



FOOD INSPECTION PLAN REVIEW CHECKLIST

Submit properly prepared digital plans and specifications through PROJECTDOX at houstonpermittingcenter.org
The Commercial Plan Checking Office is located at 1002 Washington Ave. 1st Floor, Houston, TX 77002. Plan specifications shall include the proposed layout, arrangement, construction materials, and type of proposed fixed equipment (with elevations), menu, and facilities. (Article II, Section 20-25a and Section 20-36b)

The following checklist includes a partial listing of requirements for food establishments plans. View all requirements – Code of Ordinances: Chapter 20-Food and Drugs

https://library.municode.com/tx/houston/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=COOR_CH20FODR

1. EQUIPMENT: Section 20-21.10

- Multi-use equipment and utensils designed and constructed corrosion-resistant, nonabsorbent, smooth, easily cleanable, durable under conditions of normal use. *Indicate equipment meets the requirements of Sec. 20-21.10(a)-(p). Example of meeting the requirement: equipment NSF or equivalent or custom-made equipment specifications attached meeting design and fabrication requirements 20-21.10(a)-(b).*
- Locate equipment in a way that facilitates cleaning the establishment and prevents food contamination.
- Seal floor mounted equipment to the floor unless readily movable, or installed on a raised platform of concrete, or elevated on legs to provide at least a six-inch clearance between floor and equipment.
- Seal space between adjoining equipment and adjacent walls unless sufficient space is provided for easy cleaning between and behind each unit of floor mounted equipment.
- Equipment that is placed on tables or counters, unless portable, shall be sealed to the table or counter or elevated on legs to provide at least a four-inch clearance
- Aisles and working spaces between units of equipment and walls shall be unobstructed and of sufficient width to permit employees to perform their duties without contamination of food or food contact surfaces by clothing or personal contact.

2. PLUMBING: Section 20-21.17

- Install a potable water system to preclude the possibility of backflow.
- A hose shall not be attached to a faucet unless a backflow prevention device is installed.
- Grease traps required under Chapter 47 - Article XI, Sec. 47-513 (see # 17, page 4) and designed, installed, and operated complying with the City of Houston Plumbing Code; if needed, shall be of an approved type and size in an approved area outside the building.
- Except properly trapped open sinks; there shall be no direct connection between sewage system and any drains originating from equipment in which food or utensils are placed.

3. CLEANING AND SANITIZING: Section 20-21.11 and Section 20-21.12

- Install a three-compartment sink for manual washing, rinsing, and sanitation of equipment or utensils.
- Sinks shall be large enough to permit the complete immersion of the utensils and equipment. Each compartment of required sink shall be no less than 15" W x 15" L x 12" D with all rounded internal angles and corners.
- Provide a drain board or similar equipment of adequate size to handle soiled and cleaned utensils.





4. HANDWASHING SINKS: Section 20-21.19

- Install and locate hand washing sinks to permit convenient use by employees in the food preparation, food dispensing, and utensil washing areas. *NOTE: Convenient use guidance - provide hand sinks no further away than 20 feet travel distance without having to go through a door from these areas.*
- Accessible to employees at all times.
- Locate hand sinks in toilet room or the vestibule.
- Provided with water at least 100°F through a mixing valve or combination faucet.
- Self-closing, slow closing, or metered faucet providing a continuous flow for at least 20 seconds without reactivation of the faucet.

5. FLOORS: Section 20-21.22

- Floors in food preparation areas, food storage areas, utensil washing areas, dressing areas, locker rooms, and toilet rooms shall be constructed of smooth, durable materials.
- Sealed, smooth concrete, terrazzo, ceramic tiles, or similar construction materials and shall be graded to drain.
- In all new or remodeled establishments where water flush cleaning methods are used, the junctures between walls and floor shall be covered and sealed.
- In any new or remodeled establishment, installation of exposed utility lines and pipes on the floor is prohibited.

6. WALLS AND CEILINGS: Section 20-21.23

- Walls and ceilings of food preparation areas, food storage areas, equipment and utensil washing areas, - smooth, nonabsorbent, easily cleanable, and light colored (specify color). Samples may be required for review. *NOTE: Light color means having a 40% or greater light reflectance value (LRV).*
- Toilet rooms and vestibules: walls and ceilings - any color (including wall protection), smooth, easily cleanable, nonabsorbent materials.
- Wall protection: within water closet compartments, within two feet of the front and sides of urinals, hand-washing sinks, utensil-washing sinks, food sinks, and mop sinks, and walls subject to damages from moisture – provide to a height of at least four feet above the finished floor with a smooth, light-colored impervious surface not adversely affected by moisture or grease. such as FRP (Fiberglass reinforced polyester), stainless steel, ceramic tiles, high-pressure decorative laminate or equal.
- Studs, joists, and rafters shall not be exposed in the above areas.
- Utility service lines, pipes, and water heaters shall not be exposed on walls and ceilings in these areas.
- Ceilings in retail food stores, warehouses where only packaged foods, and/or single use articles are stored or displayed - smooth, nonabsorbent, easily cleanable, and light colored (specify color).
- If exposed in areas where allowed in previous sentence; HVAC ducts shall be smooth, rigid metal designed with a circular cross-section.

7. TOILET FACILITIES: Section 20-21.18

- Toilet facilities – be accessible to employees at all times.
- Toilet facilities for employees must be located within the establishment with one or more entrances and have inside access.
- Toilet rooms shall be completely enclosed and have solid, tight fitting, self-closing doors.
- Toilet rooms shall not open directly into any room in which food, drinks or utensils are handled.





8. LIGHTING: Section 20-21.24

- At least 50 foot-candles (540 lux) of light at surface where employees may be working with food, or utensils, or equipment such as knives, slicers, grinders, or saws where employee safety is a factor.
- At least 20 foot-candles (220 lux) of light at surface where food is provided for consumer self-service such as salad bars/buffets, where fresh produce or packaged foods are sold or offered for consumption and inside equipment such as reach-in and under-counter refrigerators; and 30 inches above the floor in areas for hand-washing, utensil-washing, and equipment/utensil storage, and toilet rooms.
- At least 10 foot-candles (110 lux) of light shall be provided at a distance of 30 inches above the floor in walk-in refrigeration units and dry food storage areas and in other areas and rooms during periods of cleaning.
- Shield, coat, or otherwise provide shatter-resistant lights in areas where there is exposed food, clean equipment, utensils, linens, or unwrapped single-service or single-use articles.

9. INSECT AND RODENT CONTROL: Section 20-21.21

- Effectively protect openings to the outside against the entrance of pest by closing holes and other gaps along floors, walls, and ceilings.
- Tight-fitting, self-closing doors, and windows are kept closed; screening (16 mesh), or properly designed and installed air curtains to control flying insects.
- Perimeter walls and roofs of a food establishment shall effectively protect the establishment from the weather and the entry of insects, rodents, and other animals.

10. VENTILATION: Section 20-21.25

- Provide sufficient ventilation to keep rooms free of excessive heat, odors, smoke, and fumes.
- Install ventilation and operate according to all applicable laws.
- Design and install heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems to prevent make-up air intake and exhaust vents from contaminating food, food-contact surfaces, equipment, utensils.
- In all new or remodeled establishments; all rooms from which obnoxious odors, vapors, or fumes originate shall be mechanically vented to the outside. Ventilation resulting in the deposition of particulate matter or liquids within the ventilation system; ventilation hoods and ventilation equipment shall be equipped with effective, easily removable, easily cleanable filters. Install ventilation hoods in the manner required by all applicable laws.
- Provide sufficient in number and capacity ventilation hood systems and devices to prevent grease and condensation from collecting on walls and ceilings.
- Install ventilation hood at commercial dishwashing machines using hot water for sanitization.
- Provide ventilation hood for all cooking equipment (except microwave ovens, electric convection ovens of approved types, electric rice cookers, and ovens of approved types).

11. UTILITY FACILITIES: Section 20-21.23

- Install in new or remodeled establishment at least one utility sink or curbed cleaning facility with a floor drain provided and used for the cleaning and disposal of mop water and similar liquid waste, and cleaning of maintenance tools.

12. GARBAGE: Section 20-21.20

- Store garbage and refuse containers, dumpsters, compactor systems, and waste handling units for returnables and recyclables on or above a smooth surface of nonabsorbent material such as concrete or machine laid asphalt.





13. POISONOUS OR TOXIC MATERIALS: Section 20-21.27

- Store poisonous or toxic materials to prevent contamination of food, equipment, utensils, linens, single-use and single-service articles.
- Separate poisonous or toxic materials by spacing or partitioning.
- Locate poisonous or toxic materials in an area that is not above food, food equipment, food utensils, linens, or single-use or single-service articles.

14. LAUNDRY FACILITIES: Section 20-21.28

- Laundry facilities; if provided, shall be restricted to washing and drying of items necessary to the operation.
- Provide a separate room for laundry facilities except that laundry operations may be conducted in storage rooms containing only packaged foods and/or packaged single service articles.

15. DRESSING AREAS AND LOCKER ROOMS: Section 20-21.26

- If employees routinely change cloths within the establishment; rooms shall be designated and used for that purpose.
- These designated rooms shall not be used for food preparation, food storage or service, or for utensil washing. Lockers may be located in packaged food and/or single service article storage rooms.

16. ACCESS TO RESTROOMS

The traffic of unnecessary persons through the food preparation and utensil washing areas is prohibited. (Section 20-21, Item 28) *NOTE: Public restrooms are required by Section 2902 of the Houston Building Code. These restrooms must be accessible to the public, without the customers passing through the kitchen, food preparation, or utensil-washing areas.*

17. INTERCEPTOR REQUIREMENT: Section 47-513

- a) Commercial, institutional, and industrial facilities, including, but not limited to, restaurants, cafeterias, bars, hotels and motels, hospitals, sanitariums, manufacturing facilities, nursing homes, prisons, private and public schools, car washes, truck washes or other establishments where FOG, grit, silt or clay may be generated for which an application for a building permit is submitted after August 31, 2006, shall be required to design, install, operate and maintain an interceptor complying with the City of Houston Plumbing Code and install a sample well to allow access for inspection and sampling by the health officer.
- (b) Each interceptor must be operated and maintained in accordance with this article, and must provide a sample well to allow access for inspection and sampling by the health officer.
- (c) Except as may otherwise be provided, an interceptor shall not be required for single family or multi-family residential units.
- (d) Interceptors shall be operated and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and this article including, but not limited to, periodic removal of the accumulated waste.





18. MENUS

- Include a menu of foods served at the establishment
- The processes below may require a HACCP plan and/or variance or documented procedures. These documents must be submitted to the Health Department for review/approval before the pre-opening inspection is conducted.
 - Smoking foods for preservation
 - Curing foods
 - Custom processing of raw meat in the establishment for personal use
 - Utilizing Time without Temperature as a Public Health control
 - Utilizing Bare hand contact with ready-to eat foods
 - Cook-chill/Sous Vide ROP
 - Reduced Oxygen Packaging
 - Vacuum Packaging
 - Foods pickled or acidified before service
 - Operating a Molluscan Shellfish Life Support System/Display Tank
 - Sprouting seeds or beans

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CALL HEALTH DEPARTMENT PLAN CHECKING:832-394-8848

After obtaining an approved set of blueprints, contact pre-opening to obtain an inspection appointment before operating the business.

PRE-OPENING INSPECTIONS: 832-393-5100.