

Dunn County Health Department

Starting a Food Service Business

*Information to help guide you through the process
of opening your own food service business*



Environmental Health

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Where to Begin

It wasn't long after we began eating that some business-minded people tried to combine their love of cooking with other people's willingness to pay them just so they didn't have to cook.



For those of you who would like to turn your ideas of opening a restaurant into reality, the health department is here to help you have a healthy and successful start.

PAPERWORK

Like most good ideas it is best to start by getting things down on paper, but getting your ideas down is only the start to the paperwork. There are a number of permits and licenses you will need to obtain before opening your food service establishment.

City or Township If you will be building you may need to go through your local zoning board or township board. You will need **building permits** that require **building plans**. If your establishment plans to serve liquor you also must have a **liquor license**. The local **Fire Inspector** will also need to check your fire detection and suppression system as well as extinguishers in the facility.



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Health Department The County Health Department issues **Restaurant Licenses** and **Retail Food Licenses** that allow you to operate. There are different licenses based on the size and level of complexity of food preparation so you should have a good idea what you will be serving before applying for this license.



If you are building, this department will also need to look at your building plans to make sure the kitchen is equipped with the type and quantity of equipment required by the State of Wisconsin.

The health department also performs **pre-inspections** on all opening restaurants, even if there are no changes beyond a change of owner, because licenses are attached to the owner, not the facility. If buying a facility, know that some facilities may need equipment changes or other requirements to come up to code upon change of owner. Also, the State of Wisconsin requires at least one staff person to obtain a **Wisconsin Food Manager License**. This further requires certified food manager training. Although not required before opening, an exam must be scheduled within 90 days.



RESTAURANT EQUIPMENT



Aside from the facility, restaurant equipment is the biggest investment you have so you should be careful to select equipment that not only works well for you but is made to a standard that promotes food safety. In general, equipment should be durable, with a smooth, easily cleanable surfaces. Appliances should be ANSI or NSF certified. Any plastics should be food grade. There are specific equipment pieces that must be included or brought up-to-date on opening a restaurant.

□Hand Sink

There must be at least one hand wash sink with paddle-type handles or some other way of operating except by fingers. Depending on the size or layout of the kitchen, the local inspector may require more than one. Hand washing sinks may not be used for any other purpose and should be installed in an area that promotes hand washing.

□3-Compartment Sink

A 3-compartment sink for wash, rinse, and sanitizing must be installed. In some cases a 4-compartment sink may be required. Drainboards must be attached to both ends of the sinks and the sink compartments must be big enough to accommodate immersion of your largest equipment for adequate sanitizing.



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Food Preparation Sink For facilities washing fresh fruits and vegetables or thawing as part of food preparation you will need a food prep sink with a drain that is plumbed with an air gap. This sink is to help control cross contamination.

Mop Sink A curbed utility or mop sink is required to gather and dump mop buckets. The faucet must be equipped with a backflow preventer.

Coolers & Freezers

Refrigerators and coolers must be ANSI or NSF certified. Any shelving should be stainless or coated free of rust or breaks in the coating so that cleaners and sanitizers are able to work effectively. Walk-in coolers must be lined with stainless steel, fiberglass board, galvanized metal, or aluminum. Flooring must be sealed tile, sealed cement, or metal.



Freezers must be able to keep food frozen and in solid form. Home-style freezers are acceptable provided they satisfy this requirement. If you are going to freeze food starting from a thawed state you are not allowed to do this in a home-style freezer. In this case you must have a NSF or ANSI rated freezer.

Hoods

Hoods for ventilating steam and/or grease from cooking and cleaning processes are regulated by your building inspector and will vary depending on their purpose.

Type I Hoods are used when cooking foods that use or

produce grease or oils. **Type II Hoods** are used in cooking where steam is produced. All hoods must be designed for their use by HVAC contractors to take into account the air movement in the entire facility. Dishwasher may also require a Type II Hood.

□Dishwashers

Automatic dishwashers must also be of the commercial quality and use either **Low-temp** or **High-temp** means to sanitize the utensils.

Low-Temp dishwashers use hot water for washing and a chemical sanitizer. These must be monitored for wash temperatures and sanitizer strength using sanitizer testing strips.



High-Temp dishwashers use an additional booster heater to sanitize utensils at water temperatures of 180°F or more. These usually require a Type II hood to ventilate the steam produced. A commercial dishwasher and pre-wash sink could be used in place of 3-compartment sink provided all pots and utensils fit in the dishwasher. Note that if the dishwasher should require service the restaurant will have to close without a 3-compartment sink back up.

□Grease Traps are used to keep grease from entering the sewage or septic system and may be required for your facility, so check with your plumber and building inspector about the need for these.

Self-Service Food Bars

Salad bars and any self-service food buffet bars must have heating and/or cooling facilities to maintain hot held foods at 135°F or more and cold held foods at 41°F or less. They must also have adequate shielding to prevent contamination of food by consumers.



Walls, Floors, Ceilings

The goal of these surface treatments is that they provide for a smooth surface that can be effectively cleaned and sanitized. For floors, tile that is sealed or another surface like laminated that will not peel and does not leave gaps that would allow grime to accumulate. Walls should be stainless steel or fiberglass panel, especially in areas that require frequent cleaning to remove grease and grime. In other areas sheet rock that is smooth and sealed with paint that can withstand repeated washing is acceptable. Ceilings should also be a smooth surface that can withstand cleaning. If using grid ceiling make sure to use tiles made for commercial kitchens.

Shelving should also be made of smooth easily cleanable materials. **No bare wood** is allowed. Wood may be used in dry storage areas, provided it is sealed with paint or other surface treatment that can withstand frequent cleaning and sanitizing.



Lighting should be adequate to provide sufficient illumination for tasks required for food preparation. Light bulbs should be shielded or shatterproof over food preparation and storage areas including inside coolers and freezers.

Water & Septic

If your restaurant will be using a private well, the water will need to be tested before opening and annually thereafter. If you will be putting in a septic system make sure the contractor knows your kitchen's needs and your seating capacity so they may size the system accordingly.

Food Storage

Any food storage areas should be free of accumulated garbage or other debris and elevated 6" off the floor to discourage insect or animal pests.



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Storage of chemicals should be separated from that of food. Shelving should be open with no bare wood or cardboard. Overhead lighting should be shielded or made of shatterproof glass. Food cannot be stored under open sewer or water lines.

Restrooms

Restroom facilities must be provided for staff and must be equipped with non-hand operated faucet controls. They must also be supplied with soap and towels or drying provisions along with waste baskets. A

covered container must be provided for the disposal of sanitary napkins in women's restrooms and all restrooms must have signage requiring employees to wash hands. Doors to the restrooms must be self-closing. Customer restrooms must be provided if you have sit down food service. Those facilities with seating for 15 or fewer patrons or carry-out service when customers are allowed entrance to the building are allowed one unisex restroom. Other requirements may apply so be sure to have your plumber consult Safety and Professional Services regulations.



Coat Room

Room must be provided for coats and other employee personal items to be stored away from food preparation areas. Eating or drinking by employees must also be in a separate location.

❑Garbage Storage

Garbage should be stored outside in an enclosed storage area that is kept clean and free of unnecessary items.

❑Inspections

As part of the licensing process **Pre-Inspections** are performed before the opening of any restaurant whether a new facility or just changing ownership. These pre-inspections are done as often as necessary to ensure that you, as owners and operators, have everything in place to provide for a successful opening. Feel free to contact your inspectors whenever you have a question or would like them to look at something in the facility.



When everything is in place, licensing fees have been paid, building inspectors have signed off and the health inspector has done a final pre-inspection, he/she will release the license and you are ready to open for business.



Resources

Dept. of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection
https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/FoodAndRestaurants.aspx

https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/FoodSafetyBusinessInformation.aspx

https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/FoodCode.aspx

Wisconsin Restaurant Association
<https://www.wirestaurant.org/>

Tavern League of Wisconsin
<http://www.tlw.org/index.php>





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