



# GUIDELINES FOR CATERING OPERATIONS

This packet will help guide you through the steps to begin a catering operation. This packet is intended as a guide only and may not answer all of your questions. If you have questions after reading this packet, please call our office at (360) 676-6724.

A caterer is defined as a person or food service establishment preparing food with prior order or agreement in an approved facility for final cooking and or service at another location. The key difference between a caterer and a temporary food service establishment is the prior order or agreement. You must also have a commissary for preparation, cleanup and storage of all items relating to your business. If a licensed caterer wants to set up at a street fair, carnival, festival or similar event and sell their product on a per order basis, a temporary food service permit will be needed for each event.

Your project may also need approval from other agencies or departments. Be sure to contact the appropriate city, county or state offices for information on other permits or inspections required.

## **Complete and return the following information:**

1. The application packet along with the \$190.00 plan review fee, which covers the first hour of plan review. Additional review time will be billed at \$100.00 per hour.
2. A **commissary** or **servicing area** agreement.
3. A copy of your **menu**.
4. The enclosed Method of Food Preparation chart showing how items are prepared.
5. A list of equipment which includes all **refrigeration, cooking equipment, food warmers, sinks, ice machines, display cases, espresso machines, etc.** Please include the make and model numbers, if known. If you have not purchased the equipment, indicate whether you intend to buy commercial or residential style equipment.
6. A floor **plan drawn to scale** (show all dimensions), for both the your **permanent kitchen** or your **commissary** which includes:
  - A site plan outlining the food preparation areas
  - the location of worktables and counters;
  - the **finish materials** for all areas;
  - the location of all **plumbing fixtures**; and
  - the location of the **ventilation system**.
7. The location of restroom facilities. Restroom facilities must be available for food workers within 200 feet.

Once this information has been reviewed, you will receive notice of either plan approval or of changes required for Health Department approval. **IMPORTANT!! CHANGES TO YOUR PLANS MAY BE REQUIRED. DO NOT PROCEED WITH CONSTRUCTION UNTIL APPROVAL HAS BEEN GRANTED.**

## **Prior to opening for business you will need to complete the additional steps:**

1. Pay for your annual operating permit and any outstanding plan review fees; and
2. Call our office to schedule a pre-operational inspection at least **two business days** prior to the date of your desired inspection. Written approval for opening must be obtained prior to any food preparation or service.



WHATCOM COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

**FOOD SERVICE PLAN  
REVIEW APPLICATION**

**FEE \$190.00**

509 Girard Street  
Bellingham, WA 98225  
Telephone: 360-676-6724  
Fax: 360-676-6771

**New Facility**

**Remodel**

Facility Name \_\_\_\_\_

Facility Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State & Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Owner's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Owner's Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State & Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

TYPE OF OWNERSHIP: Individual  Corporation  Partnership  LLC

If partnership, corporation or LLC, Attach list of all partners or corporate officers as registered with State.

Accounts Payable Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Accounts Payable Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State & Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Water Supply System Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(Specify Private Well or Name of Water System)

Method of Sewage Disposal: Sewer  On Site Septic (OSS)  (Attach Copy of current ROSS)

Projected Seating Capacity \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Employees \_\_\_\_\_

Meals Served (Check all that apply): Breakfast  Lunch  Dinner  Catering

Days Open for Business \_\_\_\_\_ Operating Hours \_\_\_\_\_

New Construction / Remodel: Start Date \_\_\_\_\_ Completion Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Important:**  
*Please provide all materials requested at the time plans are submitted (see page 1 for a list of required information). Failure to do so can result in delays to your project. Changes to your plans may be required. Do not proceed with construction until your project has been approved.*

**Applicant Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

Office Use Only:

Received By \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Paid \_\_\_\_\_ Receipt # \_\_\_\_\_



WHATCOM COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

509 Girard Street  
Bellingham, WA 98225  
Telephone: 360-676-6724  
Fax: 360-676-6771

# COMMISSARY AGREEMENT

Persons wishing to operate a one of the following must submit this form for our review:

- A mobile unit or push cart; or
- A temporary food establishment requiring off-site or advanced food preparation; or
- A temporary food establishment lasting two days or more; or
- A farmer's market food vendor or processor stand; or
- A catering business

A commissary means an approved location, usually a food establishment, where food is stored, prepared, portioned, or packaged for service elsewhere. A commissary may also be used to service and store food vehicles or carts. Once our office approves of this commissary agreement, you may not use a different facility for food preparation and storage without the written approval of Whatcom County Health Department.

**The owner or person in charge of the approved food establishment or commissary must complete the following information:**

Commissary owner name: \_\_\_\_\_

Commissary address: \_\_\_\_\_

Commissary owner phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Commissary user name: \_\_\_\_\_

Commissary user phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Commissary tasks (*mark all that apply*):

- Potable water re-supply
- Wastewater disposal
- Food preparation (trimming, assembly, re-portioning, produce washing)
- Cooking foods
- Hot holding foods
- Cooling of hot foods ( If yes, which method:  shallow pan or  ice bath )
- Washing of utensils
- Food storage (i.e. walk-in cooler, sandwich prep cooler, shelving for dry goods)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

I grant permission for \_\_\_\_\_ to use my facility for the tasks indicated above. This agreement is voided immediately if the commissary owner or user sells or closes his/her business.

Commissary operator signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Commissary user signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Denied: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ EHS: \_\_\_\_\_



CLASSIFICATION →	"R"	"M"	"F/P"	"G"
REQUIREMENTS ↓	Restaurant, caterer, snack bar, espresso, smokehouse, etc.: Preparation of ready-to-eat potentially hazardous foods.	Retail meat/seafood market, or meat/ seafood depts. in grocery stores.	Bulk foods, produce stands, and produce depts. in retail grocery stores.	Convenience stores selling only prepackaged foods and low risk unpackaged foods.
Food Service Permit	Food service permit required prior to operation.	SAME AS CLASS R	SAME AS CLASS R	Same as Class R
Health Cards	Required for owners, managers, and employees.	Required	Required	Required if unpackaged foods are served.
Hand washing Sink Locations	Separate sink with hot/cold water, mixing faucet located in food prep areas, bars, wait station(s) and restrooms. Hot water to sink in 15 seconds.	SAME AS CLASS R	SAME AS CLASS R	Required if unpackaged foods are served.
Cooking Equipment	Capable of heating food to 165°F in 2 hours or less.	NOT ALLOWED	NOT ALLOWED	For hot dogs and coffee only. Otherwise NOT ALLOWED.
Hot Holding Equipment	Capable of holding cooked foods above 140°F.	NOT ALLOWED	NOT ALLOWED	For hot dogs and coffee only. Otherwise NOT ALLOWED.
Refrigeration	Must be conveniently located. Amount and type depends on menu. Commercial style refrigeration is required in most cases. Must hold food at 41 F or below.	Same as Class R. Raw meats and seafood must be stored and displayed in areas separated from ready to eat foods.	Must hold potentially hazardous foods at 41°F or below.	All refrigeration units must keep potentially hazardous foods at 41°F or below.
Dishwashing and Cleanup Facilities	3-compartment sink equipped with drain boards. See Food Code 4-301.12 for exceptions. Sinks are stainless steel. Indirect waste may be required.	3-compartment sink with drain boards for cleaning knives, utensils, equipment parts, etc. Appropriate facilities to clean large equipment in place.	Access to a 2-compartment sink for utensil cleaning. Produce prep sink may not be used for utensil washing.	A 2-compartment sink is required if any unpackaged foods are served.
Food Preparation Sink	Required if ready to eat foods are washed before serving. Separate sink may be required for raw meat.	May be required for thawing and/or washing meat or seafood.	Required for produce stands and produce depts.	Required if produce preparation is done in the store.
Food Contact Surfaces, i.e., counter tops, cutting boards, equipment	Stainless steel, plastic, plastic laminate, or hard wood. Smooth, non-absorbent, easy to clean, non-toxic.	SAME AS CLASS R	SAME AS CLASS R	SAME AS CLASS R
Structural Requirements i.e., floors, walls, ceilings	<b>Floors:</b> sheet vinyl, tile, or smooth sealed concrete. <b>Walls:</b> smooth, non-absorbent, and easily cleanable plastic laminate, stainless steel or similar required in some areas. <b>Ceilings:</b> easily cleanable.	SAME AS CLASS R	Bulk food sections same as Class R Produce stands: Foods must be off of ground on cleanable surfaces and must be protected from contamination from above.	SAME AS CLASS R
Mop Sink	Required. Mop water <u>cannot be dumped</u> in a dishwashing sink, food sink or outside.	SAME AS CLASS R	SAME AS CLASS R	SAME AS CLASS R
Restroom Facilities	Required for employees. Required for patrons if seating is provided. Must have hand sink w/hot & cold running water and mixing faucet.	SAME AS CLASS R	SAME AS CLASS R	SAME AS CLASS R