Starting a Food Business

This guide was designed to assist those who are planning to open a food business in Gallia County. Operating a food business can be challenging, but having a suitable facility design and the right tools in the beginning can help the process of opening a business run smoothly.

GREETINGS!

We want you to have a successful business. While this guide has been developed by the Gallia County Health Department (GCHD), we have also provided contact numbers for agencies that you may need to ensure that all appropriate steps are taken and the necessary permits are received. Contacting the agencies below will help you stay on track and on time. All necessary permits must be obtained before the GCHD can issue a food license. For Gallia County Health Department operations, check out our website at www.galliacohealth.org.

OFFICE	SERVICE	PHONE NUMBER
Gallia County Health District	Plan review and inspections	740-441-2943
	General Information	740-441-2018
Ohio Department of Commerce Division of Industrial Compliance Bureau of Construction Compliance	Plumbing/Building/Structural/ Electrical/Plot Plan/Certificate of Occupancy	800-523-3581
Ohio Dept of Commerce/ Division of Liquor Control	Liquor License	614- 644-2431
Ohio Department of Taxation	Vendor 's License Apply Online	1-888-405-4089 www.obg.ohio.gov
Ohio Department of Agriculture	Licenses wholesale operations and home bakeries	614-728-6250 www.ohioagriculture.gov
Gallia County Auditor	Gallia County Vendor's License	740-446-4612
Ohio EPA Southeast Office	Non-Municipal Water/Sewage	740-385-8501
State Fire Marshall	Fire Suppression Systems	614-752-8200
Gallipolis City Zoning Office	Zoning Regulations	740-441-6022
Gallia County Planning Commission	Lot Plat/Traffic Flow	740-446-4009
Gallia County Floodplain Office	Lot Plat Elevations Flood Zone Elevations	740-446-4612
Gallipolis Water/Sewer Office	Water & Sewer Connections Grease Trap Regulations	740-441-6006
Columbia Gas	Gas Service	800-344-4077
American Electric Power	Electric Service	877-237-2886
Buckeye Rural Electric Co-op	Electric Service	740-379-2025

Where do I begin?

Every new or significantly altered facility serving or selling food and/or beverages in Gallia County must submit plans to the GCHD and the Ohio Department of Commerce. Plans must be submitted and approved before a license can be issued. A sanitarian in our Food Safety Program will review the plans to ensure that the equipment, facilities and design will be adequate for the food items served or sold at the facility. The Ohio Department of Commerce will ensure the structure, plumbing, and electrical service meets their code and will issue a Certificate of Occupancy.

This guide will help you determine **when** you need to submit plans, **who** you need to contact, and **what** to expect as far as process and timeline.

There is a Plan Review Guide available through the GCHD to assist with the initial design of an operation. This is recommended if you are new to the business or if you need guidance with the design of your facility.

PLANNING AHEAD

What is required in my facility?

Every business is unique; the equipment required will be based on the menu. So, make sure you have the space and equipment needed to store, prepare and serve those foods safely.

Many retail stores will not need the floor space or equipment that a restaurant would. Likewise, a small operation may not need the equipment that a larger operation would require.

In general, you will be required to have the following…

- **Hand washing sink** that is for employee hand washing only
- **Commercial equipment**; no residential equipment is permitted (look for NSF, ETL, UL commercial, etc, on the label)
- **Dry storage space** for canned goods, paper products & retail items
- **Employee lockers** or an area used only for employee belongings
- **Utility sink** with hooks or other means to allow mops to air dry
- **Adequate lighting** in food prep areas, storage areas and coolers
- **Smooth and cleanable surfaces** for floors, walls and ceilings in food storage or prep areas

Based on menu and equipment, many facilities will also need…

- **Dishwashing sink** with 3 compartments and 2 drain boards
- **Food/vegetable sink** for processing produce or other foods
- **Ventilation hoods** for grill line, cooking equipment and high temperature dish machines
- **Fire suppression system** for grease producing equipment (fryers, grill, etc)
- **Grease interceptor** (grease trap) connected to dishwashing sinks to remove fats, oils and grease

The Plan Review Application will provide a checklist to assist you with the decision making for necessary equipment and the operation layout. The application must be completed and returned to Gallia County Health Department with a copy of the plans,

Planning Your Operation

Here are some important questions about food safety and preparation for your business. These questions may be asked during future inspections:

Employee Training…

- How will the staff be trained in food safety?
- What food safety practices will be covered during staff orientation?
- What is your employee health policy?
- What do you do about a sick worker?
- How will you share this policy with employees?

Services...

- Who will provide your waste pickup?
- How will you handle grease waste and cleaning your grease interceptor?
- Do you have a certified pest control operator?
- Who will clean your hood system and/or fire suppression system?
- Who will provide support and maintenance for your dishwasher?
- Is your facility secure?

Facilities...

- Is there enough hot water capacity for the busiest time of day?
- Do you have the storage space needed for dry goods?
- Is there room to expand the operation?
- Are floors, walls and ceilings constructed with easily cleanable materials?

Equipment...

- Is there enough space in the coolers and freezers to prevent overstocking and allow for air circulation?
- How will hot foods be kept hot?
- How will cold foods be kept cold?
- Do you have thermometers for taking food temperatures?

Processes...

- How will you date mark ready-to-eat food products?
- How will you ensure that a 'first in, first out' system is used for foods?
- How will foods be properly thawed?
- Can large amounts of leftover food be properly cooled?
- Will you keep temperature logs?
- How will you avoid bare hand contact with ready to eat foods?

Fixed Equipment

Equipment that is fixed because it is not easily movable must be installed to allow for easy cleaning. This means that it must be spaced from adjoining equipment or sealed to adjoining walls or equipment.

Table mounted equipment that is not easily moveable must be up on legs or sealed to a table.

Floor mounted equipment (in kitchen areas) that is not easily movable shall be sealed to the floor or elevated on 6 inch legs.

Plan for Easy Cleaning

There are several things that can be done to prevent the amount of future maintenance necessary for your facility and provide ease of cleaning.

Consider the following:

- Stainless steel on walls at the grill line, and behind and around grease producing equipment.
- Place heavy equipment on casters, so that it can be moved easily. Every other piece of equipment, especially at the grill line, should be on casters. This makes it easier to clean behind and between equipment.
- Avoid sealing equipment and sinks to walls, and instead brace and set equipment away from walls and other equipment. This makes it easier to clean behind 3 compartment sinks, dishwashers, etc. Set equipment at least 4 inches from the wall.

Food Safety Education

Educating employees is an important part of planning for a successful food business. The Ohio Uniform Food Code requires that a Person-in-Charge (PIC) be present during all hours of operation. A Level I Training class is required for **ALL** food handlers

The PIC must understand basic food safety concepts, and will need to demonstrate knowledge by compliance with the food code. This person must make sure that safe food handling practices are followed to lower the risk of foodborne illness.

PLAN REVIEW

The Gallia County Health District reviews facility plans to make sure the design and equipment in a facility are adequate for the storage, preparation and service of the foods on the menu or food list.

Who must submit plans?

New facilities: New construction and facilities that have never been licensed as a food operation in the past.

Remodeled or altered facilities: Major changes or alterations such as installation of a walk-in cooler, a ventilation hood, or expanding a kitchen.

Change of business: Changes in layout or equipment (example: a new owner converts a bakery into a full service restaurant, where grills and ovens have been added to the kitchen).

*If you are not sure whether plan review is required, please contact the GCHD.

What is the plan review fee?

Call the Gallia County Health Department, the fees change yearly.

What is the process?

After the GCHD have received the set of plans (that have been inspected and approved by the Ohio Department of Commerce), Certificate of Occupancy, application and payment for the plan review, the GCHD will begin reviewing the plans. GCHD has up to 30 days to complete the review, but we will do our best to follow your schedule for opening. Please be patient.

If there are any questions about the plans, or changes that need to be discussed, we will contact you (generally by phone or e-mail).

When plans are approved, we will notify you (generally by phone or e-mail). A formal approval letter will follow, and will be mailed to the Contact person noted on the plan review application.

LICENSING

After plans have been approved, Certificate of Occupancy issued and all work is completed, the GCHD will need to conduct an **opening inspection**. The opening inspection can be conducted once you have all required 'sign-offs' from the appropriate state and local agencies. (Newly constructed facilities will need to have final approval from the Ohio Department of Commerce before a license can be issued.)

During the opening inspection, the sanitarian will ask for some information about the license holder (owner) and the facility. It is helpful to have business information available, including federal tax ID and owner contact information.

If there are no outstanding issues and the license payment has been made, an inspection sheet will be given indicating permission to operate. At this point, the operation is **licensed** and approved to operate. The printed license will be given to you at this time or sent to you in the mail. The license shall be displayed at the establishment.

License renewal is once a year and payment for licenses must be received by March 1st every year. A 25% penalty will be assessed after March 1st.

Categories of Food Operations

The Ohio Uniform Food Code assigns risk levels to an operation. The risk level determines what type of license is issued as well as how many inspections are required each year. Below are general guidelines used to assist in determining risk level. (Note: The risk level of the operation will ultimately be determined by the sanitarian at the opening inspection.)

Risk Level I - poses a small health risk to the public. Examples of Risk Level I activities include:

- Coffee, self-service fountain drinks, prepackaged beverages
- Pre-packaged refrigerated or frozen potentially hazardous foods
- Pre-packaged non-potentially hazardous foods
- Baby food or formula

Risk Level II - poses a higher health risk to the public than Risk Level I because of hand contact or employee health concerns but little possibility of foodborne illness exists. Examples of Risk Level II activities include:

- Handling or preparing non-potentially hazardous food
- Holding for sale or serving potentially hazardous food at the same proper holding temperature at which it was received
- Heating individually packaged and processed potentially hazardous foods for immediate service

Risk Level III - poses a higher health risk to the public than Risk Level II because of the following concerns: proper cooking temperatures, proper cooling procedures, proper holding temperatures, contamination issues, or processing a raw food product. Examples of Risk Level III activities include:

- Handling, cutting, or grinding raw meat products
- Cutting or slicing ready-to-eat meats and cheeses
- Assembling or cooking potentially hazardous food that is immediately served, held hot or cold, or cooled
- Reheating in individual portions only
- Heating of a product from a sealed package and holding it hot

Risk Level IV - poses a higher health risk to the public than Risk Level III because of concerns associated with:

- Handling or preparing food that includes reheating
- Offering raw meat, poultry products, or fish
- Serving a primarily high risk clientele (immuno-compromised, elderly)
- Using time in lieu of temperature as a control for bacterial growth
- Reheating bulk quantities of leftover potentially hazardous food more than once every seven days
- Caterers or other similar food service operations that transport potentially hazardous food

What is the fee for a food license?

See the Plan Review Guide for an updated fee schedule for food licenses. Make check or money order payable to 'Gallia County Health Department'.

FSO = food service operation (dine in: restaurant, school, day care)
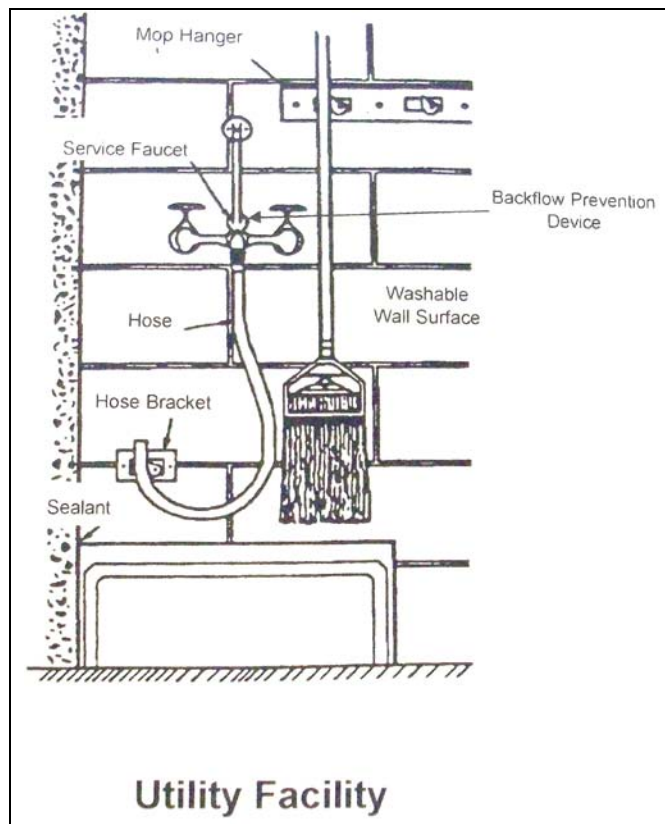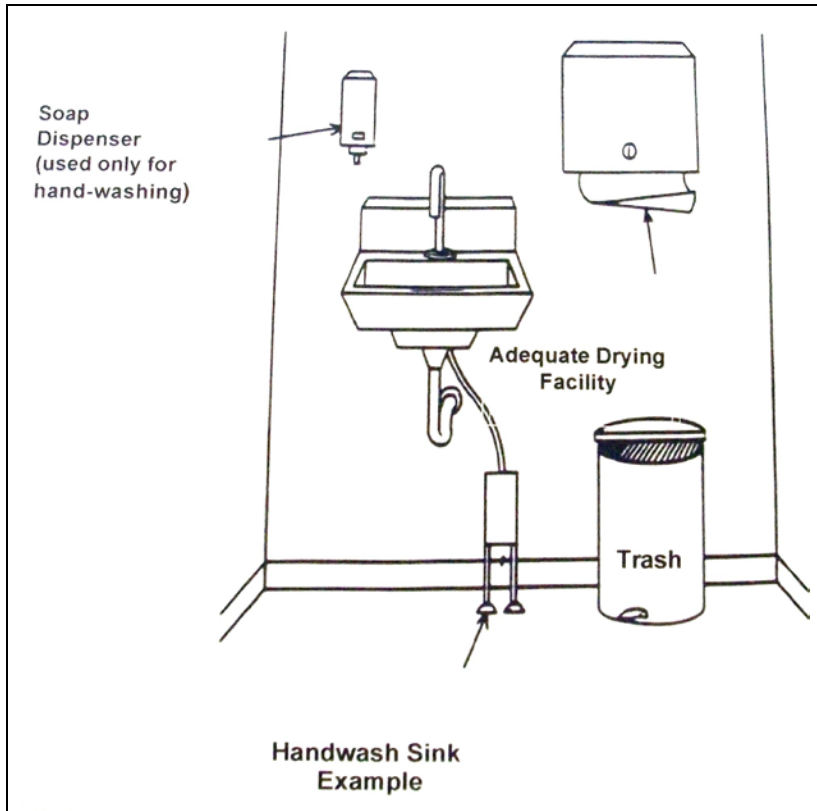**RFE** = retail food establishment (take out: grocery store, carry out, pizza shops)
Non commercial = exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (generally includes charitable or educational groups

Checklist of Basic Requirements for Opening a Food Business

☐   Read 'Starting a Food Business' to help with the design of the facility based on menu items and processes.

☐   Submit plans to the Ohio Department of Commerce Division of Industrial Compliance.

☐   Submit plans, application and plan review fee to Gallia County Health District.

☐   Receive approval of plans from the Building Department. Obtain proper permits before work is performed by licensed contractors.

☐   Complete work and obtain walk through inspection if necessary.

☐   (NEW FACILITY) Obtain approval from the Building Department for a certificate of occupancy (CO) or temporary CO, if applicable.
OR
(FACILITY ALTERATION) Obtain final approval for any work performed.

☐   Contact the Gallia County Health Department for an opening inspection.

☐   Before the scheduled opening inspection, make sure that:

       ☐   All construction and projects are complete.

       ☐   Kitchen/food areas are clean and in working order.

       ☐   Hot water is available at all sinks.

       ☐   Refrigerated equipment is running at 41ºF or below.

       ☐   Dish machine (if used) is in operation.

       ☐   Building Department approval is available on site.

       ☐   Check or money order is available (if applicable) for license fee.

☐   Obtain Vendors License and Liquor License (if applicable).

Equipment Examples…

Soap Dispenser (used only for hand-washing)

Adequate Drying Facility

Trash

Handwash Sink Example

Mop Hanger

Service Faucet

Backflow Prevention Device

Washable Wall Surface

Hose

Hose Bracket

Sealant

Utility Facility

Equipment Examples…

Air Gap   Air Break

Indirect Waste

Overhang 1" - 4"

Sealant

4" min.

Coving At Base Junctures