

## Operating your Establishment

### Person in Charge

At least one person per shift must make sure that all of the food safety rules are followed. This designated person in charge (PIC) must:

- Demonstrate food safety knowledge
- Know when to restrict ill food workers
- Ensure all food workers follow the food safety regulations

### Employee Training

The number one food safety tool is a properly trained food worker. All employees should be trained to handle foods properly, to operate equipment in a safe manner, and to ask questions when they have them.

### Food Worker Cards

All food workers must have valid food worker cards issued by a Washington State health department within fourteen days of hire. The PIC must make sure the cards (or copies) are available during an inspection.

All food workers should have food worker cards before employment. If a new employee comes to work without a valid food worker card, then food safety training must be provided by the employer before the food worker handles any foods.

### Employee Health and Hygiene Policy

Each food establishment must have an employee health policy to ensure that ill food workers do not report to work, or do not handle unwrapped food or clean utensils. Staff must also be trained on when and how to properly wash their hands. These training materials must be included in your Standard Operating Procedures.

### Materials

Food safety handouts that reinforce food safety information are available from your Environmental Health Specialist. Many are also printable from the publications page on [www.bfhd.wa.gov](http://www.bfhd.wa.gov).

### Inspections

After your pre-opening inspection, your first unannounced routine inspection will occur within a few weeks. Routine inspections are usually conducted 2-3 times per year. Establishments with multiple violations may also have follow-up inspections. The health department also conducts additional inspections when complaints or reports of foodborne illness are received.

### Inspection Reports

The Benton-Franklin Health District uses the Washington State Retail Food Inspection Report Form. Your inspector will go over the report with you after your inspection and will answer your questions. Inspection reports are available for public view. Summarized inspection reports of all food establishments are available online at [www.bfhd.wa.gov](http://www.bfhd.wa.gov).

### Contacting the Health Department

Please call the health department any time you have questions. However, food establishment owners are required to notify the health department to report ill food workers or whenever an imminent health hazard, such as fire, flood, lack of power, or sewage spill happens in the establishment.

Your Environmental Health Specialist is:

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: (509) 460-4200 ext. \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_@bfhd.wa.gov

### For More Information:

Benton-Franklin Health District  
Environmental Health Division  
7102 W. Okanogan Pl. Kennewick, WA 99336  
(509) 460-4205 or 1-800-814-4323  
[www.bfhd.wa.gov](http://www.bfhd.wa.gov)

# Opening a New Food Establishment

## Public Food Service Series



[www.bfhd.wa.gov](http://www.bfhd.wa.gov)



## Opening a New Food Establishment

Congratulations on your decision to begin a new food establishment. This brochure will help you meet health department requirements to build or remodel a food establishment in Benton and Franklin Counties. This guide should only be used for reference and may not include all of the items that may be required for your establishment.

### The Plan Review Process

Washington State food safety regulations require that all new or remodeled food establishments have their plans approved before construction begins. A proper plan review will help determine changes that will be required before costly purchases, installation, or construction begins.



Plan review usually takes from 2 to 3 weeks once all materials are received. An Environmental Health Specialist from the food safety program will review your plans and specifications to make sure they are in compliance with Washington State food safety regulations.

Often, changes must be made to your plans, equipment, or materials. These changes will help you keep your food safe and will be discussed with you during the process. ***Because it is much easier to make changes in the planning stage rather than after construction has begun, do not begin construction until you receive an approval letter from the health department.***

### Other Agencies

In addition to the health department, there are other agencies you will need to contact to make sure you meet the requirements for your business. A suggested contact list is available from the health department.

### Step 1: Beginning Plan Review

**You must submit the following items to begin the plan review process:**

- Food Establishment Application
- Plan Review Spec Sheet
- Anticipated volume of food to be stored, prepared, and sold
- Menu and list of all ingredients
- Floor layout, drawn to scale
- Site plan, with layout on property
- Mechanical, plumbing, and electrical schematics
- Equipment specifications with make, model numbers, and dimensions
- Plan review fee
- Standard operating procedures and employee training materials (must be received before operation)

**Plan review will not begin until the Benton-Franklin Health District receives all of the above items.**

### Step 2: Approval Letter

Once your plans have been approved, the Environmental Health Specialist will send you an approval letter. When you receive the approval letter, you may begin building your facility pending all other applicable agency approvals. A copy of the approval letter will also be sent to the appropriate building and licensing departments.

### Step 3: Pre-Opening Inspection

The health department will conduct a pre-opening inspection to make sure the food establishment is constructed and equipped as detailed in the approved plans. When construction is complete, contact the health department to schedule your pre-opening inspection.

If you are not ready to be inspected on your scheduled pre-opening, be sure to reschedule with your environmental health specialist. A fee may be charged if an additional inspection is required.

### Pre-Opening Inspection

Be sure to have the following completed before the pre-opening inspection:

- Remove all debris** from construction.
- Stock all handsinks** with hot and cold running water, soap, paper towels, handwash reminder, and a garbage can.
- Clean and sanitize all food contact surfaces**, refrigerators, freezers, cooking and hot-holding equipment.
- Clean all non-food contact surfaces.**
- Clean and sanitize ice machines** and ice bins. After sanitizing, run several batches of ice through the ice machine. Throw away the first few batches of ice.
- Put thermometers in all refrigerators and freezers.** Each cold-holding unit must have a thermometer in it at all times.
- Calibrate thermometers** you'll be using to monitor temperatures of food.
- Make sure all cold holding and hot holding equipment is operating properly.** Place a cup of water in cold holding and hot holding equipment. This will be used to check holding temperatures of the unit. All cold holding equipment should be able to keep food cooled to below 41°F. All hot holding equipment must be able to keep food 140°F or hotter.
- Make sure there is no food present during the pre-opening inspection.**

### Step 4: Approval To Operate

Once all requirements have been met and all equipment is functioning properly at your pre-opening inspection, your establishment will be approved to open. At this time, you must pay for your annual permit to operate a food establishment. After you post the permit in a location visible to your customers, you may open your business. [Note: You will also need to get approval from all other applicable agencies before you can open.]