

GENERAL INFORMATION ON STARTING A RESTAURANT BUSINESS IN MOBILE COUNTY ADPH 420-3-22 RULES FOR FOOD ESTABLISHMENT SANITATION

The following information is intended to provide a general overview of the Rules of Alabama State Board of Health, Chapter 420-3-22, Food Establishment Sanitation for construction requirements for starting a retail food business. **All new, renovated and remodeled food establishments must receive prior approval from the Mobile County Health Department before beginning construction and again before operation.**

A complete set of construction plans must be submitted for review by the Health Department at least 30 working days prior to beginning construction. These plans should include the detailed proposed layout, arrangement of fixtures and equipment, lighting, mechanical and plumbing plans, finish and equipment schedules, contact information and any other items deemed necessary by the Health Department for an efficient review process. Once plans have been reviewed, the Health Department remains an active participant throughout the construction process and must approve the business for operation before sales to the public begin.

The specific design or intended operation of an establishment may necessitate additional construction items; some limited food establishments or operations may not require every item exactly as described within this document. The Mobile County Health Department's Inspection Services representative will work with you on the specific construction requirements for your establishment as governed by the Rules for Food Establishment Sanitation.

PLANS (8-201)

All construction must comply with the applicable building, plumbing, fire and health codes. A final inspection from the Health Department is required before opening. This final inspection will not be conducted until all the other agencies have given their final approval.

Floor plans are required to be reviewed and approved by the County Health Department prior to beginning construction. This will protect you from buying equipment or installing an item that does not meet Health Department requirements. It is easy to correct problems on paper but can be very expensive to correct problems after construction and installation.

Show the proposed location of all equipment, sinks, restrooms, storage areas and so forth. Include a site plan showing your entire lot, garbage storage area and any other significant items (for example, grease trap location). Include a "finish schedule" of floor, wall and ceiling coverings and a list of the proposed equipment, as detailed as possible.

PLUMBING/WATER SUPPLY (5-1, 5-2)

Must be installed according to local Plumbing Code standards. Enough hot water for the intended operation must be provided. Water heaters must provide enough temperature rise to furnish hot water to all plumbing fixtures and allow for general cleaning. The Health Department or your local electric or gas utility can help you with the size of the water heater you need. Provide a vacuum-breaker at each hose connection. Provide hot and cold tempered water to all sinks through a mixing valve. Provide indirect drains for all equipment requiring drainage (ice machine, dishwashers, etc.) The water supply must be from a source approved by the Health Department.

SEWAGE DISPOSAL (5-4)

All sewage, including mop water and wastewater, must be disposed into a sanitary sewer or a Health Department-approved septic tank system. No sewage, including used grease, mop water or wastewater shall be deposited onto the ground or to any area accessible to insects or vermin. The Health Department's environmentalist can give you specific requirements for grease traps and septic tanks. (See EQUIPMENT for sink requirements)

CONSTRUCTION FLOORS (6-2)

(Food and utensil handling areas, storage and toilet rooms): Constructed of durable, smooth, easily cleanable material such as sealed concrete, quarry, terrazzo or ceramic tile, durable grades of linoleum, vinyl tile and so forth with the floor and wall junctures coved and closed to no larger than one thirty-second inch. If water-flush (hose-down) cleaning is to be used, the floor must be constructed of a masonry or tile material, graded to drain and be coved and sealed at the floor-wall juncture. Exposed horizontal utility lines and pipes on the floor are prohibited.

WALLS AND CEILING (6-2)

Constructed of smooth, durable material with a non-absorbent finish, and easily cleanable. No exposed studs, joists or rafters, no unnecessarily exposed utility service lines or pipes are allowed. No bare wood and no contact paper (including shelves) are allowed.

DOORS (6-202.15)

Doors to the outside are to be self-closing and tight fitting.

RESTROOMS/TOILET ROOM

Floors, walls and ceiling as described above. Doors are to be self-closing (6-202.14) and solid construction. Covered waste cans are to be provided in toilet rooms used by females (5-501.17). The rooms are to be power-vented to the outside (6-304.11). The number of restrooms must be that required by the local Plumbing Code, but at least one.

GARBAGE/REFUSE (5-5)

Outside garbage containers (including dumpsters) must be stored on a substantial pad of sealed concrete or machine-laid asphalt and sloped to drain. Provide hot water, and wastewater disposal facilities, for cleaning containers. Also check with local plumbing officials about water requirements and City Ordinances.

LIGHTING/ LIGHTING INTENSITY (6-303.11)

At least 50 foot-candles of light on all food preparation surfaces, including cooking equipment. At least 20 foot-candles in areas used for handwashing, warewashing and storage; customer self-service and inside reach in coolers. At least 10 foot-candles of light in the walk in coolers, dry food storage areas and in other rooms during cleaning. The lights in food handling, food storage, and equipment cleaning/storage areas are to be shielded (6-202.11).

VENTILATION (6-304.11)

All rooms, including storage rooms, are to have sufficient ventilation to keep them free of excessive heat, steam, obnoxious odors, smoke and fumes. If greasy fumes or a water condensate problem are inherent in the cooking operation, the cooking equipment must be installed under a ventilation hood, with removable filters, power-vented to the outside. If a water condensate problem will be created with a mechanical dishwasher, it must be vented to the outside. Pipes and conduits must be concealed within the hood structure except pipes for the fire extinguisher

system. The hood and installation must be approved by the Fire Marshal where applicable. Check the list of other Agencies to Contact at the end of this document.

EMPLOYEE ACCOMMODATIONS (LOCKERS/DRESSING ROOMS) (6-403.11)

Provide enough lockers or other suitable facilities to store employee clothing and other personal belongings (for example, purses). These facilities may be located only in designated rooms or areas containing only completely packaged food or completely packaged food-related articles. If employees routinely change clothes within the establishment, rooms or areas must be designated for that purpose. These areas cannot be used for any part of the food-handling operation.

STORAGE

Provide enough dry storage area for the intended operation.

PREMISES/PHYSICAL FACILITIES (6-1)

The walking and driving surface of the exterior area must be surfaced with concrete, asphalt, gravel or a similar material effectively treated to minimize dust. These surfaces must be graded to prevent water pooling.

EQUIPMENT COOLING (4-3)

Provide refrigeration adequate for the intended operation; capable of maintaining a product temperature of about 40°F or below. The maximum food temperature allowed is 41°F.

Refrigerators should be commercial-type with an air-flow fan. Freezers must be capable of maintaining food frozen and should hold the product at an air temperature of 0°F or below. Each cooler or freezer must have a conspicuous thermometer for periodic (at least daily) temperature checks.

HOT FOOD HOLDING (501.16)

If food is intended to be held hot for an extended period of time, then the holding equipment must be capable of maintaining a product temperature of 135°F or above.

NOTE: Most foodborne illnesses are due to inadequate temperature control – the refrigerator isn't cold enough, the food isn't cooled fast enough, the food isn't hot enough on the steam table, and so forth. It is extremely important that your equipment, **ESPECIALLY REFRIGERATION EQUIPMENT**, can keep food within required temperatures.

EQUIPMENT DESIGN, LOCATION AND INSTALLATION (4-4)

Each piece of equipment that is not sealed to surrounding surfaces must have enough space allowed to provide for easy cleaning underneath, on all sides, and on top. (Generally six-inches from the floor for floor-mounted equipment and four-inches from the countertop for countertop-mounted equipment). Equipment that can be easily lifted by one person or on wheels and not bound by utility connections is exempt from this requirement. Equipment must not be designed or installed so that unreachable or uncleanable cracks and crevices are created.

SINKS (4-3)

A three-compartment sink, adequate size for the intended operation, commercial type with drainboards (so the utensils, pots, pans, etc. can be air-dried) must be provided. Hot and cold water tempered through a mixing valve must be provided to all sink compartments.

At least one handwashing sink must be convenient to each restroom and food handling area. This sink is to be for handwashing only. A curbed floor sink or other approved garbage can-wash area must be provided on premises.

Other agencies to contact BEFORE you begin construction:

- (1) Building and Plumbing Inspector's office (city and county if applicable);
- (2) Zoning board;
- (3) The Fire Department/Fire Marshal's Office;
- (4) Your insurance company; and
- (5) The Alabama Department of Commerce, Small Business Advocate. This office offers assistance and guidance to people planning to start a small business. The office can be contacted at (334) 242-0485.

A copy of Alabama's Rules for Food Establishment Sanitation can be obtained online at <http://www.adph.org/environmental/Default.asp?id=1155> or by contacting:

MCHD
Inspection Services Department
251 N. Bayou Street
P.O. Box 2867
Mobile, AL 36652-2867

251-690-8116