.us/>

**Department of Health**

<http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Environment/community/foodsurveillance/index.html>

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# Guide to Public Food Service Catering Establishments



Florida Department of  
**Business & Professional  
Regulation**

License efficiently. Regulate fairly.

If you have any questions concerning catering and public food service establishments, contact

**Division of Hotels and Restaurants**

1940 North Monroe Street  
Tallahassee FL 32399-1011

Customer Contact Center at 850.487.1395

<http://www.MyFloridaLicense.com/dbpr/hr>



# Catering

The Division of Hotels and Restaurants classifies catering as a public food service establishment where food or drink is prepared for service elsewhere (see Section 509.013, Florida Statutes). Catering operations must be licensed by the Division.

Catering does not include those establishments licensed by the Florida Department of Health. The Division licenses catering operations at establishments currently licensed by the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, unless they exclusively prepare or serve only traditional bakery goods such as cakes, pastries, bagels or confections.



## Licensing

Catering operations must meet all applicable standards of a public food service establishment as provided in rule. All food storage and food preparation operations must be conducted in an approved, licensed food service establishment. No food operations can be conducted in a private residence.

To apply for a license, you must obtain and complete form [DBPR HR-7007, Application for Public Food Service Establishment License](#). Applications are available at the Division's Web site at <http://www.MyFloridaLicense.com/dbpr/hr-licenseforms.html> or from the **Customer Contact Center at 850.487.1395**. Be sure to provide all requested information. Mail the completed license application along with payment to:

**Division of Hotels and Restaurants**  
**1940 N. Monroe Street**  
**Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0783**

The Web site has a fee calculator to assist you in determining the appropriate fee. Please make checks or money orders payable to the Division of Hotels and Restaurants.

Any licensed public food service establishment may also provide catering services without holding a separate catering license

from the Division to conduct catering operations.

If an independent caterer shares the premises of an establishment licensed by the Division of Hotels and Restaurants, the caterer must obtain a separate license. The caterer is considered an operator of a public food service establishment and is subject to all applicable requirements of law and rule.

If a caterer shares a commercial kitchen permitted by the Department of Health, that department also regulates the caterer.

If a caterer shares a commercial kitchen licensed by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Division of Hotels and Restaurants still licenses and regulates the caterer.

**Personal Chefs** – individuals contracted to prepare and serve food at a private party or for a single household utilizing privately owned, onsite equipment and who do not prepare or store food before or after the event. Personal chefs do not fall under the Division's regulation.

**Mobile Food Dispensing Vehicles (MFDVs)** – vehicle-mounted public food service establishments that are self-propelled or otherwise moveable from place to place. These units must be separately licensed and meet the minimum specifications as required in section 61C-4.0161, Florida Ad-

ministrative Code (F.A.C.). MFDVs can travel from place to place and sell or serve food to anyone, unlike vehicles used only to transport catered food to a contracted service location.

## When Plan Review is Required

Plan review is required if a caterer constructs or uses a space that is:

- Newly built;
- Converted from another use;
- Remodeled; or
- Re-opened after being closed at least one year.

When a caterer uses a commercial kitchen already licensed by the Division, plan review is not required – only a licensing inspection.

## Guidelines for Preparing Food Service Plans

If a plan review is required, submit an application, fee, plans, and supporting documents to the appropriate DBPR office. Complete information concerning plan review is available on the Division's Web site at <http://www.MyFloridaLicense.com/dbpr/hr>. The completed plan review packet describes the intended menu, proposed building layout, arrangement of equipment, construc-

tion materials and finishes for work areas and equipment design. Plans should be drawn to scale.

## Filing Plans

Depending on your operation, obtain form [DBPR HR-7005, Application for Plan Review](#) or form [DBPR HR-7006, Mobile Food Dispensing Vehicle Plan Review Application](#), from the Division's Web site or by calling the Customer Contact Center at 850.487.1395. MFDV applications also require form [DBPR HR-7022, Commissary Notification](#).

Complete each section accurately and attach all requested items (e.g., menu, proof of water and sewer, etc.). Failure to complete all sections will delay processing your application.

Submit the completed application, copies of the proposed food service establishment plans, and a check or money order for the \$150 processing fee (made payable to the Division of Hotels and Restaurants) to the location indicated on the Division's Web site.

Plans are reviewed in the order of acceptance on a first come, first served basis. The plan reviewer will make every effort to process each plan as efficiently and expeditiously as possible and will notify the applicant or designated representative within 30 days as to the status of the review.