

FREE CHECKLIST

Restaurant Plan Review Checklist

Before you build, convert, or remodel a food establishment, the health department reviews your plans, then inspects before you open. This list covers what the FDA Food Code asks for. Your health department's own checklist adds local items, such as sink sizes or grease interceptors, so ask for it first.

Restaurant

Health department

Planned opening

WHAT TO SUBMIT FOR REVIEW

- ☐ Intended menu (§8-201.12)
- ☐ Anticipated volume of food stored, prepared, and sold or served
- ☐ Proposed layout, mechanical schematics, construction materials, and finish schedules
- ☐ Equipment types, manufacturers, model numbers, locations, dimensions, and capacities
- ☐ Evidence of written standard procedures (in the 2026 Food Code: a food safety management system)
- ☐ A HACCP plan if you need a variance, such as for curing, smoking to preserve, sous vide, or a live shellfish tank (§8-201.13)
- ☐ Permit application at least 30 days before opening (§8-302.11)

HANDWASHING

- ☐ Handwashing sinks in food prep, food dispensing, and warewashing areas, and in or next to toilet rooms (§5-204.11)
- ☐ Water at least 85°F through a mixing valve; metering faucets run at least 15 seconds (§5-202.12)
- ☐ Never blocked and used only for handwashing (§5-205.11)
- ☐ Soap, hand drying, a waste can, and a handwashing sign at each sink

SINKS, WATER, AND DRAINS

- ☐ Three-compartment sink large enough to immerse your largest pans (§4-301.12)
- ☐ Mop or service sink, or a curbed cleaning area with a drain (§5-203.13)
- ☐ At least one toilet room with a self-closing door (§5-203.12, §6-202.14)
- ☐ Air gaps at least twice the inlet diameter and never under 1 inch; backflow protection on hose bibbs and carbonators (§5-202.13, §5-203.14, §5-203.15)
- ☐ Indirect drains for equipment that holds food (§5-402.11); grease trap easy to reach for cleaning (§5-402.12)
- ☐ Hot water enough for peak demand (§5-103.11)

FLOORS, WALLS, AND CEILINGS

- ☐ Smooth, durable, easily cleanable, and nonabsorbent in prep, walk-in, warewashing, and toilet areas (§6-101.11)
- ☐ Floor-to-wall joints coved and sealed (§6-201.13)
- ☐ No carpet in prep or wet areas (§6-201.14)

LIGHTING

- ☐ 50 foot-candles where staff work with food or knives (§6-303.11)
- ☐ 20 foot-candles at display and self-service, inside reach-ins, and in handwashing, warewashing, and toilet rooms
- ☐ 10 foot-candles in walk-ins and dry storage

EQUIPMENT AND STORAGE

- ☐ Equipment certified to an ANSI sanitation standard, such as NSF (§4-205.10)
- ☐ Enough cold and hot holding capacity for your menu (§4-301.11)
- ☐ A thermometer in every cold and hot holding unit (§4-204.112)
- ☐ Lockers or a dressing area for staff belongings (§6-305.11)

PESTS AND REFUSE

- ☐ Self-closing, tight-fitting outer doors; screens or air curtains on openings kept open (§6-202.15)
- ☐ Outdoor refuse area on a smooth, sloped concrete or asphalt pad; lidded containers (§5-501)
- ☐ Covered waste container in every toilet room (§5-501.17)

The Food Code is a model, not federal law: it applies once your state or local health department adopts it, often with changes, and local rules can be stricter. Confirm with your health department. Section numbers are from the FDA Food Code 2026. Explained in plain English at www.foodhandlergear.com/restaurant-plan-review-checklist.html. © 2026 FoodHandlerGear. Free to print and share. **Editable written procedures and illness policy: Food Safety Plan Kit, \$29, www.foodhandlergear.com/kit.**