

# Public Health Department



Let us work together, grow together, and succeed together!

For more detailed requirements, please visit with one of our Health Inspectors.

### INSPECTOR'S OFFICE HOURS

8:00 AM - 8:30 AM / 11:30 AM - 12:00 PM / 1:00 PM - 1:30 PM

1034 E. Levee Street, City Plaza 2nd Floor  
Brownsville, TX 78520  
Office: 956-542-3437  
Fax: 956-554-6993  
Email: fooddivision@cob.us

**Ventilation hoods/Suppression System:** 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. Contact Fire Marshall's Office (Fire Department) at **956-548-6075** for information.

**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, mop sinks, floor drains and some dishwashers, and are regulated by Brownsville PUB Pre-Treatment Department. For more information, you may contact them at **956-983-6518**.

**TIP:** Grease traps must be cleaned periodically to keep them working properly.

**Certified Food Managers:** Facility must have a **Certified Food Protection Manager** during all hours of operation. If working by shifts, more than one certified food manager will be needed. Once certification is obtained, a City of Brownsville ID card is required; said fee for card is \$50.00 dollars, for 3 years.

**Food Handler certifications:** All food handlers who contact ready-to-eat food must receive training in the risks associated with this procedure including proper hand washing. The specific requirements are addressed in the Texas Food Establishment Rules (TFER). Certified employee must have food handler certification readily available during inspection.

### **How to obtain Certified Food Manager ID:**

- 1) Bring certificate
- 2) Valid photo ID (State DL / ID, or student ID)
- 3) Fill out application

### **ID card drive-thru hours:**

Monday - Friday (9am-12pm / 1pm-4pm)

### **NEW CONSTRUCTION / REMODEL / PLANS**

Contact: *Francisco Reyes* / francisco.reyes@cob.us

*Plan Reviewer/Health Inspector*

### Additional Important Information

#### Required documents needed upon applying for Health Permits, based on business type.

#### \* Restaurant / Catering / Public Cafeteria / Meat Market / Seafood Market / Deli

- Menu
- Application
- Certificate of Occupancy
- PUB Pretreatment Approval
- Fire Inspection

#### \* Retail / Drinking Establishment / Fruit Stand

- Application
- Certificate of Occupancy
- Fire Inspection

#### \* Snack Bar / Bakery / Tortilleria / Snow Cones

- Menu
- Application
- Certificate of Occupancy
- PUB Pretreatment Approval
- Fire Inspection

#### Day Care / Nursing Homes / Private or Public Schools

- Menu
- Application
- Certificate of Occupancy
- Fire Inspection
- PUB Pretreatment Approval
- Catering contract signed by both parties with start/end dates, health permit, and latest health inspection from caterer (if applicable)

#### Temporary Permit

- Temporary permit application
- Signed acknowledgement letter with respective business letterhead

#### Swimming Pool/ Spa

- Certificate of Occupancy
- Swimming Pool/ Spa permit application
- Fire Inspection

#### \* Retail (77 Flea Market - ONLY)

- Application
- Receipt of table
- Signed guidelines

#### \* Mobile Units - 77 Flea Market

- Menu
- Application
- Fire Inspection
- Valid TX Driver's License (Driver)
- License Plates (Registration)
- Vehicle insurance (6 months)
- Grease contract for one year (If applicable)
- Signed guidelines

#### \* Mobile Units - Food Truck Park

- Menu
- Application
- Fire Inspection
- Lease contract (one year)

\* REQUIRES AN **ACTIVE** STATE SALES TAX PERMIT NUMBER FROM STATE COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE

#### Permitting Process:

- 1) Fill out application for Certificate of Occupancy at Planning and Redevelopment Services..
- 2) Submit application for C.O. at Health Department to request a preliminary inspection (\$20.00). Submit copy of health inspection report to Planning and Redevelopment Services after preliminary inspection has been conducted.
- 3) Proceed to pay for C.O. & Fire Inspection.
- 4) Request PUB Pre-Treatment Inspection.
- 5) Register for Sales Tax ID at State Comptroller Office.
- 6) Once C.O. has been physically issued, submit all documentation above to Health Department, with application & payment for final inspection. Business may open once final inspection has been conducted by Health Department and written approval is granted.

# Getting started

## What is required at my facility?

Requirements are based on your menu and the intended use of the space. Make sure you have adequate space for equipment needed to store, prepare and serve food safely. Many retail establishments will not need the extent of facilities and equipment that a restaurant would need. A commercial kitchen requires a **minimum of 200 square feet** of available space or larger, based on proposed menu and type of operation.

## REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

**Hand washing sinks:** All facilities are required to have adequate employee hand washing NSF sinks, conveniently located in each food prep area, dishwashing area, and equipped with soap and disposable towels. Convenient location indicates that the sink is accessible and visible from any food area, including bars and ice dispensing locations, such as wait stations. These sinks are required to have signs reminding employees to wash hands.



**Dishwashing sinks:** A three (3) compartment (NSF) sink with dual (2) integral drain boards is required for washing, rinsing and sanitizing. Each compartment of sink must have a minimum depth of 8" inches, and large enough to submerge the largest piece of equipment/utensil you have. Air drying racks above sink are also required.



**(Bar sinks are only approved for bars, and no other use and/or business)**

## Food processing sink (vegetable /prep sink):

Food processing in a hand sink or dishwashing sink is **not allowed**. 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 pre-washed produce. A food prep sink must have an indirect drain.



**TIP:** Installing a food sink with an integral drain board will provide you with a food prep surface for items washed in the sink.

**Mop/Utility sink & enclosure:** All facilities are required to have a sink designated for cleaning of mops, cleaning tools, and for disposal of mop water. The mop sink must include a faucet with cold/hot water and drain. This sink should have hooks or other means to allow mops to properly air dry. (Enclosure for sink is required, with FRP or similar material on all walls adjacent to enclosed mop sink.) **Hot & cold water under pressure is required at all sinks.**



**Water heater:** Adequate capacity is required for business use. *Example:* A commercial restaurant requires a minimum capacity of **40 gallons**. (Commercial tank-less water heaters require prior Health Department approval)

**Chemical storage:** Chemicals must be stored below and/or away from food items, equipment and utensils to prevent contamination. Chemicals cannot be stored above the dishwashing sink or on the floor. Designate an area, and/or a cabinet to store toxic chemicals.

**Dry storage space:** Adequate space must be planned for storage of food, dishes, and equipment. Ensure 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. (Metal/raw wood shelves are not acceptable. Only NSF wire racks or food grade shelving is acceptable.) Equipment and single service items (to go' containers) must be protected from contamination and stored at least 6" inches off the floor.

**TIP:** Bins for bulk items (e.g. rice, flour) must be made of food grade material and labeled with type of food inside. Trash cans and non-food grade containers cannot be used for bulk food storage.

**Commercial equipment:** All equipment used 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; this includes day cares. NSF casters are required for large equipment if it is not already on legs or permanently fixed (caulked) to the floor with space for cleaning.



**TIP:** Check the label on the equipment or request a specification sheet from the vendor before purchasing. Note: Commercial merchandisers are for pre-packaged/bottled items only and will not be approved for the storage of any food.

**Cooking/Heating/Hot Holding equipment:** All cooking equipment must be commercial grade. Domestic/residential stoves are not approved for commercial use; this includes day cares. Any and all restaurants must comply with steam tables for holding food products at required temperature.

**Smooth and cleanable surfaces:** All floors, walls and ceilings in food areas (service, storage or preparation) must be smooth and easily cleanable. Finish schedule must be submitted with floor plan.

## Examples of acceptable surfaces commonly used:

**Floors:** Quarry tile, ceramic non-slip tile, poured epoxy. **Base Coving:** tile, vinyl = 4" inch min.

**Walls:** Stainless steel, FRP, glossy painted drywall, epoxy painted concrete block

**Ceilings:** Vinyl coated ACT (drop ceiling), glossy painted drywall (light in color)

**Adequate lighting:** Lighting must be sufficient 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 (e.g. reach in cooler), hand washing, dishwashing, utensil storage, restrooms

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

**TIP:** When submitting a lighting plan for plan review, it should include (1) type of fixtures, (2) location of fixtures, and (3) whether using plastic covers, shields, or shatterproof bulbs to protect food & equipment.

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