

**MINIMUM CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS AND
SPECIFICATIONS GUIDANCE**
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES
DIVISION OF FOOD SAFETY

The following is intended as basic guidance and does not replace all the applicable laws and regulations concerning construction and food establishment requirements. These standards apply to constructing, renovating or converting buildings to use for preparing, processing, storing or selling food for human consumption.

NOTE: The Department of Health Interagency Evaluation of Onsite Sewage(Septic) and Water Supply form found attached to the bottom of this document must be completed if the food establishment is operating on a water and sewage disposal systems other than a public (municipal) system. A copy of a bill or application for service is required if on a public (municipal) water or sewage disposal system. A written approval from the Department of Health is required for food establishments using a water and or sewage disposal system that is under the regulatory requirements of the Department of Health before being permitted for operation by this Department. Additional instructions can be found on the cover sheet for the form.

Other agencies may also require approval, such as:

- The Department of Environmental Protection for drinking (potable) water supply, sewage disposal systems, and storm water runoff;
- The Department of Health, County Health Departments for well water systems and onsite sewage disposal systems;
- Local Building and Plumbing Departments, Local Zoning Boards;
- Local Business/Occupational License Office.

1. Water Supply: The water supply must be adequate, clean, safe, and approved by either the Department of Environmental Protection through a licensed water provider, or the Department of Health, County Health Department, for onsite well water systems. Fire sprinkler systems may use a non-drinking (non-potable) water supply. The lines must be clearly marked so they are not mistaken for and connected to the drinking water supply.

2. Plumbing: All plumbing must be sized, installed, and maintained according to the Florida plumbing code as written in section 553.73, Florida Statutes. The drinking (potable) water supply must be protected from contamination. Installing and maintaining devices to prevent backflow and back siphonage at all fixtures and equipment is necessary if there is no air gap. An air gap must be at least twice the diameter of the water supply inlet between the water supply inlet and the fixture's flood level rim. If hoses are used, the faucets must have a backflow prevention device.

3. Sewage and Waste Water Disposal: Sewage and waste water must be disposed of as follows:

- In a public (municipal) sewage disposal system regulated by the Department of Environmental Protection, or
- In an onsite sewage disposal system (e.g., a septic tank) regulated by the Department of Health, County Health Department.
- Grease traps or grease interceptors must be installed when required by the public sewerage system serving your establishment or by the Department of Health, County Health Department, if you are served by an onsite sewage disposal system.



4. Toilet Facilities: Toilet facilities and fixtures must be installed according to the Florida building and plumbing code as written in section 553.73, Florida Statutes.

- Fixtures must be designed to be cleaned easily.
- Toilets must be clean, in good repair and free of offensive odors.
- Toilet rooms must be well lighted and adequately ventilated.
- Toilet rooms must be completely enclosed and have tight fitting, self-closing doors.
- Toilet seats must be the open front type.
- Access to toilet rooms is not allowed through food preparation, processing, or warewashing areas. Compliance may be achieved by physical separation such as a wall, or alternate means to prevent contamination (double doors as used in a vestibule, or positive air-flow engineered systems, etc).
- Each toilet room must be plainly marked, "women" or "men," or with an easily readable sign or symbol distinguishing between the sexes. However, the plumbing official may allow a single toilet room with one sink and one toilet if certain building area limitations exist. The door to a single toilet room must have an interior locking device (as per Florida Building Code).

5. Construction Materials and Finishes: Floor surfaces must be smooth, nonabsorbent and easy to clean.

- Floor drains are necessary in all rooms receiving flush or flood type cleaning and where normal operations release water or other liquid waste on the floor. These floors must be graded to drain effectively and the wall and floor junctures must be coved.
- Carpeting is allowed only in customer access areas when approved by the Department. Carpet in toilet rooms is never allowed.
- Installing utility lines and pipes on the floor is not allowed.
- Walls and ceilings must be constructed of easily cleanable surfaces, and washable up to the highest level reached by splash or spray in: food preparation, processing, utensil washing, walk-in refrigeration/freezer, garbage and rubbish storage areas, dressing rooms, locker rooms and toilet rooms.
- Unnecessarily exposed utility service lines and pipes on walls or ceilings are not allowed. Where there are exposed utility service lines or pipes they must not obstruct or prevent cleaning of the walls and ceilings.
- The building must be constructed to prevent the entrance of vermin by using methods like: sealing walls, floors, ceilings; tight fitting doors and windows; proper screening (at least 16 mesh to an inch), protecting air vents, and other similar preventive techniques to make the establishment **insect and rodent proof**. Insect control devices must not be installed over food preparation or processing areas.

6. Kitchen Facilities - Equipment and Utensils:

- Equipment and utensils must be made from safe and durable materials; smooth and easy to clean; corrosion resistant and nonabsorbent.
- Equipment must be installed to allow aisles and enough space so employees can work without contaminating food or food-contact surfaces by their clothing or personal contact.
- Floor mounted equipment must have a clearance of 6 inches from the floor for cleaning purposes or be sealed to the floor.
- Table or counter mounted equipment must have a 4-inch clearance from the table or counter for easy cleaning. All equipment including movable equipment must be installed with adequate space for cleaning.
- Appliances must be installed to manufacturers' specifications and according to national standards.
- Food protection equipment such as sneeze guards or other similar guards must be installed where applicable.
- Raw wood or pegboard is **not** allowed in areas where food is prepared, processed, displayed or stored, or warewashing areas.

7. Cleaning Facilities: must be provided and conveniently located to keep all parts of the establishment, equipment, and utensils clean and sanitary. Hand wash sinks, warewashing sinks, or any alternative equipment



designed and plumbed for Clean-In-Place (CIP) requires hot and cold running water under pressure and dispensed through a mixing valve. Mop (service sink) sinks or curbed can wash facilities must have hot and cold running water under pressure.

Handwash sinks must be located:

- Conveniently for use by employees in food preparation, food dispensing, processing, and warewashing areas, and in or immediately next to toilet rooms.
- Hand soap and sanitary hand drying devices like single service towels, hot air dryers, etc. are required.

Warewash sinks:

- At least one three-compartment sink is required in food preparation and processing areas. A three-compartment sink is needed to perform the 3-step procedure to wash and to use a distinct separate water rinse after washing and before sanitizing.
- Warewashing sink compartments must be large enough to hold the largest piece of equipment or utensil. If equipment or utensils are too large for the warewashing sink, alternative equipment approved by the Department must be used, for example: high-pressure detergent sprayers, low or line pressure spray detergent foamers, specialized Clean in Place equipment etc.
- Warewashing sinks may also be used to prepare foods if they are cleaned and sanitized before use. However, a separate prep sink may be more appropriate to use for food preparation. Three compartment sinks and culinary (prep) sinks must be indirectly plumbed to a sewage outlet pipe by either an air gap or air break.
- **Drainboards**, utensil racks, or dish tables must be large enough to hold all soiled and cleaned items that may accumulate during hours of operation. Clean and soiled utensils and equipment must be adequately separated. All equipment and utensils must be air dried. Drain boards must drain properly.
- **Warewashing machines** if provided must be equipped with a data plate that is easy to read and attached by the manufacturer that shows the machine's design and operating instructions.
- **A mechanical warewash machine does not substitute for sinks if the equipment or utensils used by the establishment are larger than the warewash machine is designed to handle.**
- **At least one mop sink or curbed can wash facility must be provided. Additional mop sinks may be required in large food establishments.**

8. Storage Facilities: Containers of food must be stored a minimum of 6 inches above the floor because food must be protected from splash and other contamination, and to allow for easy cleaning of the storage area. Pallets are allowed for food storage if there is equipment on the premises to move them for cleaning. The pallets must be sealed and in good repair. Metal pressurized beverage containers, cased food packaged in cans, glass, or other waterproof containers need not be elevated when the floor is clean and the food container is not exposed to floor moisture. Food must not be stored under exposed water or sewer lines.

- **Store poisonous or toxic materials** so they will not contaminate food, equipment, utensils, linens, and single-service or single-use articles by spacing or partitioning.
- **LP gas** containers whether full or empty must be **stored outside** and properly secured (**this does not apply to new and empty LP gas containers that sell for retail or containers one pound or smaller**). Buffing machines that use LP Gas must be used only after business hours or when the establishment is closed. The LP gas container on the buffing machine must be secure to the machine when in use and after use the container must be removed and stored outside. Keep LP gas buffing machines away from open flames or from battery operated buffing machines while they are being recharged. **All pressurized gas containers** (CO², helium, etc.), whether full or empty, must be secured by a chain attached to the wall, a piece of equipment fixed and sturdy, or in an enclosed box of heavy construction that cannot tip over. **Do not obstruct or block electrical panels or fuse boxes. Rooms specifically designed to house electrical panels and machine rooms must not be used for storage.**



9. Lighting: The following light foot candle intensity is required in retail food establishments and in manufacturing lighting must be adequate for the processes being conducted:

- At least **50 foot-candles** on all working surfaces in food processing and preparation areas where safety is a factor.
- At least **20 foot-candles** at a distance of 30 inches above the floor in areas used for handwashing, warewashing, equipment and utensil storage, toilet rooms, and where packaged food and fresh produce is offered for sale or consumption.
- At least **10 foot-candles** in **all areas and rooms** including dry storage and stockrooms during periods of cleaning at a distance of 30 inches above the floor.
- All lights must be shielded where food, clean equipment, utensils, unwrapped single service articles are exposed, and where clean linens are stored. **Shields are not required if food is stored in unopened packages**, and the integrity of the package keeps falling glass from tearing the packaging materials and the packaging can be cleaned to remove all glass. Heat lamps must have a shield surrounding and extending beyond the bulb so only the face of the bulb is exposed.

10. Ventilation: Adequate ventilation is required throughout the establishment. Equipment that produces steam, smoke, or grease laden vapors must be properly vented. A hood system with fire suppression equipment is required where **grease laden vapors** are produced. The **hood system** must be installed to meet **National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Pamphlet #96** standards. Installation of hood fans, grease extractors, ducts, and fire extinguishing equipment must be according to NFPA Standards. Warewashing machines, steamers, smokers and similar equipment may not need fire suppression equipment but may still be required to be properly vented because of the quantity of steam, heat, or smoke they produce.

11. Fire Protection: All fire equipment and requirements such as sprinkler systems, alarm systems, exiting (means of egress), designating and marking of exit ways, occupancy loads etc. **must be properly installed and inspected by the local fire authority before operation. Fire equipment must be serviced and tagged by a fire extinguisher company certified by the State Fire Marshals' Office where required.**

12. Laundry Facilities: Laundry facilities on the premises of a food establishment must be used only for the washing and drying of items used in the operation. Laundering of personal items is not allowed. Laundry facilities must be located where food and food contact surfaces will not be contaminated such as in a separate room or where only packaged or cased foods are stored.

13. Garbage and Refuse Disposal: All garbage and refuse are required to be disposed of in a sanitary manner.

- Leak proof trash containers with tight fitting lids are required.
- Dumpsters must be in good repair with proper drain plugs installed and lids and doors kept closed.
- Dumpsters, compactors, and grease containers must be placed on non-absorbent surfaces such as a concrete pad or machine laid asphalt.
- Liquid waste from cleaning or from garbage must be disposed of as sewage into a drain connected to the proper sewage disposal system. **Liquid waste must not be discharged into a storm drain, drainage ditch, or similar location.**

14. Premises: Outside walking and driving surfaces must be adequately graded to prevent pooling of water. Dust must be minimized. Grass and other vegetation must be kept mowed and maintained to prevent the harborage of rodents. Doors that open to the exterior must be self closing. Roll type receiving doors must be kept in good repair and closed except during deliveries



15. Handicap Accessibility: Accessibility must be provided as required by Chapter **553.501-553.513** Florida Statutes.

16. Florida Clean Indoor Air Act: This act is required by Chapter 386, Florida Statutes and Rule 64D-1 Florida Administrative Code. Questions about enforcing this act must go through the Department of Health at: 1-800-337-3742.



WATER AND SEWAGE APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS FOR PERMITTING AND INITIAL INSPECTION

All food entities requesting an initial inspection to obtain a food permit are required to provide written documentation of an approved water source and wastewater source. The Interagency Evaluation of Onsite Sewage (Septic) and Water Supply Capacity form is attached to the bottom of this document. This form must be completed for all food entities operating on a water or wastewater source (septic) other than a public (municipal) system. Food entities operating on a public (municipal) water or wastewater disposal system can use this form or provide the alternative written documentation mentioned below.

Section 2 - Water is to be completed for water approvals by the Department of Health (DOH) or Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) depending on who regulates your water supply. Food entities operating from an onsite well system must provide a recent quarterly water sample report showing results which are negative for total coliforms and fecal coliforms. Food entities can locate their DOH contact at <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/chdsitelist.htm#A> and your DEP contact at <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/mainpage/contact.htm>. Food entities operating from a Municipal/Public Water system can have the supplier sign off on Section 2, OR provide a water bill or application for water service with the address of your food entity listed, OR written documentation such as a letter from the municipal supplier listing the food entity and address.

Section 3 – Wastewater is to be completed for wastewater approval unless you are an existing FDACS permitted food entity requesting an ownership change and there is no change to the current food business operations in the food entity and the wastewater disposal system (septic) shows no indications of failure. Food entities operating on an Onsite Wastewater Disposal System (septic) must have Section 3 completed by the Department of Health. Only the Department of Health, the county health department, or the municipal utility company is authorized to sign section 3 indicating approval of your wastewater disposal system. If your food entity operates from a Municipal/Public Sewage system you can have the provider sign off on Section 3, OR provide a sewage/wastewater bill or application for service with the address of your food entity listed, OR written documentation such as a letter from your municipal supplier listing the food entity and address.

Written Water and Wastewater approval is required of all food entities before permitting and inspection by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services/Division of Food Safety.

**www.FreshFromFlorida.com/FS
850-245-5520**



Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

**INTERAGENCY COORDINATION OF REGULATED ESTABLISHMENTS - DOH/DACS/DBPR/DCF/AHCA/APD
EVALUATION OF ONSITE SEWAGE (SEPTIC) AND WATER SUPPLY CAPACITY**

This evaluation is to ensure certain regulated facilities/businesses are evaluated for adequate water and sewage services before opening or expanding operations. If the facility/business is on a DOH regulated onsite well or onsite septic system, completion of this evaluation will facilitate and expedite the approval process. Please return to the appropriate licensing agency when complete.

Completed by Applicant	Section 1 - EVALUATION REQUEST FOR/LICENSING AGENCY		
	<input type="checkbox"/> New (new building or structure)		<input type="checkbox"/> Expansion / Remodeling (increase in seating/residents/other)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Change in Occupancy/Tenancy		
	Licensing Agency: <input type="checkbox"/> DBPR <input type="checkbox"/> DACS <input type="checkbox"/> DCF <input type="checkbox"/> AHCA <input type="checkbox"/> APD		License Number:
	Contact Person:		Phone: FAX:
	Comments:		
	ESTABLISHMENT INFORMATION		
	Establishment Name:		Type of Establishment:
	Address:		Contact Person / Phone#:
	City:		County: Zip:

Section 2 – WATER		
The above named facility/business uses the following water supply (choose one type), and complete evaluation:		
Completed by DOH/CHD, DEP or Utility Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Municipal/Public Water System Name of Supplier:	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Onsite Well System Permit Number:	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Establishment served by a 64E-8, F.A.C., Limited Use Public Water System, DOH Regulated	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Establishment served by a Florida Safe Water Drinking Act (DEP or DOH) regulated public water system	
	SYSTEM EVALUATION RESULT: <i>(this section below normally only completed by DOH if on a DOH water system)</i>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	Comments:
	<input type="checkbox"/> Denied (see comments)	
	Name & Title (Printed)	
	Signature	
	Address	
County Health Department/DEP/Utility		
Date		
Phone		

Section 3 – WASTEWATER		
The above named facility/business uses the following wastewater disposal system (choose one type), and complete evaluation:		
Completed by DOH/CHD, DEP or Utility Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Municipal/Public Sewer Name of Supplier:	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Septic System (Onsite Wastewater) Permit Number:	
	SYSTEM EVALUATION RESULT: <i>(this section below normally only completed by DOH if on a septic system)</i>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Single-Service Utensils Only <input type="text"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Number of Seats Permitted <input type="text"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Hours of Operation <input type="text"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Denied (see comments)	<input type="checkbox"/> Number of Residents/Students <input type="text"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Number of Beds/Clients <input type="text"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Other Conditions (see comments) <input type="text"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Food Service Yes <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
	Comments:	
	Name & Title (Printed)	
	Signature	
	Address	
	County Health Department/DOH/Utility	
Date		
Phone		

Instructions/Explanations for Interagency Coordination of Regulated Establishments /Evaluation of Onsite Sewage and Water Supply Capacity

As indicated on the evaluation page, the evaluation is to ensure facilities/businesses regulated by the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR), Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS), Department of Children and Families (DCF), Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) and Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) are evaluated for adequate water and sewage services before opening or expanding operations. When the evaluation form is completed, it is returned to the licensing agency to indicate whether or not the water and sewage services are adequate and have been approved by the appropriate agency or utility authority. The evaluation form is used to facilitate and expedite the approval process. The evaluation form is not intended to be used for existing or failing systems not associated with any changes to the operation. *If the business/facility is served by onsite water or onsite septic system (one or both), the evaluation form must be completed by the Department of Health/County Health Department (DOH/CHD) in sections 2 and/or 3 and the regulating agency must not complete licensing until the DOH/CHD has approved the onsite septic and/or water system.*

Section 1 – Evaluation Request For/Licensing Agency

This section should be completed by the applicant. Ensure correct information regarding the applicant and facility is provided. Indicate by checking the appropriate box if this request is for a new facility, expansion/remodeling, or change in occupancy/tenancy.

- New – A newly constructed business/facility
- Expansion/remodeling – a business/facility that is being remodeled or upgraded. This could be due to an increase in seating (food service establishment), change in food operation (e.g., single service to full service, an increase in operation hours, addition of a deli or food preparation in a convenience store, etc.), increase of the food preparation in a food outlet or bakery, increase in the residents in a adult living facility and increase in students in a childcare facility and more.
- Change in Occupancy/Tenancy – an existing business that has changed occupancy or tenancy resulting in changes to the business operation.

Indicate the appropriate licensing agency, permit number (if available), contact person with the licensing agency, phone number and any comments. In addition, complete the establishment information. Clearly indicate the name and physical address of the business/establishment, the type of business (i.e., restaurant, convenience store, bakery, childcare, adult living facility etc.) Provide the name of a contact person and phone number.

Section 2 – Water

This section is to be completed by the DOH/CHD, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) or the Utility Authority.

If served by a Municipal/Public Sewer:

Indicate the name of the supplier. You may provide the appropriate documentation requested by the licensing agency to validate this or have the Municipal/Public Sewer provider complete the evaluation section.

If served by an Onsite Water System regulated by DOH:

The entire portion of Section #2 should be completed by DOH/CHD. In this section list the permit number if a permit has been issued. Indicate the type of water system. List the result of the evaluation as either approved or denied. In comments section list any conditions of approval or disapproval that may be necessary. At the bottom of the form indicate the name and title of the Health Official reviewing or approving the evaluation including a signature, date, office address and phone number. The licensing agency needs this information for reference, questions and any validation that may be necessary.

Section 3 - Wastewater

This section is to be completed by the DOH/CHD, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) or the Utility Authority.

If served by a Municipal/Public Sewer:

Indicate the name of the supplier. You may provide the appropriate documentation requested by the licensing agency to validate this or have the Municipal/Public Sewer provider complete the evaluation section.

If served by a Septic/Onsite Wastewater System:

This entire portion of Section #3 should be completed by the DOH/CHD. In this section list the permit number if a permit has been issued. List the result of the evaluation as either approved or denied. If approved, list the conditions of approval. The conditions include; food service establishments that are designed for single service utensils only, the number of seats approved, the hours of operation, in group care/institutional facilities the number of residents or students, in adult living facilities the number of bed or clients, other conditions and whether or not food service is provided. In the comments section, other details or conditions of permitting/approval can be listed. At the bottom of the form indicate the name and title of the Health Official reviewing or approving the evaluation including a signature, date, office address and phone number. The licensing agency needs this information for reference, questions and any validation that may be necessary.