



WHATCOM COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

# GUIDELINES FOR CATERING OPERATIONS

509 Girard Street  
Bellingham, WA 98225  
Telephone: 360-778-6000  
Fax: 360-778-6001

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) 778-6000.

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 **\$375.95** plan review fee, which covers the first hour of plan review. Additional review time will be billed at \$132.00 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.

8. A copy of your **Report of System Status (ROSS)** if site is served by a On Site Sewage system (OSS).

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 ESTABLISHMENT PLAN  
 REVIEW APPLICATION**

509 Girard Street  
 Bellingham, WA 98225  
 Telephone: (360) 778-6000  
 Fax: (360) 778-6001  
 www.whatcomcounty.us

New Facility

Remodel

Fee: 375.95

Food Establishment Name \_\_\_\_\_

Food Establishment Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Business Owner Information**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City State Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Ownership:  Individual       Corporation  
 Partnership       LLC

*If partnership, corporation or LLC, attach list of all partners or corporate officers as registered with the State of Washington.*

**Plan Review Contact for Correspondence**  
 (If different from owner)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City State Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Public Water Supply System Name \_\_\_\_\_  
*Specify Name of Public Water System (for example "City of \_\_\_") – non-public systems cannot be approved*

Method of Sewage Disposal:       Sewer       On Site Septic (OSS) *(Attach copy of current ROSS)*  
 Parcel # / Geo ID #: \_\_\_\_\_

Projected Seating Capacity \_\_\_\_\_ Projected Number of Meals per Day \_\_\_\_\_

Days open:

<input type="checkbox"/> Mon	<input type="checkbox"/> Tues	<input type="checkbox"/> Weds	<input type="checkbox"/> Thurs	<input type="checkbox"/> Fri	<input type="checkbox"/> Sat	<input type="checkbox"/> Sun
Hours of Operation:						

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

If you selected "Yes" for Catering, choose all that apply:     Full service (staffed events)       Take away platters  
 Catered events at this facility

If seasonal, operating dates and hours: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Do you own other food establishments in Whatcom County? If so, list \_\_\_\_\_

***Important: Please provide all materials requested at the time plans are submitted (see page 1 for 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. I understand that, in consideration for the review of these materials by the Whatcom County Health Department, this application shall constitute a contract and a promise to pay all applicable fees as established by the Whatcom County Council.***

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

Office Use Only

Received By \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Paid \_\_\_\_\_ Receipt # \_\_\_\_\_



WHATCOM COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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COMMISSARY AGREEMENT

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. Food code requires you to return to your commissary every day.

Persons wishing to operate at one of the following must submit this form for our review (check one):

- 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

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

Commissary Owner Information

Commissary User information

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

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

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City State Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

City State Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Round trip mileage from commissary kitchen to service location and back: \_\_\_\_\_ Miles

Afterhours accessibility – key provided to commissary user? [ ] Yes [ ] No

Commissary tasks (mark all that apply):

- Cooking foods
Hot Holding foods
Raw Meat/Seafood Prep
Vegetable / Ready to Eat Food Prep
Other Food preparation ( trimming, assembly, re-portioning )
Dry Goods Food storage ( i.e. shelving for dry goods )
Refrigerated Food storage ( i.e. walk-in cooler, sandwich prep cooler )
Cooling of hot foods ( If yes, which method: [ ] shallow pan or [ ] ice bath )
Other: \_\_\_\_\_
Potable water re-supply
Wastewater disposal
Cleaning of utensils
Restroom Available

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. The commissary owner consents to inspection of the facility by the Whatcom County Health Department.

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

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

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

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

## DETAILED PLAN REQUIREMENTS

**Facility Site plan** - Include all areas of the food service establishment on a site plan. All text on the site plan must be legible. Be sure to include the following for indoor and outdoor areas:

- Restroom locations
- Seating areas and banquet rooms
- Approximate locations of tables and chairs
- Server stations
- Bar
- Bussing stations
- All storage and food preparation areas
- Off-site storage or preparation facilities

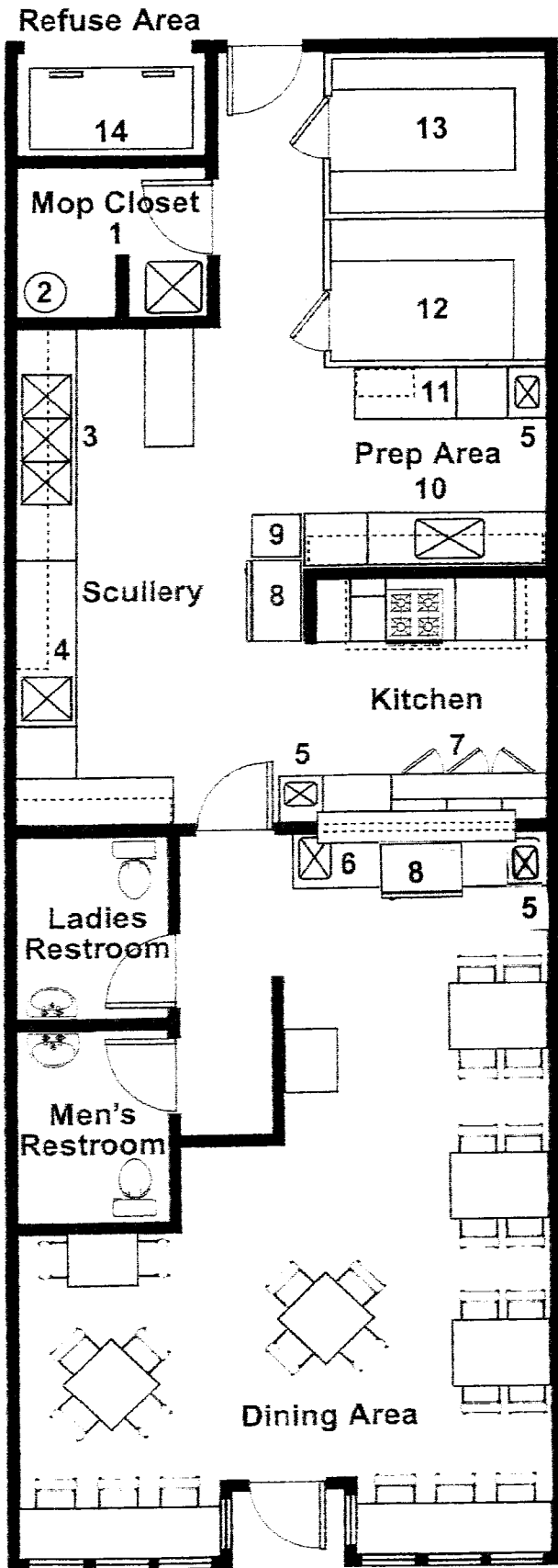
**Kitchen Floor plan** - Include food storage, preparation, and service areas. Include enough detail to clearly show all equipment, fixtures, work areas, storage areas, etc. **All items must be drawn to scale.**

Equipment and sink requirements depend on menu and food prep methods. Be sure to include:

- Plans drawn to scale. Minimum scale  $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1'$  ( $\frac{1}{4}$  inch on the floor plan equals one foot in the food establishment).
- Manufacturer name and model number for each piece of equipment.
- A utensil cleaning area with sinks. A three-compartment sink is usually **required**. Include drain boards for both soiled and clean utensils. Provide dimensions of sink basins and drain boards.
- Dish machine (**optional**). Dish machines must be commercial style with a chemical or high temperature rinse cycle. Commercial dish machines usually complete a full cycle within 5 minutes.
- Handwashing sink(s). Must be located convenient to (within line of sight) and no more than 25 feet from each work area. Handwashing sinks must provide water at 100°F -120°F that arrives within 15 seconds.
- Produce and ready-to-eat food preparation work station with sink. Show dimensions of sink.
- Raw meat and raw seafood preparation work station with sink. Show dimensions of sink.
- Mop sink (**required**).
- Water filtration and treatment systems if applicable. Systems must meet appropriate ANSI-NSF standards for potable water.
- Indirect floor sink and hub drains. Indirect drainage is required for food preparation sinks, dish machines, ice machines, ice storage bins, cooler condensate, dip wells.
- Cooking equipment. Proper ventilation is required – contact your local building services department.
- Refrigeration – must be commercial style. Refrigeration capacity must be adequate to support proposed menu and preparation methods.
- Freezers (*may be non-commercial*).
- Hot food holding equipment.
- Miscellaneous equipment. For example, mixer, blender, slicer, food processor, ice machine, soda fountain, milkshake machine, work tables, etc.
- Dry storage shelving - must be smooth, durable and easily cleanable.
- Hot water heater - make, model number, and capacity.
- Equipment schedule indexed to floor plan. See sample floor plan.

## EXAMPLE Floor Plan

This plan is to be used as an example only.



	Equipment Schedule	Make	Model
1	Mop sink	Acme	MOP123
2	Hot water heater	Acme	HW-125
3	3 Compartment sink	Acme	SS-3COM
4	Dishwasher with pre-rinse sink	Acme	DW-123
5	Handwashing sink	Acme	HW101
6	Water fill station /dump sink	Acme	DS201
7	Prep cooler	Acme	PREP300
8	Reach in cooler with work top	Acme	REA300
9	Ice machine	Acme	ICE888
10	Produce prep sink	Acme	PS231
11	Work counter with slicer	Acme	SS-1
12	Walk in cooler	Acme	WI45
13	Walk in freezer	Acme	WF45
14	Garbage and recycle area	N/A	N/A
Scale: 1/8 inch = 1 foot			



# FINISH SCHEDULE

List the materials used for floors, walls, coving (covering floor/wall junction), and ceilings.

- Floors must be constructed of smooth, easily cleanable, durable, non-absorbent material.
- Coving must be installed at all floor/wall junctures.
- Walls must be constructed of smooth, easily cleanable, durable, non-absorbent material. Fiberglass Reinforced Plastic (FRP) or similar waterproof materials are required on wall surfaces behind sinks and areas exposed to moisture:
  - From floor level to 8 feet behind your scullery area (warewashing area).
  - From floor level to 1 foot above the top of the sink faucet behind food preparation and hand washing sinks.
  - From floor level to 4 feet behind and adjacent to plumbing fixtures in the restroom.
  - Behind the sink from counter to 1 foot above the top of the sink faucet for sinks mounted in laminate counters that are attached/sealed to the wall.

Specify the finish materials for floor, wall, counter, and shelving surfaces (for example quarry tile, stainless steel, FRP, plastic laminate). Use N/A (not applicable) when necessary.

Area	Floor	Coving	Walls	Counters/Shelves
Kitchen and Food Preparation				
Bar				
Dry Storage				
Warewashing				
Wait station				
Restrooms				
Mop Storage				
Walk-in Refrigerator		Coving may not be required for prefabricated walk-ins.		
Other:				
Other:				



## METHOD OF FOOD PREPARATION – Part A: Food Preparation

For each menu item:

- Provide a narrative of all food preparation steps.
- Fill out the Method of Food Preparation Chart.

### Narrative Instructions and Examples

**Instructions:** List by number, the order of food preparation steps for each menu item. Include:

- How food is received (raw, commercial prepared, pre-washed)
- Thawing
- Cutting, assembling, mixing
- Cooking
- Hot holding
- Cold holding
- Cooling
- Reheating

Include anticipated quantities. If the menu item has multiple ingredients, list them. Menu items that are prepared in an identical way may be grouped together (such as BBQ beef and pork).

Examples:

Roasted Chicken Breast – cook 12 breasts per day.

1. **Thaw** frozen raw chicken breasts in the walk-in cooler.
2. **Cold hold** raw chicken in the walk-in refrigerator until needed.
3. **Cook** raw chicken in the oven to an internal temperature of at least 165°F verified with a digital thermometer.
4. **Hot hold** cooked chicken in the display case at 135°F or more for service.
5. **Cool** leftover chicken in a single layer, on a sheet pan that is uncovered in the walk-in refrigerator. When the temperature reaches 41°F, chicken is covered.
6. **Cut** cooled chicken for house made chicken salad.

Chicken Salad – 1 gallon every 3 days

1. Produce **washed** on site in dedicated prep sink.
2. **Cut up** produce: celery, green onion, grapes, and apples.
3. **Cold hold** prepared chicken salad ingredients.
4. **Assemble** ingredients for chicken salad with pre-chilled ingredients including commercial dressing, pickles, and hard boiled eggs.
5. **Serve** chicken salad to order on bed of greens and topped with almonds.

Hamburgers – cooked to order

1. **Cold hold** fresh raw patties in reach in cooler.
2. **Cook** fresh raw patties on the grill to order until they reach at least 155°F verified with a digital thermometer. Hamburger patties are not cooked in advance.
3. **Assemble** cooked patties. Toppings include cheese, lettuce, tomato, onion, guacamole made on-site, bacon and commercial condiments (ketchup, mustard, mayo).
4. **Serve** hamburgers.

BBQ Beef/Pork – 25 pounds each every other day, or as often as needed.

1. **Thaw** frozen beef/ pork in the walk-in refrigerator.
2. **Cold hold** meats in the walk in cooler while marinating for at least overnight. Marinade is made in house.
3. **Cook** meats in smoker until internal temperature reaches 145°F verified with a digital thermometer.
4. **Shred** meats while hot and combine with warmed (at least 145°F) house made BBQ sauce.
5. **Hot hold** meat for service.
6. **Cool** any leftover meat shallow, uncovered pans no more than 2 inches deep in the walk in cooler. After meats are cooled to 41°F, they are covered.
7. **Reheat** meats in the steamer to 165°F within 2 hours and hold in steam table at 135°F or more.
8. Discard any leftovers.



# Method of Food Preparation Chart Instructions and Examples

## Instructions:

- Place an "X" indicating if the food will be purchased already prepared or made on site. Place an "X" indicating if the menu item is made with raw meat (beef, pork, or poultry), raw seafood or unpasteurized eggs.
- Then, list, by number, the order of food preparation steps used for the menu item you will be serving. If food is purchased prepared, you do not need to complete the food preparation steps unless you plan to add additional ingredients. You can use the same food preparation step multiple times for the same food if needed.

**Roasted Chicken Breast** See the example in the chart below.

- Menu item is **prepared on-site**..... "Prepared on site" is marked "X".
- Chicken is **raw**..... "Raw" box is marked "X".
- 1. Chicken is **thawed**..... "Thaw" box is marked "1".
- 2. Raw chicken is held **cold** ..... "Cold Holding" marked "2".
- 3. Chicken is **cooked to 165° F** ..... "Cooked" box is marked "3".
- 4. Chicken is **hot held**..... "Hot Holding" box is marked "4".
- 5. Any leftovers are **cooled** ..... "Cooling" box is marked "5".
- 6. Cooled chicken is **served** ..... "Serve" box is marked "6"

*This is for example only.*

Complete your menu narrative and method of food preparation chart on the next pages.

**Chicken Salad** See the example in the chart below.

- Menu item is **prepared on-site**..... "Prepared on site" is marked "X".
- Chicken is **raw**..... "Raw" box is marked "X".
- 1. Chicken is **diced & mixed** with other ingredients..... "Cut or assemble" box is marked "1".
- 2. Chicken is held **cold**..... "Cold holding" box is marked "2".
- 3. Chicken salad is **served**..... "Serve" is marked "3".

**Hamburgers** See the example in the chart below.

- Menu item is **prepared on-site**..... "Prepared on site" is marked "X".
- Hamburger is **raw**..... "Raw" box is marked "X".
- 1. Raw hamburger is held cold..... "Cold Holding" box is marked "1".
- 2. Hamburger is **cooked to 155° F**..... "Cooked" box is marked "2"
- 3. Hamburger is **assembled**..... "Cut or assembled" box is marked "3".
- 4. Hamburger is **served**..... "Served" box is marked "4".

## Method of Food Preparation Chart Examples:

Food or menu item	Food purchased prepared		Food preparation on site Is menu item made with raw meat, seafood or eggs?	Thaw	Cut or assemble	Cook (include final cooking temperature)	Hot Holding at 135F or more	Cooling	Cold Holding at 41F or less	Choose one reheating method per menu item			Serve	Office use only
	X	X								Reheat food cooled on site to 165F	Reheat to order per customer order	Reheat commercially made product to 135F for hot holding		
Roasted Chicken breast	X	X		1		3 165F	4	5	2				6	
Chicken Salad	X	X			1								2	3
Hamburgers	X	X			3	2 155F							1	4
BBQ Beef/Pork	X	X		1	4	3 145F	5	6	2	7				8
Potato salad	X								1					2

# METHOD OF FOOD PREPARATION – Part A: Food Preparation

Complete the Method of Food Preparation Chart – include each menu item.

Food or menu item	Food purchased prepared	Food preparation on site	Is menu item made with raw meat, seafood or eggs?	Thaw	Cut or assemble	Cook (include final cooking temperature)	Hot Holding at 135F or more	Cooling+	Cold Holding at 41F or less	Reheat food cooled on site to 165F	Reheat to order per customer order	Reheat commercially made product to 135F for hot holding	Serve	Office Use Only
										Choose one reheating method per menu item				

+ If you marked “Cooling”, complete Method of Food Preparation – Part B: Cooling

## METHOD OF FOOD PREPARATION – Part B: Cooling

Cooling is when:

- Hot foods are properly cooled down to 41°F or less with the intention of:
  1. Reheating the food at a later time, either for hot holding (such as soup in a soup warmer) or for immediate service (such as BBQ pork in a microwave), or
  2. Serving food cold (such as cold fried chicken in the grab & go case); or
- Ingredients warmer than 41°F (or that warm to over 41°F during preparation) are cut, mixed or assembled with the intention of offering the food cold (such as tuna salad, bean salad made with canned beans, sandwiches, salads).

Allowed cooling methods:

- Shallow pan (food depth in pan is 2 inches or less and uncovered while cooling in refrigerator).
- Food is cut into smaller portions no more than 4 inches thick (roasts and whole poultry).

Time/temperature method: If you choose this method, you must provide written documentation that the food item cools from 135°F – 70°F in 2 hours and 69°F - 41°F in 4 hours with the total time not exceeding 6 hours.

Here is an example of a cooling table:

Food Item	Cooling Method Used	Amount of food cooled in gallons, quarts, pieces, or pans (include volume or size)	Number of times per week food is prepared and cooled.
Chicken	Shallow pan	One hotel pan – chicken pieces in single layer	Every 3 days
Soup	Cream based – shallow pan	Leftovers only	Every 2 days
Chili	Shallow pan	5 gallons	Once a week
Pork roast	Meat cut into 4 inch pieces	Approx. 15 pounds	Once a week



# METHOD OF FOOD PREPARATION – Part C: Consumer Advisory

Will you be offering any of the following items undercooked or raw?

Eggs (over easy/poached or raw as part of an entrée, salad, dessert, recipe)? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  If yes, list menu items: _____ _____ _____	Hamburgers	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Steaks	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Roasts	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Fish or seafood	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Oysters or other shellfish	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Other:	

If you marked yes to any of the above, you will be required to provide a consumer advisory on your menu and/or at your point of sale.

Provide a sample consumer advisory for the menu items you plan to offer raw or undercooked.

Consumer advisories are made of up two parts: Disclosure and Reminder.

1. **Disclosure:** Identifies which food items are raw. Disclosure is satisfied when the cooking status is explained in the menu description:

- “Oysters on the half shell (raw oysters)”
- “Caesar salad dressing (contains raw egg)”
- “Our steaks and hamburgers are cooked to order”.

Or a footnote with an asterisk or other indicator at the menu item and at the bottom of the menu page stating that the menu item is:

- Served raw or undercooked or
- Contains raw or undercooked ingredients

2. **Reminder:** Reminds the customer that there is a health risk associated with eating raw or undercooked food. Example: “Consuming raw or undercooked meats, seafood, shellfish or egg may increase your risk of foodborne illness”.

The consumer advisory must be placed at the point where the food is ordered by the customer which may include menu, table tent, or menu board. Statements on menu boards must be readable from a point at which customers would normally stand.

## EXAMPLES OF CONSUMER ADVISORIES

MENU	
<u>Hamburgers*</u>	
Bacon Cheeseburger	Jr. Burger
Deluxe Burger	Cheeseburger
* Can be cooked to order. Consuming raw or undercooked meats may increase your risk of foodborne illness.	

MENU
Garden Salad
Chef’s Salad
Caesar Salad (contains raw eggs)
NOTICE: Consuming raw or undercooked meats, poultry, seafood, shellfish, or eggs may increase your risk of foodborne illness.

<u>Beverages</u>
Soda Pop (Sm, Med, Lg)
Milkshakes (Chocolate or Strawberry)
Strawberry Fruit Smoothie
Apple Cider*
(SQUEEZED ON-SITE EVERY 3 DAYS)
*Notice: Unpasteurized juice may increase the risk of foodborne disease to people with certain medical conditions.

More information on consumer advisories can be found at:  
<http://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/332-017.pdf>

## METHOD OF FOOD PREPARATION – Part D: Other Questions

1. Do you plan to do any of the following?

Smoking fish/meats <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Sous vide <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Vacuum packaging or reduce oxygen packaging <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Making yogurt on site <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Water bath or pressure canning <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Fermenting or pickling <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Using food additives as preservatives (nitrite/nitrate, vinegar) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Curing <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Par-cooking or grill marking <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Dehydrating <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Sprouting seeds or beans <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Juicing wheatgrass <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Live shellfish tank (mollusk or crustacean) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Juicing produce <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

If you marked yes, you may need to submit a HACCP plan or variance request along with this application. Please contact the Health Department for more information.

2. Is sushi or sashimi offered on your menu?  Yes  No  
*If yes, you will need to submit the supplemental application.*

3. The Food Code requires fruits and vegetables to be washed under running water before preparation. Will produce be washed on site?  Yes  No

- If yes, which produce items will be washed on-site?

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- If no, which produce items will be purchased pre-washed?

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4. Will any foods be unattended while cooking or hot holding (such as overnight):  Yes  No

If yes, list food items: \_\_\_\_\_

*If yes, you will need to submit the supplemental application.*

5. Do you have to go outside to access any refrigerators, freezers, food storage, equipment, cooking (such as a BBQ or smoker) or preparation areas?  Yes  No **All locations must be clearly marked on the floor plans. Note these areas must be protected from sources of contamination.**

6. Are all ice machines, ice bins, dish machines, food preparation sinks, drip trays, espresso machines, beer taps, and dipper wells indirectly drained with an air gap?  Yes  No

7. Are all food and single-service items protected from customer contamination by a sneeze guard? This includes self-service condiment bars, salad bars, buffet lines, espresso counters, and all other food preparation areas.  Yes  No If no, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### ***How long does the plan review process take?***

We usually send you a response letter within 1-2 weeks after you submit your plan review application.

### ***What if I am not sure of the make and model for all of the equipment yet?***

Just tell us what you intend to buy in general terms. You can provide more detailed information once you purchase your equipment. Note that some equipment must be commercial, such as dish washers, ice machines, refrigeration, and food processors. If you change equipment after approval is given, contact the Health Department.

### ***Can I draw the floor plans myself?***

Yes, provided that the plans must be accurate, legible, drawn to scale (example: a ¼ inch on the floor plan equals one foot in the food establishment), and provide detail as shown on the example in this packet on page 3. Also remember to ask the appropriate building/planning departments about their required format for plan submittal.

### ***Why are so many sinks required?***

Each type of sink has a purpose that is spelled out in the Food Code. The Food Code requires sinks to be used for a single purpose or task.

### ***Will I need more than one handwashing sink?***

Maybe. A handwashing sink must be located in each work area, be easily accessible, and convenient to use. Handwashing sinks must be located within the line of sight and no more than 25 feet from each work area. Note that handwashing sinks must provide water at a temperature between 100°F - 120°F that arrives within 15 seconds.

### ***Do all surfaces need to be covered with stainless steel?***

No. All surfaces do need to be smooth, durable, easily cleanable, non-toxic, and non-absorbent.

### ***Can I sell wholesale or online?***

Your operating permit from the Health Department only covers retail sales in Whatcom County and does not cover on-line sales outside of Whatcom County or wholesale transactions. Licensing from the Washington State Department of Agriculture, the United States Department of Agriculture, or the U.S. Food and Drug Administration are needed for wholesale sales or sales beyond Whatcom County.

### ***Should I contact other regulatory agencies?***

Your project may require permits and approval from other government agencies such as the local Building/Planning department, the State Liquor Board, etc. A list of resources is provided with this packet.

### ***Do all of my employees need food worker permits?***

Yes. Food and Beverage Service Worker's Permits are required for all individuals who handle any food or utensils, including those who wash dishes and PICs (Person in Charge). Food workers must have their cards before they begin work unless food safety training is provided by the operator of the establishment and is documented in the food establishment. In this case, a food worker card is required within 2 weeks of the employee's starting date. The only online food worker training authorized for Washington State is at <https://www.foodworkercard.wa.gov>.

**Is a Health Department inspection required before I open?**

Yes. At least one week prior to the completion of your project, contact the Health Department office to schedule a pre-operational inspection. If all of the conditions and requirements of approval are not met during the pre-operational inspection, this may delay opening. Additional inspection(s) and fee(s) may be required before you receive approval to open.

**Can I store food in the establishment before Health Department inspection has occurred?**

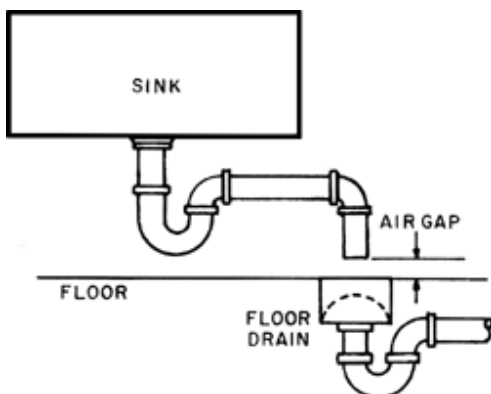
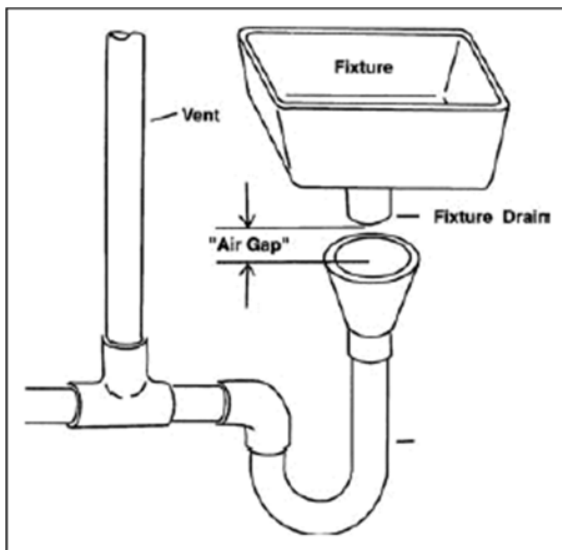
Not unless you have received approval from the Health Department to do so. Food may not be prepared before approval is granted after the pre-operational inspection.

**What about personal food?**

Personal food needs to be limited to a day's worth and be segregated from the food supply intended for customers and clearly labeled as personal food. Please note that all food in the food establishment is subject to inspection by the Health Department.

**What is indirect drainage (air gap)?**

Per Chapter 246-215 – Section 052125 - Air gaps must be at least twice the diameter of the water supply inlet and may not be less than 1 inch.



## LIST OF RESOURCES

### [Whatcom County Health Department](#)

<http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us/826/Environmental-Health>  
509 Girard St., Bellingham, WA 98225

Food establishment review, on-site sewage review, water and well review .....(360) 778-6000

### [Whatcom County Building Services](#)

<http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us/517/Building-Services>  
5280 Northwest Dr., Bellingham, WA 98226

Building permits, remodeling, Fire Marshal .....(360) 778-5900

### [Washington State Department of Agriculture \(WSDA\)](#)

<http://agr.wa.gov/>  
1111 Washington St. SE, Olympia, WA 98504

Wholesale licensing .....(360) 902-1876

### [United States Department of Agriculture \(USDA\)](#)

<http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome>

Wholesale licensing - meat/poultry .....(888) 674-6854

### [Federal Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\)](#)

<http://www.fda.gov/>

Wholesale licensing - processed food.....(888) 463-6332

## Tax and License

Contacts for tax and licensing requirements for general business licenses, liquor licenses, business taxes, property taxes, and occupational taxes

### [Washington State Department of Revenue](#)

<http://dor.wa.gov/Content/Home/Default.aspx>  
1904 Humboldt St., Ste. A, Bellingham, WA 98225

Unified Business Identifier (UBI) number, retail sales, B & O Tax.....(360) 676-2114

### [Department of Labor and Industries](#)

<http://www.lni.wa.gov/>  
1720 Ellis St., Ste. 200, Bellingham, WA 98225

Local office .....(360) 647-7300

L & I Headquarters .....(360) 902-5800

Employer Services – Quarterly Reports .....(360) 902-4817

Employment Standards / Workplace Rights .....(866) 219-7321

Mobile Vending Units .....<http://www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/FAS/FoodTruckTrailer/default.asp>

### [Employment Security Department](#)

<https://esd.wa.gov/>  
101 Prospect St., Bellingham, WA 98225

Unemployment Insurance .....(360) 676-1521

### [Internal Revenue Service](#)

<https://www.irs.gov/>  
114 W. Magnolia, Bellingham, WA 98225

Federal Taxes, Social Security

Local Office .....(360) 752-4361

Customer Service.....(800) 829-1040

[Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board](#)

<http://liq.wa.gov/>

3000 Pacific Ave SE, Olympia, WA 98504

Liquor licenses .....(360) 664-1600

[Office of Secretary of State Corporation Division](#)

<http://www.sos.wa.gov/corps/>

Republic Building, 801 Capitol Way S., Olympia, WA 98501

Registration of firm or corporate name .....(360) 725-0377

[Washington State Department of Licensing](#)

<http://www.dol.wa.gov/>

405 Blake Lake Blvd SW, Olympia, WA 98502

Statewide business license information, trade name registration .....(360) 902-3900

[Whatcom County Assessor](#)

<http://www.whatcomcounty.us/177/Assessor>

311 Grand Ave., Ste. 106, Bellingham, WA 98225

Parcel number information .....(360) 778-5050

[Whatcom County Treasurer's Office](#)

<http://www.whatcomcounty.us/331/Treasurer>

311 Grand Ave., Ste. 104, Bellingham, WA 98225

Real estate tax, excise tax .....(360) 778-5160

[Whatcom County Auditor](#)

<http://www.whatcomcounty.us/199/Auditor>

311 Grand Ave Ste. 103, Bellingham, WA 98225

Unincorporated Whatcom County business licenses .....(360) 778-5100

**Recycling and Garbage Service**

Curbside garbage and recycling service in Whatcom County are handled by three private companies, each one dealing with a different region of the county. To find out which company serves your area, check the maps of the different service regions here.

[Cando Recycling and Disposal](#) (serving Pt. Roberts)

<http://www.candorecyclinganddisposal.com/>

2005 Johnson Rd., Point Roberts, WA 98281 .....(360) 945-2636

[Nooksack Valley Disposal](#) (serving Lynden, Everson, Nooksack, Sumas and a portion of northern Whatcom County)

<http://nvd-inc.com/>

250 Birch Bay Lynden Rd., Lynden, WA 98264 .....(360) 354-3400

[Sanitary Service Company](#) (serving Bellingham, Ferndale, Birch Bay, Blaine, and the majority of unincorporated Whatcom County)

<http://ssc-inc.com/index.php>

21 Bellwether Way, Ste. 404, Bellingham, WA 98225 .....(360) 734-3490

**City Websites**

Contacts for building departments - zoning and building occupancy requirements, sewer-grease traps/interceptors, other building requirements; taxes and business licenses

[City of Bellingham](http://www.cob.org/) http://www.cob.org/  
210 Lottie St., Bellingham, WA 98225  
Planning and Community Development Department.....(360) 778-8300

[City of Blaine](http://www.ci.blaine.wa.us/) http://www.ci.blaine.wa.us/  
435 Martin St., Blaine, WA 98230 .....(360) 332-8311

[City of Everson](http://www.ci.everson.wa.us/) http://www.ci.everson.wa.us/  
111 W. Main St., Everson, WA 98247 .....(360) 966-3411

[City of Ferndale](http://www.cityofferndale.org/) http://www.cityofferndale.org/  
2095 Main St., Ferndale, WA 98248 .....(360) 384-4302

[City of Lynden](http://www.lyndenwa.org/) http://www.lyndenwa.org/  
300 4th St Lynden, WA 98264  
Planning Department.....(360) 354-5532

[City of Nooksack](http://www.cityofnooksack.com/) http://www.cityofnooksack.com/  
103 W. Madison St., Nooksack, WA 98276.....(360) 966-2531

[City of Sumas](http://cityofsumas.homestead.com/) http://cityofsumas.homestead.com/  
433 Cherry St., Sumas, WA 98295 .....(360) 988-5711