

# Guide to Opening a Food Premise

**BRANT COUNTY HEALTH UNIT**



**BRANT COUNTY  
HEALTH UNIT**

519-753-4937 ext. 470  
EnvironmentalHealth@bchu.org

## Getting Started

Congratulations on your business plans.

This guide has been developed in order to assist you planning your food premise and to ensure compliance with the Ontario Food Premise Regulation (available online at [www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/170493](http://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/170493)) and other applicable public health legislation.

The steps in this package are for Brant County Health Unit approval purposes only. You should contact your local municipal office, fire department and building department for additional requirements, such as zoning and business licensing.

If you need further information or assistance, please contact your area Public Health Inspector by calling 519-753-4937 ext. 470 or send an email to [EnvironmentalHealth@bchu.org](mailto:EnvironmentalHealth@bchu.org).

*This package was adapted with permission from Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health.*

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## Step 1

Contact the municipality to determine if the premises complies with zoning and other municipal by-laws. Do this before submitting your application to Public Health.

If a septic tank system is proposed, contact the municipality for information and approval of the system.

## Step 2

If you are opening a new food business, complete the enclosed **Food Premise – Notice of Intent and Assessment Checklist** form. An electronic version is available at [www.bchu.org/FoodSafety](http://www.bchu.org/FoodSafety).

Why? Section 16(2) of the Ontario Health Protection and Promotion Act requires that every person who intends to commence to operate a food premise shall give notice of the person's intention to the medical officer of health of the health unit in which the food premise will be located.

## Step 3

When planning construction or renovations, follow our suggestions for the construction materials and equipment (see Appendix B). Our suggestions are not an exhaustive list, but they should help for planning. Feel free to contact us for advice.

### **Home-Based Food Premise Requirements:**

A separate and distinct kitchen in the home will be required. It must be closed off and made inaccessible from the rest of the home with floor to ceiling walls and doors. This kitchen must meet the requirements of Ontario Regulation 493/17 and will be subject to inspection to ensure compliance.

This kitchen will be inspected as per the Ontario Food Premises Regulation 493/17 by your Public Health Inspector.

Note: Construction is regulated under the *Ontario Building Code*. Contact your local building and fire department for more information.

## Step 4

Prior to construction or renovation, inform Brant County Health Unit about your plans and provide information concerning the physical features and the nature of operation of the food premises. Include a copy of plans to scale and the proposed menu.

Plans and specifications should contain the following information:

- Name, address, and telephone number of the applicant
- Legal description of the property

- Complete floor plans of the proposed structure drawn neatly and to scale, showing:
  - the dimensions of all rooms;
  - location of all equipment (label or provide list);
  - location of sinks and handwashing sinks;
  - location of all washrooms;
  - location of the ventilation equipment;
  - location of grease traps;
  - description of materials to be used on floors, walls, and ceilings in all rooms;
  - location of well if on a private or communal water supply, and type of well (drilled or dug);
  - location of sewage system if on a private sewage system (septic tank).

Your area Public Health Inspector will contact you to review and approve your plans. This will ensure you are compliant with the Ontario Food Premises Regulation 493/17.

## **Step 5**

Contact your area Health Inspector at least 14 days prior to opening to arrange a pre-opening inspection.

Any changes to the plans after approval must be submitted to your Public Health Inspector prior to opening.

## Other Useful Information

Thanks for following the above steps to getting Public Health approval of your food premises.

The information below may also benefit your business.

### Food Handler Certification

Section 32 of the Ontario Food Premises Regulation 493/17 requires that there is at least one food handler or supervisor on-site in a food service premise during every hour the premise is operating. To obtain further information on how to obtain food handler certification, visit [www.bchu.org/FoodSafetyCourse](http://www.bchu.org/FoodSafetyCourse).

### Water Supply

All food premise must provide a supply of potable water adequate for the operation of the premises. Hot and cold running water under pressure must be provided in areas where food is processed, prepared or manufactured or where utensils are cleaned. Food Premises that are on private well water may be required to comply with regulation 319/08 small drinking water systems. This regulation has requirements for treatment, operator training, sampling and documentation. Speak to your area Public Health Inspector to determine the requirements for your business.

### Pest Control

Every food premise must be protected against the entry of pests and kept free of conditions that lead to the harbouring or breeding of pests. An integrated pest management approach should be used. Whether a premise hires a professional pest control company or conducts pest control activities on their own, records must be kept. More information on pest control can be found in the Food Safety Guide for Ontario Food Handlers.

### Renting a Kitchen

If you intend on renting a pre-existing kitchen to operate your business, a written letter of agreement from the kitchen facility is required. Examples of rentable kitchens may include public halls, commissaries and church kitchens. Only inspected and approved kitchens are permitted for use. Facilities inspected by the Brant County Health Unit can be found at [inspectionreports.bchu.org](http://inspectionreports.bchu.org).

### Low-Risk Food Preparation

Premises who only prepare low risk foods or only sell low-risk and/or pre-packaged food may qualify for an exemption to specific requirements related to sinks, dishwashing equipment and food handler training. Review your plans with your area Public Health Inspector to determine if exemptions apply.

## **Posters**

Public Health offers a variety of free posters about handwashing, keeping food safe, and proper use of 2- and 3-compartment sinks. You may ask a Public Health Inspector for copies of laminated posters.

## **Home Canned Products**

If you intend to prepare and sell canned products, consult with your area Health Inspector prior to production. All canned items must be made from a validated recipe by a reputable source specifying processing time, temperature, measured ingredients, and container size.

High risk (low-acid) items such as vegetables, chutneys, and soups must be prepared in a pressure canner to reach the proper temperatures to kill *Clostridium botulinum* spores. Low risk (high-acid) items such as jams, jellies, and vinegar-based pickles and relishes may be prepared in a boiling water canner.

## **Menu Labelling**

The Health Menu Choices Act and its accompany regulation requires food service premises with 20 or more locations in Ontario to display calories on menus for standard food items. Please refer to the menu labelling link in the Reference section of this document for more specific details.

## **Processed Meat Products**

As of January 1, 2014, amendments to the Meat Regulation 31/05 allow food service premises to produce a limited quantity of processed meat items (e.g., jerky, salami, pepperoni, and prosciutto) without a meat plant license. Premises solely conducting low risk meat processing activities such as aging, packaging, and slicing may also operate without a license within a limited quantity.

If you intend to conduct meat processing activities, contact your Public Health Inspector to determine whether your proposed operation meets the requirements of the exemption.

Non-exempted operations require a license which is enforced by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

A Food Safety Plan will be required for these activities. Information on Food Safety Plans can be found in the Food Premise Reference document (available at [www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/oph\\_standards/docs/reference/food\\_premise\\_reference\\_document\\_2019\\_en.pdf](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/oph_standards/docs/reference/food_premise_reference_document_2019_en.pdf)).

## Smoke-Free Ontario Act Compliance

If you intend to operate a bar or restaurant, contact Public Health at 519-753-4937 ext. 470 to speak with a Tobacco Enforcement Officer. The officer will help ensure your premises complies with the Smoke-Free Ontario Act.

As of July 1, 2018, smoking (tobacco and cannabis) and vaping are not permitted on all bar and restaurant outdoor patios, regardless of whether the patios are covered or uncovered. For more information, visit [www.ontario.ca/health-and-wellness/smoke-free-ontario#section-2](http://www.ontario.ca/health-and-wellness/smoke-free-ontario#section-2).

## References

Food Premises Regulation 493/17

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/170493#BK40>

Food Premise Reference Document (2019)

[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/oph\\_standards/docs/reference/food\\_premise\\_reference\\_document\\_2019\\_en.pdf](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/oph_standards/docs/reference/food_premise_reference_document_2019_en.pdf)

Provincial Guide to Starting a Home-Based Food Business

[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/selling\\_low\\_risk\\_food.pdf](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/selling_low_risk_food.pdf)

Food Safety Guide for Ontario Food Handlers

[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/enviro/docs/training\\_manual.pdf](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/enviro/docs/training_manual.pdf)

Small Drinking Water Regulation 319-08

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/080319>

Building Code Act 332/12

[http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2012/elaws\\_src\\_regs\\_r12332\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2012/elaws_src_regs_r12332_e.htm)

Fire Code 213/17

<https://www.canlii.org/en/on/laws/regu/o-reg-213-07/latest/o-reg-213-07.html>

Smoke-Free Ontario

<http://www.ontario.ca/health-and-wellness/smoke-free-ontario#section-2>

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/inspection/meatinsp/m-i-p-r/meatinspecprogram.htm>

Guide to Food and Beverage Manufacturing in Ontario

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/business-development/guide.pdf>

Menu Labelling Requirements

<https://www.ontario.ca/document/guide-menu-labelling-requirements>

Appendix A

## Food Premise – Notice of Intent and Assessment Checklist

This form is required to be submitted during the planning and consultation stage for food premises. Please email your completed form to [EnvironmentalHealth@bchu.org](mailto:EnvironmentalHealth@bchu.org) or fax to 519-753-2140.

Section 1: Notice of Intent	
Business Name:	
Legal Name (if different than above):	
Proposed Date of Opening:	
Business Address:	Business Phone:
Fax:	Email:
City/Town:	Postal Code:
Mailing Address	
Address:	Telephone:
City/Town:	Postal Code:
Owner/Operator Contact Information	
Owner Name:	Operator Name:

## BRANT COUNTY HEALTH UNIT

[EnvironmentalHealth@bchu.org](mailto:EnvironmentalHealth@bchu.org)

Fax: 519-753-2140

519-753-4937 ext. 470

[www.bchu.org](http://www.bchu.org)



## Section 2: Facility Checklist

### A. Operations Type:

What type of food premise will you be operating?

- Dine-in restaurant/eating establishment
- Take-out food service
- Catering
- Home-based
- Food truck/trailer
- Other – please explain:  
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### B. Water Supply:

What type of water supply will service your premise?

- Municipal
- Well water
- Potable water cistern or holding tank

### C. Sewage Disposal:

What type of sewage disposal system will service your premise?

- Municipal
- Septic system
- Holding tank

### Section 3: Food Preparation and Handling Checklist

Please answer all questions

1. Will you be preparing only low-risk foods and/or selling/serving only prepackaged, ready-to-eat foods?  
*E.g., low-risk foods that do not require time and temperature control after preparation. Examples include most baked goods.  
Pre-packaged, ready-to-eat food are foods that have been prepared and packaged at another approved food premise and do not require further preparation before eating. Examples include packaged yogourt, cheese, salads, deli meats, etc.).*

Yes

No

If yes, please list your products:

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2. Will you be preparing or serving potentially hazardous foods?  
*E.g., finished food products that require time and temperature control in order to keep them safe. Examples include meat, poultry, seafood, eggs or dessert made with real cream and/or custard).*

Yes

No

If yes, please list your products:

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3. Will you be conducting any of the following activities: canning, curing, dehydrating, emulsifying, fermenting, or smoking of a meat product?

Yes

No

If yes, please refer to the decision tree in the [following](http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/inspection/meatinsp/decisiontree.htm) link to determine if you are a [Free Standing Meat Plant](#).  
([www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/inspection/meatinsp/decisiontree.htm](http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/inspection/meatinsp/decisiontree.htm))

4. Will you be conducting any canning/jarring of any food other than meat products?

Yes

No

If yes, please list items:

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Please review the following guidance on proper processing:

- [Food and Beverage Manufacturing – Food Preservation and Processing](http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/business-development/guide.pdf)  
([www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/business-development/guide.pdf](http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/business-development/guide.pdf))
- [Public Health Ontario – Home Canning](http://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/h/2014/home-canning.pdf?la=en)  
([www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/h/2014/home-canning.pdf?la=en](http://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/h/2014/home-canning.pdf?la=en))

5. Are you a certified food handler?

Yes

No

If yes, please provide the name of the food handler training program and the date you received your certificate:

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Food service premises where potentially hazardous food are prepared must have at least one certified Food Handler present during all hours of operation.

6. Will you be using a residential dwelling for any aspect of your food premise business? This includes any food storage or preparation.

Yes

No

If yes, please describe the proposed usage:

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Note: A fully separate and dedicated kitchen, preparation and storage area is required.

7. Will you be renting time/space in a pre-existing, approved kitchen facility?

Yes

No

If yes, please provide a written Letter of Agreement from this facility to the Brant County Health Unit.

8. Please indicate your proposed business hours:

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9. Please provide the names and addresses of all food suppliers you intend to use for your business:

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10. How/where will you distribute/sell or serve your food products?

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11. Will you be preparing and pre-packaging food products for retail?

Yes

No

In Canada, labelling of pre-packaged foods for retail is under federal jurisdiction. If you answered yes to above, please review the [federal labelling requirements](https://bit.ly/RetailFoodBGCCA) (<https://bit.ly/RetailFoodBGCCA>) and contact the Canadian Food Inspection Agency at 1-800-442-2342.

## Section 4: Planning Checklist

### Have you contacted the following municipal departments?

Zoning

Yes

No

Licensing

Yes

No

Building

Yes

No

Fire

Yes

No

**Note:** If you answered no to any of the above, please contact them as soon as possible to review your proposed business plans.

### Have you completed the following tasks?

Reviewed the Guide to Opening a Food Premise?

Yes

No

Submitted floor plans?

Yes

No

**Note:** If you answered no to any of the above, please complete as soon as possible. Please refer to the floor plan section of the Guide for details and requirements.

## Appendix B

### Suggested Construction Materials

#### Floors

Floor covering must provide a smooth, easily cleanable and non-absorbent surface. Here are some examples:

- Trowelled cement. A mechanical, steel-trowelled process with an applied hardener and sealer is necessary to provide a tight, smooth and non-absorbent finish.
- Dry vinyl floor coverings that are high grade industrial strength which cover the floor wall to wall.
- Non-slip ceramic tiles that have been grouted to create a smooth surface at the same level as the tiles. A non-slip sealant is suggested when quarry tiles are installed.

Floors should be coved in the corners and extended up to the wall a minimum of 15 cm (6"). Baseboards or mouldings can take the place of coving.

**\*\*\* Carpet and rugs are permitted in dining areas only.**

#### Walls

Here are some wall materials you may use:

- drywall
- plaster
- cement block (sealed and painted)
- ceramic wall tile
- pre-finished PVC or aluminum wall coverings

For walls to be readily cleaned and maintained in a sanitary condition, we recommend a good quality paint, such as high gloss or semi-gloss latex or enamel paint. Paints used in food preparation areas and walk-in refrigerators or freezers should be light in colour, stand up to scrubbing, and have mould inhibitors.

Stainless steel, arborite, or ceramic tiles should be installed to protect the wall surfaces behind cooking areas, heavy wear areas, or wet dishwashing areas.

Where movable equipment could damage walls, properly finished bumpers should be installed to protect the walls.

Acceptable material for canopies and hoods is stainless steel in accordance with Fire Department specifications.

## **Ceilings**

Painted drywall is recommended. If you wish to use suspended ceilings, the tiles must be smooth, non-absorbent, and easily cleaned.

Ceiling tiles must be kept clean and replaced when broken. Where a decorated ceiling (i.e., wine glass holder at bar) is installed, the original ceiling above must be smooth and painted.

Open ceilings with exposed vents and piping are not recommended in the kitchen and preparation areas. If an open ceiling is part of the dining décor, all pipes and vents must be painted and a maintenance plan must be in place for routine cleaning.

## **Pipes and Wires**

Plumbing pipes, electrical wires, and electrical panels must be enclosed to facilitate cleaning.

## **Lighting**

Food preparation areas must be well lit for the safety of employees and so that areas can be properly cleaned and sanitized. Lighting throughout the premises must meet the requirements of the *Ontario Building Code* and is enforced by the local building department.

All lighting fixtures should be secured tightly to the ceiling to facilitate cleaning. Ensure light fixtures are shatterproof or protected by a covering over food preparation and food storage areas.

## **Sinks**

Handwashing basins must be a separate unit and of such size that will not promote other uses. The handwashing basin is to be used for hand-washing only. Handwashing basins are required in a location convenient for employees in each processing, preparation, and manufacturing area.

Dishwashing sinks must be large enough to easily contain the utensils or equipment being cleaned.

A 3-compartment sink or commercial dishwasher is required for cleaning and sanitizing multi-use dishes and utensils. A 2-compartment sink is satisfactory when only single-use utensils are used, such as at a food take-out restaurant.

A separate janitor's sink is recommended for disposal of cleaning wastes (e.g., water in a mop bucket).

If a hose is used in connection with any sink, ensure a back flow preventer is installed to prevent the possible contamination of the potable water supply.

## **Suggested Equipment**

Any article or piece of equipment used for the manufacturing, distribution, sale, offering of sale, preparation, processing, handling, transportation, storage, or display of food shall be of sound, tight construction, kept in good repair, and of such form and material that it can be readily cleaned and sanitized.

### **Shelving**

Stainless steel or prefinished shelves are recommended for the dry food storage area. Wood shelving must be painted or properly sealed. Ensure shelves are at least 15 cm (6") off the floor.

### **Cutting Boards**

Polyethylene (plastic) is the recommended material for cutting boards, blocks, bowls, platters, and churns. Hardwood may be used if it is maintained in a clean and sanitary manner and its use does not create a health hazard.

### **Cleaning and Sanitizing of Utensils**

Multi-service articles shall be cleaned and sanitized after each use. Utensils other than multi-service articles shall be cleaned and sanitized as often as is necessary to maintain them in a clean and sanitary condition.

### **Natural Gas Cooking Equipment**

Gas ranges, fryers, woks, grills, etc., shall be equipped with wheels and extended flexible hosing to allow cleaning and sanitizing of walls and floors around the equipment. Contact the local gas company for inspection.

### **Walk-In Refrigerators/Freezers**

Stainless steel or prefinished lining and shelves are recommended for walk-in refrigerators and freezers. Wood must be properly sealed.

Trapped floor drains are recommended for walk-in refrigerators to facilitate easy cleaning. Consult the plumbing inspector in your area to ensure trapped floor drains are permitted in refrigerator units.

### **Commercial Dishwashers**

Domestic dishwashers are not permitted. All dishwashers must be provided with accurate indicating thermometers and must use an approved disinfection method. High temperature dishwashers must obtain a temperature of 82°C for at least 10 seconds during the rinse cycle. For low temperature dishwashers that utilize a chemical disinfectant such as chlorine, a 3-cycle machine is recommended to permit the use of a rinse agent.



## **Ventilation**

Ventilation systems must comply with the Ontario Building Code and Fire Code and be maintained to ensure the elimination of odours, fumes, vapours, smoke and excessive heat. Consult with your local building and fire departments for specific requirements.

Ventilation equipment shall be vented to the outside and be of sufficient size as to be effective. Contact the local building department for guidance.

## **Garbage Storage**

Garbage storage areas should be constructed of metal, treated wood, concrete or similar material that can be easily cleaned and prevent entry of insects and rodents.