



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
501 N. THOMPSON, SUITE 101
CONROE, TEXAS 77301
(936) 539-7839 • (281) 364-4200, EXT 7839**

DEFINITION OF A FOOD ESTABLISHMENT:

Any operation that stores, prepares, packages, serves, or otherwise provides sustenance for human consumption to the general public.

**PROCEDURE FOR OPENING A RETAIL FOOD ESTABLISHMENT IN
MONTGOMERY COUNTY**

The following is applicable to all new food establishments. An establishment is considered new if it undergoes a change of ownership or remodeling.

- 1. In cases of new construction or remodeling of an existing establishment, one (1) set of plans showing a detailed layout of existing and/or proposed facilities must be submitted to the Montgomery County Environmental Health Department along with information on the type of water and sewage facilities. Such plans should be drawn to scale on 11"x17" paper or larger. Handwritten plans must be legible and to scale.**

Minimum plans consist of:

- A. floor plans**
- B. equipment**
- C. plumbing plan**
- D. room finish schedule**
- E. lighting**

In addition, plans must show, name of owner, contractor, or person in charge of construction, a physical address, a contact person for plan approval and their telephone number. There is a \$50.00 new facility/extensive remodeling fee.

- 2. In all cases; new construction, new ownership or remodeling, the establishment must meet current requirements of the Montgomery County Environmental Health Services located at 501 N. Thompson, Suite 101, Conroe, TX 77301.**
- 3. To schedule a preopening inspection of an establishment, the required documentation of approved water, sewer, and compliance from the Fire Marshal must be finalized and presented to this department. Construction shall be completed with all utilities on and the approved set of plans on site for the inspection.**

4. Upon approval, an application to obtain the food service permit shall be issued on site. Until the permit has been purchased, no food is allowed to be served to the public.
5. No operation of a food service establishment shall be conducted in a private home or any room used for living or sleeping quarters.
6. A Montgomery County Certified Food Service Manager employed by the food service establishment shall be present during all hours of operations.
7. All food employees must obtain a food handler certificate from an accredited training course, within 60 days of employment. This includes wait staff, dishwashers, anyone involved in handling food, food contact surfaces, and/or equipment.

CONSTRUCTION AND REQUIRED EQUIPMENT FOR OPERATING A FOOD SERVICE ESTABLISHMENT IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

The following are based on the Texas Food Establishment Rules:

RESTROOMS:

Restrooms shall be conveniently accessible to employees; must have lavatory with hot and cold running water, tempered by means of a mixing valve or combination faucet. Floors, walls and ceiling shall be of smooth, cleanable, non-absorbent materials and light colored.

HAND WASHING SINKS:

Hand washing sinks shall be located to permit convenient use by all employees in the food preparation and utensil washing areas. Sinks used for food preparation or for washing equipment or utensils shall not be used for hand washing.

DISHWASHING:

MANUAL CLEANING AND SANITIZING:

A three (3) compartment sink for washing, rinsing and sanitizing is required. This sink should be large enough to fully submerge the largest utensil. Drain boards or easily movable dish-tables of adequate size shall be provided for proper handling of soiled utensils prior to washing for clean utensils following sanitizing and shall be located so as not to interfere with the proper use of the dish washing facilities.

MECHANICAL CLEANING AND SANITIZING:

Mechanical dishwashers must meet all County and State requirements pertaining to water temperature and/or sanitizer injectors. In addition, a three (3) compartment is required.

When chemicals are used for sanitization, a test kit or other device that accurately measures the parts per million (ppm) concentration of the solution shall be provided and used.

EQUIPMENT AND UTENSILS:

Equipment and utensils shall be designed and fabricated for durability under conditions of normal use. Floor-mounted equipment, unless readily moveable, shall be sealed to the floor or elevated to provide a six inch (6") clearance.

Food-contact surfaces shall be easily cleanable; smooth and free of breaks, open seams, cracks, chips, pits and similar imperfections and free of difficult to clean corners and crevices.

VENTILATION:

All rooms shall have sufficient ventilation to keep them free from excessive heat, steam, condensation, vapors, odors and fumes. All rooms from which obnoxious odors, vapors or fumes originate shall be mechanically vented to the outside.

Ventilation hoods and devices shall be designed to prevent grease or condensation from collection on walls and ceiling and from dripping into food or onto food-contact surfaces.

DISPLAY EQUIPMENT:

Food on display shall be protected from consumer contamination by the use of packaging, serving line sneeze guard, display cases, or other effective means.

Enough hot or cold food facilities shall be available to maintain the required temperature of time/temperature control for safety food on display.

LIGHTING AND PROTECTIVE SHIELDING:

Sufficient lighting must be provided in all areas of the establishment. Provide shielding for all lighting fixtures located over, by or within food storage, preparation, service and display facilities, and facilities where utensils and equipment are cleaned and stored.

FLOORS:

Floors and floor coverings of all food preparation, food storage and utensil washing areas, and the floors of all walk-in refrigerating units, dressing rooms, and vestibules shall be constructed of smooth durable material and shall be maintained and good repair.

Carpeting is prohibited in food preparation, equipment and utensil washing areas, food storage areas and toilet room areas.

Establishments utilizing concrete, terrazzo, ceramic tile or similar flooring materials, and where water flush cleaning methods are used, the junctures between walls and floors shall be coved and sealed.

Installation of exposed horizontal utility lines and pipes on the floor is prohibited.

DRAINS:

Floor drains shall be provided in floors that are subject to condensation or cleaning by being water flushed or in areas where pressure spray methods for cleaning are used.

WALLS AND CEILINGS:

Walls and ceilings in food preparation areas, food storage areas, equipment and utensil washing areas, walk-in refrigeration units, toilet rooms and vestibules shall be smooth, non-absorbent, light-colored, easily cleanable, and shall be maintained in good repair. Studs, joists and rafters shall not be exposed in the above areas and utility service lines and pipes shall not be unnecessarily exposed in these areas.

UTILITY FACILITY:

At least one (1) utility sink with hot and cold water or curbed cleaning facility with a floor drain shall be provided and used for the cleaning of mops and for the disposal of mop water or similar liquid wastes.

DRESSING ROOMS AND LOCKER AREAS:

If employees routinely change clothes within the establishment, room or areas shall be designated and used for that purpose only. Whatever a dressing room is required or not, lockers or other suitable facilities must be provided for the proper storage of personal belongings.

BREAK AREA:

Employees shall consume food and use tobacco in designated areas only. An employee break area shall not be designated for that purpose if it may result in contamination of food, equipment, utensils or other items needing protection.

POISONOUS OR TOXIC MATERIALS:

Poisons, toxic materials, and chemicals shall be stored and located away from food and food equipment.

GARBAGE AND REFUSE:

There shall be a sufficient number of containers to hold all garbage and refuse that accumulates.

Containers stored outside the establishment; dumpster, compactors and compactor systems shall be easily cleanable and shall have tight-fitting lids, doors, or covers and be kept covered when not in actual use. Containers designed with drains, drain plugs shall be in place at all times except during cleaning.

Suitable facilities, including hot water and detergent or steam, shall be provided and used for washing containers. Liquid wastes from compacting or cleaning operations shall be disposed of as sewage.

Garbage and refuse containers: dumpster and compactor systems located outside shall be stored on or above a smooth surface of non-absorbent material, such as concrete and kept clean and maintained in good repair.

INSECT AND RODENT CONTROL:

Outside openings shall be protected against the entrance of insects and rodents by tight fitting, self-closing doors, closed windows, screening, controlled air currents or other means. Screen doors shall be self-closing and screens for windows, doors, intake and exhaust air ducts and other openings to the outside shall be tight-fitting and free of breaks. Screening material shall not be less than sixteen (16) mesh to the inch.

PLUMBING:

Plumbing shall be sized, installed and maintained according to law. There shall be no cross-connection between the potable water supply and any non-potable water supply (permitted for air-conditioning and fire protection only). Devices shall be installed to protect against backflow and back-siphonage at all fixtures and equipment (i.e. dishwashers and outside faucets with a hose attached) unless an air gap at least twice the diameter of the water supply inlet is provided between the water supply inlet and the fixture's flood level rim (i.e. mop and dish sinks). Grease traps, if required, shall be easily accessible for cleaning and properly maintained.

WATER:

Water shall come from a State approved water system. If a well, a Professional Engineer (P.E.) or a Registered Sanitarian (R.S.) shall be utilized in the process of approval. A State Identification Number shall be obtained from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).

SEWAGE:

Sewage shall be connected to a State approved public sewage disposal system or County approved individual On-Site Sewage facility. For more information contact Montgomery County permitting office at 936-539-7836. Permit to operate an individual O.S.S.F. should be available upon final approval of food establishment.