

# STARTING A FOOD BUSINESS

## A HELPFUL GUIDE

*Hocking County Health Department  
350 SR 664 North  
Logan, OH 43138  
740-385-3030*

*Updated January 2024*



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Hocking County Health Department

# WELCOME

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The Hocking County Health Department would like to welcome you and your business to the county. We realize opening a new operation or remodeling can be an overwhelming experience and we would like to assist you as much as possible.

Contacting the agencies below will help you to stay on track and on time. All required permits must be obtained before a food license can be issued.

OFFICE	SERVICE	PHONE NUMBER
Hocking County Health Department	Plan review and inspections	740-385-3030
Ohio EPA-SEDO 2197 E Front St Logan, OH 43138	Public Water/Sewer System	740-385-8501
Hocking County Health Department	Private water/sewer	740-385-3030
Ohio Dept of Commerce	Building	614- 644-2223
Logan Fire Department 155 E Main St Logan, OH 43138	Fire Safety	740-385-2307
Local zoning authorities (Logan City only) Logan Service Director 10 S Mulberry St Logan, OH 43138	Zoning	740-385-4060
Ohio Department of Liquor Control *If your facility will have a liquor license, all information must match exactly on both the liquor license and the food license. Make a copy of your liquor license application so you have the information when you fill out your food license application.	Liquor License	614-644-2360

## Where do I begin?

Nearly every new or significantly altered facility serving or selling food or beverages in Hocking County must submit plans before a license can be issued. A sanitarian will review the plans in order to ensure that the equipment, facilities and design will be suitable for the food items served or sold at the facility.

This guide will help you determine when you need to submit plans, who you need to get in contact with, and what to expect as far as the process and timeline.

# PLAN AHEAD

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## What is required in my facility?

Every business is unique. What will be required is based on your menu or food preparation process. You must make sure that you have the space and equipment needed to store, prepare and serve those foods safely. Many retail stores will not need the extent of facilities and equipment that a restaurant would need, just as small operations may not need as much equipment that a larger operation would require.

Please ensure contact with the Ohio Department of Commerce for necessary approval of occupancy in new and existing buildings.

Per the Ohio Department of Commerce: Special clarification: For change of occupancy in existing building, the property owner may wish to occupy the existing building for the new use group without any alterations. However, in view of many fire and life safety issues concerning the change of occupancy, the building official has determined that the existing building components shall be evaluated, verified, and drawings shall be prepared by an Ohio registered design professional. These plans shall be Ohio Department of Commerce Application for change of occupancy submitted to DIC for review and approval for all change of occupancy applications regardless if the new use occupancy is more or less hazardous than the existing use occupancy. Because of the complexity of verifying code compliance in existing buildings, the analysis and drawing preparation cannot be performed by the owner or their contractors. This information must be verified and submitted by an Ohio registered design professional in accordance with section 106.2.1 OBC. Please note that once the plan review process is completed, the building official may determine that alterations are required to bring the existing building components up to the current code requirements. **It is highly recommended to consult with the building official prior to purchasing or leasing a building or tenant space.**

## EQUIPMENT YOU WILL NEED

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**Hand washing sinks:** All facilities are required to have adequate employee hand washing sinks, conveniently located in each food and dishwashing area, and equipped with soap and disposable towels or hand dryers. Convenient location means that the sink is accessible and visible from any food area, including bars and server areas. These sinks are required to have signs reminding employees to wash hands. If disposable towels are used for the handwashing sink, a trash can must be available at the hand sink.

Exception: In facilities that serve only prepackaged foods, a hand sink is only required in a restroom.

**HELPFUL TIP:** Each sink described in this section can only be used for its designated purpose (hand washing, dishwashing, food prep, mop sink).

**HELPFUL TIP:** All waitress stations that are scooping ice must have a hand washing sink.

**Commercial equipment:** All equipment used for a new retail food operation must be listed as commercial and must be certified by a recognized testing agency (e.g. NSF, ETL, UL sanitation). No household equipment is permitted.

**Dry storage space:** Enough space must be planned for storage of food, dishes, and equipment. Ensure that there are designated locations for bulk foods, cans, and other items. All food items must

be stored at least 6 inches off the floor both in walk-in coolers or freezers, and on storage shelving. Look for wire racks and food grade shelving.

Equipment and single service items (e.x: 'to go' containers) must be protected from contamination and stored at least 6 inches off the floor. Bins for bulk items (e.g. rice, flour) must be made of food grade material and marked with the type of food inside. Trash cans and non-food grade containers cannot be used for bulk food storage.

**Chemical storage:** Chemicals must be stored below and/or away from food items, equipment and utensils to prevent contamination of these items. Chemicals cannot be stored above the dishwashing sink or on the floor.

**Employee area:** There must be lockers, shelving or a designated area provided only for employee belongings. Personal belongings such as coats, purses, cigarettes, and phones cannot be kept in food areas.

**Utility sink:** Also called a mop sink or service sink, all facilities are required to have a sink designated for cleaning of mops and cleaning tools, and for disposal of mop water. The utility sink must be installed with hot and cold running water and an appropriate back flow prevention device along with an area set aside for mop, mop bucket and maintenance equipment.

**HELPFUL TIP:** A curbed sink provides an easier means to dump mop water, and is a good storage spot for the mop bucket when not in use.

**Lighting:** Lighting must be adequate in food areas and other areas to allow for safe work conditions and to facilitate cleaning. A guide to general lighting intensity requirements are listed below.

50-foot candles: cooking areas, food prep areas, food service areas

20-foot candles: customer self-service, inside equipment (ex: reach in cooler), hand washing, dishwashing, utensil storage, restrooms

10-foot candles: walk-in coolers and freezers, dry storage, and other areas

**Smooth and cleanable surfaces:** All floors, walls and ceilings in food areas (service, storage or preparation) must be smooth and easily cleanable. Carpet is allowed only in areas for packaged food storage.

Approved surfaces which are commonly used...

Floors: quarry tile, ceramic tile, sealed concrete, poured epoxy

Walls: stainless steel, FRP, glossy painted drywall, painted concrete block

Ceilings: vinyl coated ACT (drop ceiling), glossy painted drywall

Base Coving: tile, rubber

*Based on your menu and equipment that is used, many facilities will also need...*

**Dishwashing sinks:** A 3-compartment sink designated for dishwashing is required in any operation that sells or serves unpackaged food. The sink should have curved interior edges and at least three (3) compartments for washing, rinsing and sanitizing. The sink should also have two (2) drainboards, one for collection of dirty dishes and the other for air drying. Approved detergent and sanitizer with appropriate test strips must be provided.

Dishwashers are optional, but a 3-compartment sink is required in a facility that sells or serves unpackaged food. Each compartment of the sink must be large enough to submerge the largest piece of equipment you have (i.e. a small bar sink would not be acceptable for washing large pots and pans). If a chemical sanitizer rinse cycle is used, the appropriate sanitizer test strips must be provided

**HELPFUL TIP:** Bar areas will require a 3-compartment sink.

**Food prep sink (vegetable sink):** Hocking County Health Department does not allow food processing in a hand sink or dishwashing sink. A separate sink is required for the processing of produce and other foods. Processing can include washing, soaking, thawing, and using ice baths for cooling. If a food processing sink is not available, a facility will be limited to using only prewashed produce.

A food prep sink must have an indirect drain, specifically an air gap, to prevent backflow from a sewage system into equipment in which food is placed. The air gap should be twice the diameter of the pipe, but no less than one inch.

**Ventilation hoods:** A ventilation hood is required at a grill line, or where other cooking equipment and high temperature dish machines are located, to prevent the accumulation of grease, heat, condensation, smoke and vapors.

Installation of a ventilation hood requires a permit and inspections. Contact the Fire Department with questions about ventilation requirements or permits for installation.

**HELPFUL TIP:** Ventilation is always required for gas equipment.

**Fire suppression system:** If a ventilation hood is required because of the use of grease producing equipment (fryers, grill, etc.), a Type I Hood with fire suppression is required. The fire suppression system acts like a fire extinguisher in case of a grease or cooking fire.

If a hood is required for heat, condensation or gas only, a Type II Hood might be allowed. Verify the type of hood required through the Fire Department or the Building Department.

**Grease interceptor (grease trap):** A grease trap is a device that is attached to sinks and/or drains to collect fats, oils and grease in order to prevent accumulation in our sewer system. Grease traps are connected to dishwashing sinks, some floor drains (e.g. at wok lines) and some dishwashers.

## LICENSED FOOD BUSINESSES & PLUMBING PERMITS

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### WHEN IS A PLUMBING PERMIT REQUIRED?

- New work
- Renovations
- Additions
- Anytime you are cutting into and replacing or adding to parts of an existing system. (Sanitary or domestic potable water and/or when adding any type of chemical dispensing equipment which ties into the potable water system, such as soap dispensing stations)

### WHO DETERMINES WHAT TYPE OF GREASE REMOVAL DEVICE IS REQUIRED?

**Hocking County Health Department-Plumbing Inspector**

Contact: *Walt Keigley 740-385-3030 extension 242.* Walt is available weekly on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

# RUNNING YOUR BUSINESS

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There are important questions that you need to think about in order to run a successful food business. Some examples are below. Keep in mind you may be asked these during an inspection.

## Employee Training...

How will you train your staff about food safety?  
What food safety practices will be covered during staff orientation?  
What is your employee health policy? What do you do about a sick worker? How will you share this policy with employees?

## Services...

Who will provide your waste pickup? All receptacles for waste or recyclables shall be of sufficient capacity and on concrete or asphalt surface that slope to the drain.  
How will you handle grease waste and cleaning your grease interceptor?  
Do you have a certified pest control operator?  
Who will clean your hood system and/or fire suppression system?  
Who will provide support and maintenance for your dishwasher?  
Is your facility secure, and is your food supply safe? Do you make sure to use approved suppliers? Does your food come from approved sources?

## Facilities...

Do you have enough hot water capacity for the busiest time of day?  
Do you have the storage space needed for dry goods?  
Do you plan to expand the operation, and will you have the space?  
Are floors, walls and ceilings constructed with cleanable materials?  
Are all outside openings screened and all doors tight fitting so they're insect and rodent proof?

## Equipment...

Do you have enough space in your coolers and freezers? Can you prevent overstocking and make certain to allow for air circulation?  
How will you keep hot foods hot?  
How will you keep cold foods cold?  
Have you purchased thermometers for all coolers? Do you have thermometers for taking food temperatures

## Plan for Easy Cleaning...

There are several things you can do to prevent the amount of future maintenance necessary for your facility and provide ease of cleaning.

Have you considered stainless steel on walls at the grill line, and behind and around grease producing equipment?

Have you placed heavy equipment on casters, so that it can be moved easily? Every other piece of equipment, especially at the grill line, should be on casters. This makes it easier to clean behind and between equipment.

Can you avoid sealing equipment and sinks to walls, and instead brace and set equipment away from walls and other equipment? This makes it easier to clean behind 3 compartment sinks, dishwashers, etc. Set equipment at least 4 inches from the wall.

## Fixed Equipment...

Is all equipment that is fixed (because it is not easily movable) installed to allow for easy cleaning? This means that it must be spaced from nearby equipment or sealed to walls or equipment.

Is table mounted equipment that is not easily moveable on legs or sealed to a table?

Is all floor mounted equipment (in kitchen areas) that is not easily movable sealed to the floor or elevated on 6-inch legs?

## Processes...

What will be your process for date marking ready-to-eat food products?

How will you ensure that a 'first in, first out' system is used for foods?

How will foods be properly thawed? Do you have enough cooler space to allow for overnight thawing?

Can large amounts of leftover food be properly cooled? Do you have shallow pans, ice wands, or other necessary tools?

If you have a large amount of leftover food that you want to use the next day, is your facility licensed to reheat food in bulk quantities or only in individual portions?

Will you keep temperature logs? Who will be responsible? When will you take temperatures?

How will you avoid bare hand contact with ready to eat foods? Will you use gloves, tongs, utensils, deli paper, or other tools?

# FOOD SAFETY EDUCATION

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The Ohio Uniform Food Code requires a **person-in-charge (level one)** certification in food protection for the person in charge per shift of a risk level I, II, III, and IV food service operation (FSO) or retail food establishment (RFE) in the following instances:

- When a new food service operation or retail food establishment is licensed after March 1, 2010 unless the individual has successfully completed an equivalent or more comprehensive certification in food protection course
- When a food service operation or retail food establishment has been implicated in a foodborne disease outbreak
- When the licensor has documented a failure to maintain sanitary conditions as per section 3717.29 of the Revised Code for a retail food establishment or section 3717.49 of the Revised Code for a food service operation

After March 1, 2017 the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) 3717-1-02.4 (A) requires that all Risk Level III and IV FSO/RFE must have at least one person that has supervisory and management responsibility and the authority to direct and control food preparation and service with the **manager certification (level two)** in food protection which is approved by the Ohio Department of Health.

For more information on Ohio Certifications or for a list of the approved providers for the person-in-charge or managers certification in Food Protection Trainings, please visit the Ohio Department of Health website: <https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/food-safety-program/food-safety-certification/>

## STEPS TO OPENING YOUR BUSINESS

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Hocking County Health Department reviews facility plans to make sure that the design and equipment in a facility are proper for the storage, preparation and service of the foods on the proposed menu or food list.

### Step 1: PLAN REVIEW

#### Who must submit plans?

New facilities: New construction and facilities that have never been licensed as a food operation in the past.

Remodeled or altered facilities: Major changes or alterations such as installation of a walk in cooler or ventilation hood, or expanding a kitchen.

Change of business: Changes in layout or equipment (example: a new owner converts a bakery into a full-service restaurant, and grills and ovens have been added to the kitchen).

\*If you are not sure whether plan review is required, please contact HCHD.

#### What is the fee?

The plan review fee is 50% of the local license fee, which is based on the risk level category.

#### What is the process?

After we have received your set of plans, application and payment for plan review, HCHD will begin reviewing the plans. We have up to 30 days to begin the review, but we will do our best to follow your schedule for opening.

If there are any questions about the plans, or changes that need to be discussed, we will contact you by phone or e-mail.

When plans are approved, we will notify you (generally by phone or e-mail). A formal approval letter will follow, and will be mailed to the Plan Review Contact noted on the application.

### Step 2: LICENSING

**Post-construction/Pre-licensing Inspection:** After plans have been approved and all work is complete, you will need to contact our office for an inspection. The opening inspection can be conducted once you have all required 'sign-offs' from the appropriate departments. (Newly constructed facilities and change of use existing buildings will need to have final approval from the Building Department before a license can be issued.)

**Licensing:** The license application must be filled out and the fee paid. We typically bring the license with us to the pre-licensing inspection. If there are no outstanding issues at that inspection, we give you the license that day.

License renewal is once a year, and payment for licenses must be received by March 1 every year. Late fees are added after March 1.

## HOW DO I KNOW WHEN I'M READY FOR MY FINAL INSPECTION?

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**Have you completed all items on this checklist? If YES, you are ready!**

- ☐ I have read the 'Starting a Food Business' guide to help design my facility based on menu items and processes.
- ☐ I submitted plans to Ohio Department of Commerce.
- ☐ I submitted plans, application and plan fee to Hocking County Health Department.
- ☐ I received plan approval from Hocking County Health Department and Ohio Department of Commerce.
- ☐ Work was performed by licensed contractors and permits were obtained when necessary.
- ☐ All construction or remodel work is complete.
- ☐ FOR A NEW FACILITY or Change of use building: I have a certificate of occupancy (CO) or temporary CO from the Building Department

OR

FOR A REMODEL: I have final approval for any work performed, including inspections and sign offs on permits.

- ☐ I have contacted Hocking County Health Department for an opening inspection.
- ☐ Before the scheduled opening inspection:
  - ☐ Kitchen/food areas are clean and ready to use.
  - ☐ Hot water is available at all sinks.
  - ☐ Refrigerated equipment is running at 41°F or below.
  - ☐ The dish machine (if applicable) is in operation.
  - ☐ A check or money order is available for the license fee.

# EQUIPMENT EXAMPLES

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## HANDWASHING SINK

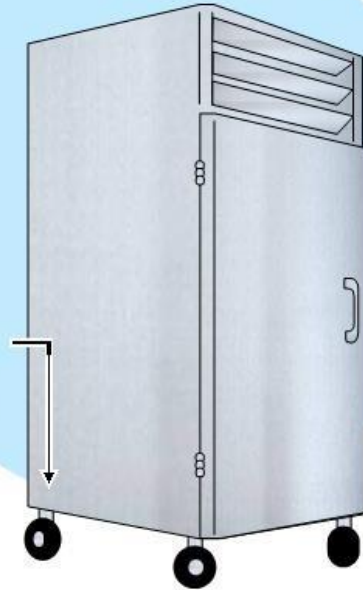
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## REACH-IN REFRIGERATOR

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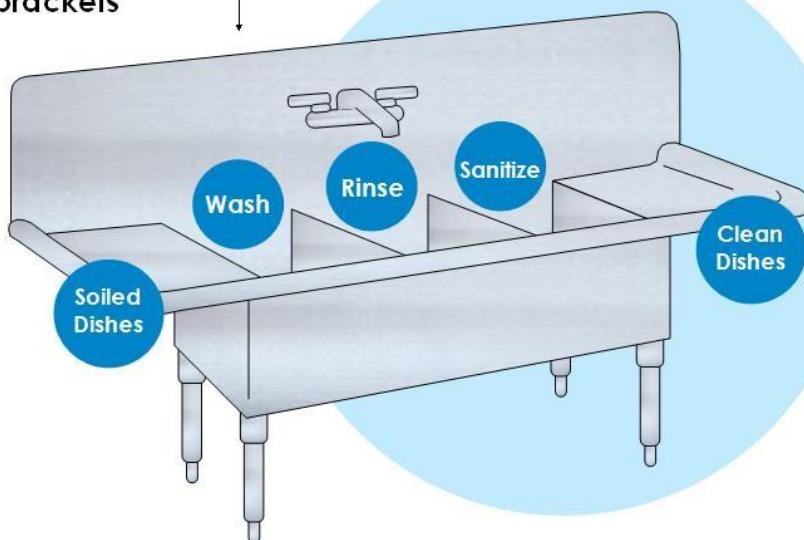
On casters  
so it's easy  
to move  
and clean  
around



## 3 COMPARTMENT SINK

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Installed 4" off  
the wall with  
brackets



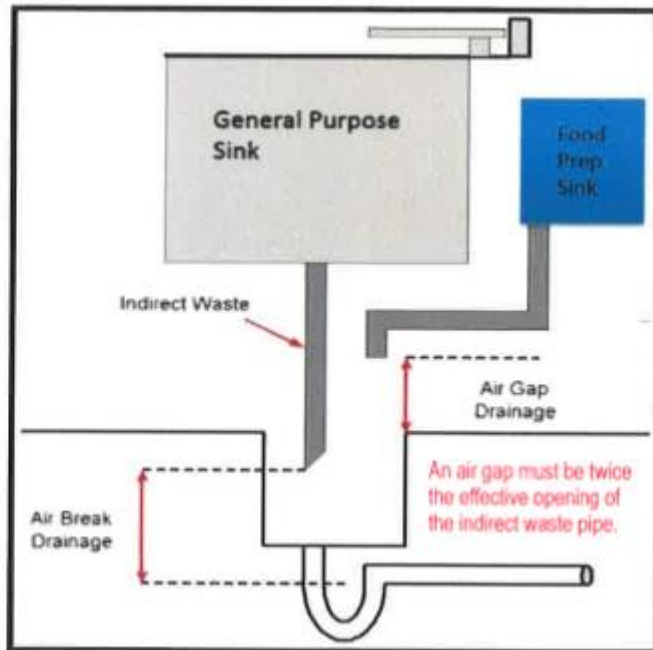
# EQUIPMENT EXAMPLES, CONTINUED

## Difference between Air Gaps and Air Breaks.

In this illustration the Indirect Waste pipe from the sink in the drawing is terminating in the waste receptor with an **AIR BREAK**. (to the left- not approved for food prep.)

The second pipe (from another sink to the right) is illustrating what the pipe would look like if it terminated in the waste receptor with an **AIR GAP**. (required for food prep)

The waste receptor illustrated here is a floor sink.



## Ice Maker Drains

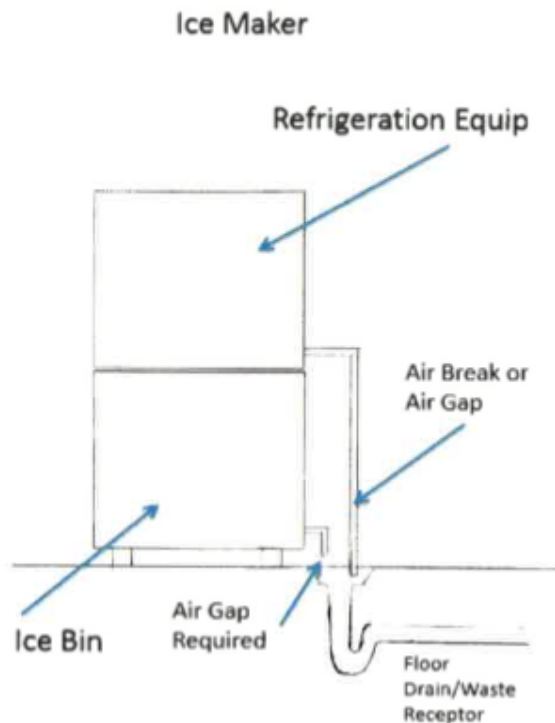
The ice in the bin is either considered potable water or food therefore requires an air gap.

The condensation drain coming from the refrigeration equipment is normally accompanied by a nasty slime and must NOT be communicating with the drain from the ice bin. The drains MUST be separate, not tied together.

The refrigeration drain does not require an air gap. An air gap or air break are both acceptable since there is no potable water or food associated with that drain.

**An air gap must be twice the effective opening of the indirect waste pipe.**

## Correct Installation



***The plan review fee must be submitted with application. The plan review fee is 50% of the local license fee. Please note the fees below are the final license fee NOT the local fee.***

## **FEE SCHEDULE (AS OF 1/6/2024)**

<b>PLAN REVIEW FEES</b>	<b>Commercial</b>	
	<b>&lt;25,000 ft<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>&gt;25,000 ft<sup>2</sup></b>
Risk Class 1	\$123.00	\$172.00
Risk Class 2	\$136.50	\$180.00
Risk Class 3	\$250.00	\$607.00
Risk Class 4	\$313.50	\$642.50

<b>FSO &amp; RFE LICENSE FEES</b>	<b>Commercial</b>	
	<b>&lt;25,000 ft<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>&gt;25,000 ft<sup>2</sup></b>
Risk Class 1	\$274.00	\$372.00
Risk Class 2	\$301.00	\$388.00
Risk Class 3	\$528.00	\$1242.00
Risk Class 4	\$655.00	\$1313.00

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