

How to Open a Food Establishment

Opening a restaurant can be a major undertaking. DHD10 is here to assist you in your new venture. The Food Law of 2000, as amended, requires plan review for construction, conversion or remodeling of food service establishments. You are required to obtain a food service license to operate a restaurant or food service establishment. Operating a food service establishment without a valid restaurant license is illegal in the State of Michigan. Here are three possible scenarios for getting a restaurant license:

Scenario 1: Purchase an existing licensed food service establishment, keeping the same menu and NOT remodeling.

1. Submit a completed food license application and licensing fee to our office
2. Submit copies of Certified Manager and Allergen training certificates
3. Submit [Standard Operating Procedures \(SOPs\)](#) depending on the situation
4. Submit the [Water Supply Serial Number \(WSSN\) Change of Information form](#) for your facility if water is supplied by a well
5. Contact this Department for a change of ownership inspection; required for approval to open

Scenario 2: Purchase a closed establishment or an existing licensed food service establishment, changing the menu (e.g. deli to pizza) or remodeling.

1. Submit a change of ownership form to the Department
2. Submit a [Type II Change of Information form](#) for your facility if water is supplied by a well

Our Department will contact you to inform you if a plan review is applicable to you.

Scenario 3: Converting a building or building a new food service establishment

1. Fill out a [Plan Review Application](#) and submit to our office with all required materials along with the applicable plan review fee.

Our Department will be in contact with you.

PLAN REVIEW GUIDANCE

The Food Service Program, an operational section within the Environmental Health Division at DHD10 is required, by law, to conduct a plan review for all construction, not previously or recently licensed, extensively remodeled, or significantly changed food

service establishment. Plan review ensures that your vision for construction and operation meets health code and law requirements. The best way for us to make that determination is for you to complete the plan review documents in the most descriptive and specific manner possible. This process ensures that both construction of the establishment and operation within the establishment will comply with the applicable health codes.

Failure to apply for a plan review prior to construction or conversion of a food service establishment may result in time and money lost due to delays in opening and having to be repaired or redone.

As a reminder, new construction or conversion of a building often requires the approval of other agencies. Plan review will only evaluate your construction and operation as it pertains to the food code and law. Please contact the appropriate authorities including building, zoning, planning, plumbing, electrical and fire departments to determine their requirements. An inspector sign-off sheet for other authorities will be required at the completion of the plan review process.

Plan Review Processing

1. Once a complete packet is received, your review can be added to our queue. All plans are reviewed in the order in which they are received. It is important to note the plan review process cannot begin if any of the required parts are missing.
2. Upon review, more information, clarification or changes to the plans may be requested. At that time, the review will be put on hold and you will be notified in writing of additional requested information.
3. Once all information has been received, reviewed and shown to comply with applicable codes, an approval letter will be generated and delivered, in writing.
4. Construction or remodeling can now begin on your facility.
5. If any revisions are needed to your approved plans during construction, they must be submitted in writing to this Department for prior approval. Extensive changes may result in a Stop-Work Order being issued while new plans are reviewed.
6. Apply for the applicable food service establishment license as least 30 days before your anticipated opening.
7. Schedule a pre-opening inspection with your local environmental health sanitarian. Contact information will have been provided and can be found in the plan review approval letter. The sanitarian will verify that the plan review was followed in the construction of the facility.
8. The facility will be approved to operate if approved plans were followed and the person-in-charge (PIC) adequately demonstrates knowledge. This inspection report will serve as your license until one is received in the mail.

Some notes on our plan review process and required documents-Our plan review specialist and other assigned staff will be addressing multiple facilities when your plans are submitted; all plans are reviewed in the order in which they are received. Your plan

review will be delayed and placed at the end of the queue if your submission is missing information or is incomplete. You can avoid this delay by using the provided plan review checklist and ensuring that you have included all requirements. Due to the high volume of plans we receive, we are unable to provide extensive assistance in completion of your plans. If you are unsure how to complete the plan review, it may be beneficial to hire an outside consultant experienced in plan reviews.