

Instructions for New Food Operators in Lancaster County



Environmental Public Health Division
Food Safety Program
3131 O Street
Lincoln, NE 68510
(402) 441-6280

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Instructions for New Food Operators

The following information is provided to you to help you better understand the law and the standards as they apply to food service establishments. This list is intended to be a summary; it is **not** the complete ordinance or standards.

A building permit from the City of Lincoln Building and Safety Department (402-441-7521) is required for new establishments. In some cases, existing establishments must obtain a permit from Building and Safety in order to remodel the establishment. Even if no permit is needed from Building and Safety, building and remodeling plans must be reviewed and approved by an Environmental Health Specialist (EHS) at the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department (LLCHD) prior to construction. This review will ensure that all requirements are adequately met. If you have any questions, please call our office at (402) 441-6280.

Permits and Inspections

1. Any person who operates a food establishment in Lincoln or within its three-mile limit must have a valid Food Establishment Operating Permit according to the Lincoln Municipal Code (LMC) 8.20 *Lincoln Food Code*.
2. Please notify the LLCHD at least two working days prior to the planned opening date to allow ample time for processing and scheduling the initial inspection.
3. In most cases, both city and state applications are required along with the necessary fees. The EHS will provide the application(s) to the owner/operator(s) or to a designated representative at the time of the initial inspection. The permit fee(s) must be paid, preferably by check, at the time of the initial inspections. Any fee(s) must be mailed or brought to the LLCHD offices at 3140 N Street in Lincoln.
4. Food handler permits are required for all employees, food preparers, cooks, dishwashers, bussing staff, and anyone else who works in a food service establishment in Lincoln or within its three-mile limit. Every food establishment that prepares or serves potentially hazardous food must have at least one employee who holds a current Food Protection Manager (FPM) permit. Every food establishment that does *not* prepare or serve potentially hazardous food must have at least one employee who holds a current Restricted/Shift (RS) Manager permit. (Establishments required to have an FPM, may also have one or more employees who hold an RS permit. The permitted manager does *not* have to be on site at all times. An employee with the appropriate permit can function as the Person In Charge (PIC) when the manager is away from the establishment. In a food establishment that prepares or serves potentially hazardous food, the PIC must hold either an RS or a Prep/Cook (PC) permit. An employee who only holds an SC permit cannot be the PIC for such an establishment. In a food establishment that does *not* prepare or serve potentially hazardous food, the PIC must hold at least a Serve/Clean (SC) permit. For more information about these permits, for class schedules, or to access on-line training call the LLCHD Food Safety office at (402) 441-6280. You can also go on line at www.lincoln.ne.gov, type "food." You will link to the Food Safety Program web page. From that page, you can access the on-line training, among other resources.
5. For questions regarding occupancy, permits, building permits, and zoning requirements, contact the Bureau of Fire Prevention at (402) 441-7791.

Other Important Phone Numbers

Nebraska Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Dairies and Foods	(402) 471-2536
Nebraska Liquor Control Commission	(402) 471-2571
Nebraska Department of Revenue	(402) 471-2971

Personnel

1. No person, while infected with a disease in communicable form that can be transmitted by food or who is a carrier of organisms that cause such a disease or while afflicted with a boil or an infected wound, shall work in a food service establishment in any capacity in which there is a likelihood of such person with pathogenic organisms transmitting disease to others.
2. The outer clothing of all employees shall be clean. Food handlers shall use effective hair restraints to prevent the contamination of food or food contact surfaces. Hair shall be restrained by the use of a hair net, cap, scarf, or by tying shoulder-length or longer hair behind the shoulders.
3. Employees may consume food or drink only in designated areas to prevent the contamination of food or equipment.
4. Employees shall not use tobacco while engaged in food preparation or service nor while in areas used for equipment or utensil washing or for food preparation.
5. Employees shall wash their hands and the exposed portions of their arms thoroughly with soap and warm water before starting work, during work as often as is necessary to keep them clean, and after smoking, eating, drinking, using the toilet, or anytime food handling activities are interrupted. Employees shall keep fingernails clean and trimmed. Food service gloves or hand sanitizer may be used but shall *not* be a substitute for proper hand washing. Employees wearing false fingernails or nail polish must wear gloves when handling exposed food.

Food Protection

1. Food shall be obtained from approved sources and bear all essential labeling information.
2. Food shall be protected from contamination while being stored, prepared, displayed, served, or transported. Potentially hazardous foods held at a temperature of 41° F or below shall be consumed within seven calendar days. Such food held at 41° F-45° F shall be consumed within four calendar days. Potentially hazardous food held hot shall be at a temperature of 135° F or higher. (*Potentially hazardous foods* shall include any food that consists in whole or in part of milk or milk products, eggs, meat, poultry, fish, shellfish, edible Crustacea, raw seed sprouts, cooked vegetables, or other food that are in a form capable of supporting rapid and progressive growth of infectious and toxigenic microorganisms.)
3. Some *minimum* safe cooking temperatures:

Poultry and stuffed meats 165° F

Ground beef, pork, and eggs held on a steam table	155° F
Pork roast	145° F
Beef, fish, lamb, and cooked to order eggs	145° F
Rare roast beef	130° F
Any food cooked in a microwave	165° F

(Let stand for 2 minutes before serving)

4. Potentially hazardous foods that have been cooked, and then refrigerated shall be reheated within two hours to 165° F before serving.
5. A metal-stemmed product thermometer that is accurate within $\pm 2^\circ$ F and with a temperature range appropriate for the food being tested shall be provided and used to check product temperature during the cooking, holding, cooling, and reheating processes.
6. Potentially hazardous food shall be thawed using one of the following methods:
 - ❖ In a refrigerated unit not to exceed 45° F and consumed within four calendar days.
 - ❖ Under potable running water of a temperature of 70° F or below.
 - ❖ In a microwave, even as part of the continuous cooking process.
 - ❖ As part of the conventional cooking process.

Potentially hazardous foods shall *not* be thawed at room temperature.

7. Food at risk of contamination shall be stored at least six inches off the floor.
8. All refrigerated and hot food holding facilities storing potentially hazardous food shall be provided with numerically scaled thermometers, accurate at $\pm 3^\circ$ F, and located to be easily viewed.

Food Equipment and Utensils

1. Equipment and utensils used for food preparation shall be smooth, easily cleanable, corrosion resistant, nonabsorbent, and in good repair.
2. All equipment, and the installation of the equipment, must meet NSF standards or their equivalent.
3. Floor-mounted equipment—such as stoves, grills, and fryers—shall be raised at least six inches off the floor for easy cleaning. The LLCHD recommends that cooking equipment that utilizes natural gas should be equipped with flexible lines that allow the equipment to be pulled away from the walls for easy cleaning.
4. Equipment shall not be located under exposed or unprotected sewer or water lines, open stairwells, or other potential sources of contamination.

Warewashing

1. Tableware and kitchenware shall be washed, rinsed, sanitized, and air-dried after each use.
2. Manual dish washing utilizing a three-compartment sink with drain boards shall be conducted as follows:
 - v Sinks shall be cleaned prior to use.
 - v Equipment and utensils shall be flushed or scraped to remove gross food particles prior to being washed.
 - v Equipment and utensils shall be thoroughly *washed* in the first compartment of the sink with a hot detergent solution at a temperature of 110° F or hotter.
 - v Equipment and utensils shall be *rinsed* free of detergent and abrasives with clean water in the second compartment of the sink at a temperature of 110° F or hotter.
 - v Equipment and utensils shall be *sanitized* in the third compartment of the sink.
 - v Equipment and utensils shall be placed on the drain board and thoroughly *air dried*. The use of towels for drying equipment or utensils is prohibited.
 - v A temperature measuring device shall be readily available to measure the washing, rinsing, and sanitizing water temperatures frequently.
3. Equipment and utensils shall be sanitized in the third sink by immersion:
 - v for at least 30 seconds in hot water of at least 171° F,
 - v for at least 10 seconds in a solution of 50 parts per million (ppm) but not more than 200 ppm of chlorine and water (respectively) at a temperature between 75° F and 120° F,
 - v for at least 30 seconds in a solution of 200 ppm of quaternary ammonium (quats) and water (respectively) at a temperature of at least 75° F,
 - v at least 30 seconds in a solution of 12.5 ppm to 25 ppm of available iodine and water (respectively) at a minimum temperatures of 75° F, or
 - v for at least 30 seconds in any other approved chemical sanitizing agent.
4. Mechanical dish washing shall be conducted according to the manufacturer's specifications.
5. A sanitizer test kit of the type appropriate for the chemical being used shall be available at all times and shall be used frequently to check the strength of the sanitizer.
6. Wiping cloths shall be stored in a sanitizing solution between uses. The bucket shall be clearly labeled "*sanitizer*." For food contact surfaces, it is recommended that a red bucket be used and the word "*sanitizer*" be printed in clearly visible black lettering. Detergents, cleaners, and other chemicals shall not be added to the wiping cloth sanitizing solution.

Plumbing

1. Water must come from an approved source.
2. Devises shall be installed to protect against backflow and back siphonage on all fixtures and equipment where an air gap at least twice the diameter of the water supply inlet is not provided between the water supply inlet and the fixture's flood level rim. A hose shall not be attached to a faucet unless a backflow prevention device is installed.
3. At least one utility sink or curbed cleaning facility with a floor drain shall be provided and used for the cleaning of mops or similar wet-floor cleaning tools. Only this sink or facility shall be used for the disposal of mop water or similar liquid wastes. The use of lavatories, utensil-washing or equipment washing, or food preparation sinks for these purposes is prohibited.
4. Floor drains/sinks must be installed whenever equipment, such as ice bins and drink machines, discharge liquid condensate. This equipment shall be drained into the sanitary sewer system.
5. All plumbing fixtures must be in good repair with no leaks and all water lines must meet the specifications of the Plumbing Code.
6. Ice bins and equipment in which food is held may not be connected directly to the sewer lines. An air gap is required.

Lavatories

1. Hand washing facilities shall be conveniently located to allow use by employees in food preparation, warewashing, and service areas. Hand washing facilities shall also be located in or immediately adjacent to toilet rooms or vestibules. Water temperature must be at least 100° F.
2. Hand-cleansing soap, dispensed sanitary towels, or heated air hand-drying devices and a waste receptacle shall be conveniently located near each hand washing facility.
3. Sink compartments used for food preparation or for warewashing shall not be used to hand washing.

Toilet Facilities

1. Restroom doors must be equipped with self-closing devices.
2. A covered waste container must be supplied in all women's restrooms.
3. Contact the Building and Safety Department, Plumbing Inspector at (402) 441-7525 for information regarding the number of restrooms required for your facility.

Floors

1. Floors must be constructed of a smooth, durable material that is impervious to water and grease. Acceptable examples are ceramic tile, durable grades of linoleum, terrazzo, or sealed concrete.
2. The junctures between walls and floors shall be covered and sealed.
3. Carpeting is prohibited in food preparation, equipment- and utensil-washing areas where it would be exposed to large amounts of grease and water, in food storage areas, and in toilet rooms where urinals and toilet fixtures are located.

Walls and Ceilings

1. Walls and ceilings must be kept clean and in good repair.
2. The walls, wall coverings, and ceilings or walk-in refrigerating units, food preparation areas, equipment- and utensil-washing areas, and toilet rooms and vestibules shall be light colors, smooth, nonabsorbent, and easily cleanable.
3. Walls that are exposed to sink splash must be covered with ceramic tile or FRP paneling.
4. Stainless steel walls are recommended behind grills and equipment that generate grease and high temperatures.
5. The ceiling tile above coolers, food prep areas, warewashing areas, and toilet rooms must be washable.

General Information

1. Light fixtures must be properly shielded.
2. All rooms shall have sufficient ventilation to keep them free of excessive heat, steam, condensation, vapors, obnoxious odors, smoke, and fumes.
3. A self-extinguishing fire suppression system may be required. For more information, contact the Bureau of Fire Prevention at (402) 441-7791.
4. Openings to the outside shall be effectively protected against the entrance of insects and rodents.
5. Pesticides and cleaners shall be stored away from food preparation, food storage, and utensil storage areas. Only pesticides that are approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in food service establishments can be used. Check the label and use the product according to instructions.