

# Food Establishment Plan Review

What to Expect: Guide to Submitting a Plan



*mi*Ottawa Department of  
Public Health



# GOALS

---

- Help ensure licensure.
- Avoid problems.
- Aid in compliance.
- Provide record of design.
- Ensure safe flow of food.

## Food Establishment Plan Review

---

### Why is it required?

The purpose of a plan review is to make sure your project can be approved and licensed as a food establishment when the work is complete. Often plans need adjustments to meet the standards of the Food Code. When you submit detailed plans, we can spot potential problems while it's still on paper and make changes before costly purchases, installation and construction take place.

## Who must submit a plan?

---

**Food Service Establishment**

**Extended Retail Grocery**

**Transitory Food Unit**

**Mobile Food Establishment**

## Plan Review Process

---

The plan review process can be overwhelming if you are not experienced or familiar with the requirements. The Ottawa County Department of Public Health (OCDPH) reviews plans on a first come, first served basis. The plan review specialist is working on multiple plan reviews at any given point throughout the year. This may result in a 30-day wait time before approval is granted.

Plan review requirements originate from the FDA Food Code and the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD). We have limitations to flexibility, but we do our best to provide excellent customer service during this process.

Our goal is to inform applicants on what to expect and provide guidance on what to do. This helps make sure the process moves as quickly as possible.

---

Short notice and incomplete applications can make the timeline significantly longer and complicates the review.



# Plan Submission

## TIMELINE

The timeline required by Act 92 of the Michigan Food Law allows OCDPH 30 days to review submitted plans and respond back in writing. This starts once we receive **ALL** required information. The plan review specialist will inform you in writing when the submitted plans appear complete and the review process has begun. Often plans we receive are incomplete or lacking required details to perform a review. The best way to avoid this is to refer to the Plan Review Checklist. Upon submission of an application, our goal is to respond in writing within 7-10 business days regarding any information that is missing, incomplete or unclear. This helps keep the process moving forward and customers can get started on providing the missing information.



**Plans are often submitted incomplete or lack details to do a review. Seek consultation before you submit, if you are unsure about the application or creating scaled drawings.**

## CONSULTATION

The OCDPH rejects incomplete plan submissions, resulting in a reset timeline. Applicants may become frustrated, but we are unable to provide vast consulting services during the process. If you are unsure how to complete aspects of the required plan review application, please consult with a firm that specializes in plan review before submitting your application. Most applicants need assistance from a licensed contractor to help complete the scaled drawings or completing the portions of a plan review that pertain to plumbing installation. Hiring an experienced consultant can greatly reduce confusion and

frustration and prevent delays in approval. Please contact our food services team at (616) 393-5645 for a list of consultants. Beyond hiring qualified help, your rapid and accurate responses to questions will help keep the plan review moving forward.

## COMPLETION

You will receive an approval letter once the plan review specialist completes the review. The approval letter provides the required permission to begin construction of your food establishment.

 **DOs**

- Contact local building departments to obtain permits and ensure the property is zoned properly for its intended use.
- Refer to the Plan Review Checklist to ensure completeness of the application.
- Hire an experienced consultant to help streamline the process if unsure about the application or creating scaled drawings.
- Submit the COMPLETED plan review packet *at least 30 days* before any planned construction with the fee.
- Be thorough and submit organized and legible plans to avoid lengthy delays in receiving an approval.
- Follow up immediately with any missing information or documents requested.
- Wait to begin construction until after you receive an approval letter.

Applications lacking details significantly slow down the plan review process.



# Required Information

## WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

As an accredited local health department, we're required to review and document all items listed below.

## APPLICATION FORM & FEE

Email is the best way to communicate during the plan review process. Include the email and phone number of the person designated to answer questions or make changes to plans when they arise. The plan review fee supports the time required to fully review/approve plans and complete the pre-opening inspection. Submit the plan review fee with all plan review materials. The license fee is a separate fee and is due before the opening of the establishment.

## PROPOSED MENU

For us to determine the processes and type of operation the establishment needs to accommodate, submit detailed menus (or drafts) including all foods and beverages to be served. Place consumer advisories on the menu for foods to be served undercooked or raw.

## SITE PLAN

Site plans help us understand the full scope of the project, waste disposal, safe drinking water and sewage disposal. Indicate the exterior dimensions of the building, outside garbage storage area and containers, exterior storage areas, and outdoor seating or additional exterior use. If applicable, provide on-site water well and on-site sewage disposal data.



## SCALED DRAWINGS

Proper locations of all equipment is an essential part of food safety. Provide a plan of all food service areas with dimensions or scale.

- **Floor plan.** Indicate the equipment layout with an equipment schedule.
- **Mechanical plan.** Indicate makeup air systems, ventilation hoods (hood, duct and exhaust fans; must show all equipment is covered by appropriate ventilation) and air balance schedule (if applicable). Be sure to contact the local mechanical inspection authority.
- **Lighting plan.** Give details of the lighting locations and how lights will be protected from shattering.
- **Plumbing plan.** Indicate all sinks, hot and cold water outlets, hot water equipment, water heaters, sewer drains, grease traps, floor drains/sinks and backflow prevention devices.

## WATER HEATER

A formula is used to determine whether the proposed hot water heater will meet the demand based on the proposed plumbing fixtures. Provide a specification sheet for the proposed or existing water heater(s) and indicate all existing and future fixtures on the MDARD Plan Review Worksheet.

## SINKS

Sink usage and installation have numerous regulations. Be sure to:

- Label hand sinks on the floor plan. Make sure they are within 25 unobstructed feet of all food service work areas. This helps prevent a lack of hand washing.
- Label all other sinks for their intended use on the floor plan (e.g., dish washing, food preparation, dump, utility and mop sinks).

## ROOM FINISH SCHEDULE

The Food Code requires all surfaces to be smooth, nonabsorbent, easily cleanable and durable. Provide materials, floor finishes or paint type, covering walls and ceiling for all interior rooms or custom-built cabinetry.

## SPECIFICATION SHEETS

The OCDPH must make sure all equipment is safe, cleanable and designed for commercial use. Indicate the make, model number and equipment materials for all equipment (e.g., prep tables, cooking equipment, shelving and sinks); including construction materials for custom-built or used equipment.

## CERTIFIED MANAGER

A knowledgeable person-in-charge is necessary to run a safe food establishment. Hire a certified manager and submit a copy of the certificate before the pre-opening inspection.

## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOPs are used to train staff on procedures that can impact food safety. Submit organized and legible procedures detailing how to follow food safety practices. These procedures should be typed and submitted electronically. Refer to the Standard Operating Procedure Checklist for guidance.

## MDARD PLAN REVIEW WORKSHEET

The worksheet provides an organized format to describe additional details not covered elsewhere in the process, such as meal estimates assist us in determining whether proposed storage space is adequate. Fill out the worksheet completely and in detail. Mark items in the worksheet that are not a part of the establishment's operation as *Not Applicable*. Mark items described in the Standard Operating Procedures as *In SOPs*.





## Pre-Opening Inspection

---

As you're completing the construction or remodel, request a pre-opening inspection from the plan review specialist. **We require a minimum 7-day notice.** This inspection is when OCDPH verifies the construction matches the approved plans. Do not purchase food before the pre-opening inspection has been approved.

For specific requirements, refer to the Pre-Opening Checklist given by the plan review specialist.

### Examples of items that can prevent an approval:

- Construction or installations do not match approved plans.
- Refrigeration not turned on or operating below 41°F.
- Wrong hot water heater installed.
- No final mechanical approval from the township.
- No application and payment for the food service license.
- Wrong sanitizer test strips or dishmachine is not operational for testing.
- No proof of a certified manager.

To receive an approval to open, approved plans must match what we observe at the pre-opening inspection. Otherwise, we will require new plans that reflect the actual design and the review process begins again. If you followed the approved plans, do not have any open violations and all equipment is functioning, we will provide an inspection report stating *Approved to Operate*. This serves as your license until the State of Michigan issues the permanent license. You can then order food to stock, begin training staff and prepare to open.

## 30-Day Inspection

---

Approximately 30-45 days after receiving approval at the pre-opening inspection, a member of our team will conduct an unannounced routine inspection. If the conditions have degraded, staff do not show knowledge or there is a lack of active managerial control, we will suspend the license at this inspection or begin other enforcement activities.

Our goal is to educate, but our priority is to protect the public from illness when dining out. To have successful and safe food service, the Food Code requires a knowledgeable person-in-charge during all hours of operation. This person is responsible for training staff and performing their jobs to the standards of the Food Code. Inspections may occur at any time, day or night. If there is a person present inside a food establishment, it is reasonable an inspection could occur. Occasionally, inspections may occur on nights or weekends.

## Inspection Results

---

The public can view inspection results at [www.miOttawa.org/Food](http://www.miOttawa.org/Food). Routinely, the OCDPH sends out inspection reports related to violations and enforcement. These results are available on OCDPH's website, published in local newspapers, sent to email subscribers and shared on social media.

We do an in-depth analysis looking for violation trends after each inspection. When necessary; we hold hearings, conferences, issue civil citations and revoke, limit or suspend a license at any time. A very small percentage of our inspections lead to enforcement actions, generally our establishments are very proactive and invest time in food safety.

## **PRIORITY** Food Safety

Food establishments protect public health by making food safety a priority. The OCDPH audits, educates, and when necessary enforces. However, inspections our agency completes are only snapshots in time.

To help make sure your business is successful; follow the Food Code, correct violations when they occur and retrain staff in these areas. Violations occur in every establishment. Our goal is for every establishment in Ottawa County to demonstrate active managerial control, which means there is a person-in-charge who does the following:

- Demonstrates knowledge about food safety.
- Makes food safety a priority.
- Has the authority and time to properly manage the operations, train staff and enforce the regulations.

Beyond the internal training on your standard operating procedures, OCDPH offers a free Food Safety 101 class for food service workers. By providing these additional educational opportunities for staff, we better reach our common goal of serving safe food.

**We welcome you**  
to Ottawa County and  
want to help you succeed  
in your business!

### **Resources**

Ottawa County Department of Public Health Food Services, [www.miOttawa.org/Food](http://www.miOttawa.org/Food)

Michigan Food Law of 2000 Act 92, [www.legislature.mi.gov](http://www.legislature.mi.gov)

Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development, [www.michigan.gov/mdard](http://www.michigan.gov/mdard)

Michigan Food Safety Information, [www.michiganfoodsafety.com](http://www.michiganfoodsafety.com)

FDA Food Code, [www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/RetailFoodProtection/FoodCode](http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/RetailFoodProtection/FoodCode)

United States Department of Agriculture, [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov)

USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service, [www.fsis.usda.gov](http://www.fsis.usda.gov)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Food Safety, [www.cdc.gov/FoodSafety](http://www.cdc.gov/FoodSafety)

National Sanitation Foundation, [www.nsf.org](http://www.nsf.org)



*mi*Ottawa Department of  
Public Health

[www.miOttawa.org/Food](http://www.miOttawa.org/Food)

(616) 393-5645