

## Tri-County Health Department

### HOW TO OPEN A RETAIL FOOD BUSINESS

**The Colorado Retail Food Establishment Rules and Regulations** are state laws that require compliance. The items mentioned below are required by Tri-County Health Department prior to opening new establishments, or changing ownership of existing establishments.

#### **When is a license from Tri-County Health Dept. required?**

If selling food to the public (other than hot coffees, bottled or canned beverages, pre-packaged non-potentially hazardous foods such as chips and candy, or non-potentially hazardous pastries & bagels which have been prepared in a licensed facility).

This license is renewed every year and is good from January 1 through December 31. The license is not transferable or prorated.

**\*\*Note:** You may not operate under the license of an existing food facility if there is a change in ownership of the business. This applies if there is any change in the Colorado Department of Revenue account number.

#### **NEW ESTABLISHMENTS AND MAJOR REMODELS OF EXISTING ESTABLISHMENTS**

#### **When is a Plan Review required?**

If you are taking over an existing retail food facility and will be changing the equipment or doing a major remodel of the existing food preparation/utensil washing/food storage/restroom areas.

OR

If you are building a new retail food facility.

## **Where to begin:**

### **Helpful hint**

Prior to purchasing a business or signing a lease for an existing retail space you may request that Tri-County Health Department do a site evaluation of the existing food establishment that you are considering taking over or for a space which you are considering turning into a food establishment. This can help you to avoid very costly situations. An Environmental Health Specialist will conduct a full inspection and inform you of construction items and equipment issues that need to be corrected for approval to operate.

The fee for an on-site inspection is \$75.00 or the actual cost of the inspection, calculated at the rate of \$40.00/hour. This fee may be applied to the change of ownership fees should you decide to open your business at the same location where the evaluation was conducted. To request a site evaluation you may dial 303-220-9200 for referral to the appropriate Tri-County field office.

### **Agencies to contact**

There are several agencies which may need to be contacted when opening a Retail Food establishment including:

Local Health Dept. (Tri-County Health Department 303-220-9200)  
Building Department (city or county). They may also require plans.  
Fire Department  
Water and Sanitation District  
Colorado Department of Revenue (for sales tax license account)  
City where business will be located (for business license)

Helpful hint: Contacting all of these agencies prior to beginning construction will get you on the right track, and will help you to avoid costly mistakes or oversights.

### **What to provide to Tri-County Health Dept. for Plan Review:**

1. Tri-County Food Establishment Specification Form (Filled out completely). This form is available at all of our area offices. To locate the office nearest you call 303-220-9200.

2. Equipment list (example and blank form are included in the Specification Form)
3. Manufacturer's Specification sheets for all equipment (these may not be available if you have purchased used equipment)
4. 1 set of plans (equipment layout, plumbing plan, lighting plan)  
See example in Specification Form.
5. \$75.00 application fee (plans will not be reviewed until this fee is paid)

Note: Plan review and inspection fees are billed at the rate of \$41.50/hour (\$280.00 maximum).

Allow 2-3 weeks from the time of plan submission until you receive our letter of approval.

Building Departments usually want to see our approval letter prior to issuing a building permit

### **Construction & Pre-Opening Inspections**

Typically, a minimum of 2 inspections are required. You may call for an inspection once you have received the plan review approval letter and have reached the following steps in the construction of your establishment (we require 1 weeks notice for inspections).

1<sup>st</sup> Inspection: Interior finishes inspection.

Wall, floor, ceiling finishes complete (or nearly so) and plumbing stub-outs present.

2<sup>nd</sup> Inspection: Pre-Opening Inspection.

Everything finished, all equipment installed, lighting functioning, refrigeration units functioning, hot and cold water at all sinks.

Fill out Retail Food Est. License Application

Pay for license and inspection fees (Range from \$55.00-\$383.00 per year).

Note: Additional inspections may be required depending on results of each inspection.

## **Change of Ownership for Existing Facilities**

Prior to beginning operation a construction inspection is required by this Department. Violations noted on the construction inspection must be brought into compliance with the current codes prior to approval to operate.

Note: If you have already had a-site evaluation of the establishment prior to purchasing the business, you should already have an inspection report that notes all construction violations to be corrected. Please be sure to mention this to the Environmental Health Specialist conducting the inspection.

There is an initial, non-refundable fee of \$75.00 for change of ownership inspections, and then an hourly fee of \$40.00/hour for additional inspection time.

This Department may require a plan review of your establishment. A final inspection of the establishment and approval from TCHD are necessary before you open for business.

## **Licensing Fees**

Retail Food Establishment license fees range from \$55.00 - \$383.00/year based on the total seating capacity or square footage, depending on the type of operation.

A completed retail food establishment license application must be submitted **at the time of inspection**, and the license fee paid prior to approval to operate.

The license is renewed every year and is good from January 1 through December 31. The license is not transferable or prorated.

**\*\*Note:** You may not operate under the license of an existing food facility if you are taking over the business.

## **Minimum Equipment Requirements**

Three compartment sink- properly sized and indirectly drained.

Indirectly drained food preparation sink as needed

Mop sink.

Hand sinks- appropriate number and locations.

Commercial refrigeration- adequate for operation.

Steam producing equipment (including high temperature sanitization dish machines) must be located under a ventilation hood.

Grease producing equipment must be located under a Type 1 hood with grease collection and fire suppression systems; contact your local fire prevention authority for more information.

Water heater- sized to meet peak hot water demand.

Toilet facilities- the number of public restrooms required is determined by customer seating:

- No seating = no public restrooms required.
- 15 seats or less = one public restroom required.
- More than 15 seats – minimum of two restrooms required, separate facilities for men and women.
- The number of fixtures per each restroom is determined by local building codes- contact your local Building Department for more info.
- In all cases, restroom facilities must be provided for employees.

Other equipment may be required based on the size and type of operation.

All equipment must be NSF approved or the equivalent. All equipment must be in good condition.

**For further questions you may contact our Administrative office at 303-220-9200, or the field office nearest you:**

<b>Aurora</b>	<b>303-341-9370</b>
<b>Castle Rock</b>	<b>303-663-7650</b>
<b>Englewood</b>	<b>303-761-1340</b>
<b>Commerce City</b>	<b>303-288-6816</b>