

Opening a Food Establishment

All food operations within the jurisdiction shall be licensed by the Kenosha County Division of Health. The requirements for food operations are found in the Wisconsin Food Code which is state law. The code has been adopted into the Kenosha County Municipal Ordinances Chapter 16.

Wisconsin Food Code:



There is no "one size fits all" license for food operations. We've prepared this brochure to help you get started with opening a food establishment.

Don't assume that taking over an existing food establishment will simply be a matter of completing some paperwork. In many cases things may need to be changed or upgraded to meet current codes. Do your homework before making any type of commitment to open a food establishment.

Apply for a License

Where do I apply?

Contact the Division of Health to schedule an appointment with an inspector.

262-605-6591

<https://www.kenoshacounty.org/EnvironmentalHealth>

What information should I bring?

- If you want to license your business as a corporation, limited liability company or limited partnership, make sure your company is registered with the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions. Have an estimate of what your gross sales will be, since fee calculations are based on that. If you're going to be licensed as an individual, bring your driver's license or state ID.
- A menu of the food being served.
- A copy of the construction plans if you are making changes to an existing establishment or for new construction.

Here to Help

The Division of Health is not just a regulatory authority to food establishments, but a resource as well. Inspections by a sanitarian are not meant to catch food establishments doing something wrong, but to ensure they are putting out a safe product to the customers.

Information on Our Website

<https://www.kenoshacounty.org/EnvironmentalHealth>



Send Us Your Question

<https://www.kenoshacounty.org/EnvironmentalHealthQuestions>



Call Us at the Direct Environmental Health Phone Number

262-605-659 1



Questions?

<https://www.kenoshacounty.org/EnvironmentalHealth>

262-605-6591

Food Establishment

Guidelines for Opening a Food Establishment

- A list of any equipment being added to the establishment with the manufacturer's name and model number.

Remember to submit your application, information, and pay all associated fees as soon as possible. The application and review process can take several weeks depending on many factors.

Facilities and Equipment

Floors, Walls, and Ceilings

A food establishment must be easy to clean and finishes must stand up to the constant application of water and cleaning solutions. Dark colors that conceal dirt and grease must be avoided. Ridges, textures, seams, cracks and crevices aren't allowed because they are harder to clean and retain moisture and food debris. These conditions make sanitation and pest control difficult.

Older facilities may have areas that don't meet these standards. The Division of Health will evaluate these each time there is a change of operator, a change of use, or a change in menu at an existing establishment.

Lighting

All lighting in the food preparation, food storage, food display and dish washing areas shall be shatter resistant or shielded.

Sinks

Sink requirements vary depending in the type of food service being done. Specific standards and requirements for each type of sink are found in the Wisconsin Food Code. You should never purchase or install a sink or dish machine until you've made sure it meets the requirements for your establishment.

Refrigeration

Non-commercial refrigerators are not allowed in any licensed facility. Do not buy a refrigerator that isn't licensed by an ANSI accredited agency (NSF) for commercial use. Before buying a listed unit, check with the Division of Health to make sure it is designed for your application.

A cooler accepted for beverage self-service may not be accepted in a restaurant kitchen. Non-commercial freezers may be accepted in certain circumstances.

Ventilation

Heat and grease producing equipment must be properly ventilated. Make sure the ventilation equipment has been inspected and approved by a Commercial Building Inspector.

Plan Review and Pre-Inspection

I'm taking over an existing business

If you don't plan to make any changes in the business, fill out a food establishment application, pay the fees and make an appointment with your inspector. Your inspector will do an inspection at the business to see if any repairs need to be made before you open. Existing equipment will be evaluated to determine if it is still acceptable for use. Your inspector will also review your menu.

I'm taking over an existing business but I'm making changes

Fill out a food establishment application, pay the fees and make an appointment with your inspector. Your inspector will conduct a pre-inspection and talk to you about your plans. Changes in menu or volume of food preparation may require equipment changes. Existing equipment will be evaluated to determine if it is still acceptable for use. If you plan to remodel, you must submit plans for the Division of Health to review and approve before you start construction.

I'm starting from scratch with new construction

If you plan to build, you must submit plans, menu and equipment list for the Division of Health to review before you start construction. Once the plans have been approved your inspector will do multiple on-site inspections during the construction process to ensure that the process is being completed properly.

Food Equipment

Your inspector will evaluate any new or existing equipment.

- If a piece of equipment complied with the code in force when it was installed, and is still in good condition you may be allowed to continue using it. It must still function as designed and be used for the purpose it was made for.
- Any equipment you acquire, that was not on the premises before, must comply with current codes.
- The current code requires a separate, air-gapped food preparation sink in some situations. After evaluating your operation and menu, your inspector may require one.

Plan Review

If you submit construction plans, they do not have to be drawn by a professional but they should be drawn to scale and must address the following items:

1. Floor Plan - show the locations of serving, food preparation and dry storage areas, toilet rooms, customer areas, etc.
2. Food Equipment Layout - identify each piece of equipment and show where it will be located.
3. Food Equipment Specifications - equipment specifications must include manufacturer's name, model number and descriptive information. All food equipment shall be sanitation listed by an ANSI accredited organization (NSF, ETL, UL) or its equivalent.
4. Plumbing Fixtures - show location and type of all plumbing fixtures.
5. Floor, Wall and Ceiling Finishes - material to be used and finished surface must be indicated. Indicate product description for surface finishes in all areas.
6. Lighting - location, type, and intensity of lights must be shown.
7. Solid Waste Disposal - indicate what provisions will be made for the storage and disposal of garbage.
8. Service Areas - indicate where the service sink will be, and where cleaning equipment and supplies will be stored.