

A woman wearing a white chef's hat is peering over the top edge of a wooden-framed chalkboard. Her eyes are wide and looking directly at the camera. The chalkboard is black and contains white text.

Guidelines for  
OPENING  
or RENOVATING  
a Food Premise

# The protection of food is a critical part in the operation of a food service business



An estimated two million cases of food-borne illnesses occur in Canada every year. Operating a safe, sanitary food premise can help to protect your customers and prevent these illnesses from occurring.

This brochure outlines some of the basic requirements you will need before you receive Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit approval to open and operate a food premise. This is not an exhaustive list, and these requirements are for Health Unit approval only. Other regulatory agencies and municipal departments will require information from you as well.

Opening a food premise in Ontario falls under Regulation 562 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act. This regulation provides the MINIMUM requirements for the operation of a

food premise. Public Health Inspectors use the regulations in this act when conducting inspections of premises serving food to the public. There are additional requirements in O. Reg 562 that are not included in this brochure, so please refer to the regulation for a complete list.

A copy of the Food Premises Regulation can be found at [http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws\\_regs\\_900562\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_900562_e.htm). You may also request a copy of the regulation from your Public Health Inspector by calling the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit in Simcoe at 519-426-6170 or in Caledonia at 905-318-5367.

# Before opening your premise...



Anyone who intends to open or re-open a food premise must in Haldimand or Norfolk County must notify the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit. Failure to do so may result in the premise being ticketed, fined up to \$5000 for each day of operation without Health Unit approval, or closed. The Health Unit can be notified of the intention to open a food premise through the submission of the "Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit Business Application Form." This form is available on the Health Unit's website, [www.hnhu.org](http://www.hnhu.org), under 'Forms'. Upon receipt of the notification, a public health inspector will contact the food premise operator to request information regarding the physical features and the nature of the operation of the food premise, including a detailed plan of the kitchen/food preparation area, food storage areas and washrooms, along with an equipment list/legend and a seating plan.

The operator of any establishment is also strongly encouraged to become a certified food handler. It is also **highly recommended** that at least one certified food handler be present in the food premises at all times during operation. The Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit offers one-day Food Handler Certification courses throughout the year, designed to provide food premises operators and employees with the basic knowledge and skills they need to comply with safe food handling and sanitation practices required by law. The course aims to complement ongoing inspection activities of our health unit. A list of clinic dates, locations and costs is available on the Health Unit's website, [www.hnhu.org](http://www.hnhu.org), under 'Classes/ Clinics'.

# Structural requirements

If you are planning to build or renovate a food premise, contact a local public health inspector before the work begins. The inspector will advise you on how to renovate so that you are still meeting the required regulations, which may help you save money and time and avoid future fines or health hazards.



## Floors

- Floor and floor coverings must be tight, smooth and non-absorbent (e.g., behind bar, kitchen, storage, washrooms).
- Commercial grade flooring of acceptable materials (e.g. vinyl, ceramic tile, etc.) should be used.
- Carpeting is allowed in dining rooms, provided it is maintained in a clean and sanitary condition.

## Walls and ceiling

- Walls and ceiling must be finished to allow proper cleaning and maintenance.
- A painted surface must withstand frequent cleaning.
- For splash-prone areas (e.g., cooking area, dishwashing area) stainless steel, laminate or ceramic tiles are good options to protect the wall and facilitate cleaning.

## Lighting

- Adequate lighting must be maintained during all hours of operation of a food premise.
- Lighting must meet the requirements of the Ontario Building

Code. Your local building inspector can advise you on the illumination requirements for food premises.

- Protective covers are required for fluorescent lights.

## Sinks

- A separate handwashing basin shall be provided in a convenient location in each food preparation area, together with supplies of hot and cold water, soap or detergent in a dispenser and clean single service towels.
- A three-compartment sink of sufficient size or an approved commercial dishwasher with an accurate temperature gauge is required for cleaning/sanitizing multi-use utensils/dishware (forks, plates, etc.).
- If patrons are provided only with single-service articles (disposable forks, plates, etc.), a two compartment sink of sufficient size is required for cleaning/sanitizing utensils/equipment.
- In addition to handwashing basins and sinks to wash and sanitize utensils, a food preparation sink may be required, depending on the nature of the food preparation.
- A separate mop sink is recommended.

## Water

- A supply of potable water adequate for the operation of the premise shall be provided.
- Hot and cold running water under pressure shall be provided in areas where food is processed, prepared or manufactured or utensils are washed.

## Sanitary Facilities (Washrooms)

- At least one sanitary facility shall be provided for each gender and have a sign clearly indicating the gender for which it is intended.
- Every sanitary facility in a food premise shall be equipped with the following:
  - A supply of toilet paper;
  - a constant supply of hot and cold potable running water;
  - supply of soap or detergent in a dispenser;
  - a durable, easy-to-clean receptacle for used towels and other waste material;
  - a supply of paper towels, a supply of clean single service towels or a hot air dryer.
- The number of wash basins, urinals and toilets required in washrooms is regulated under the Ontario Building Code. For more information, consult with a Building Department Official.

## Garbage Storage

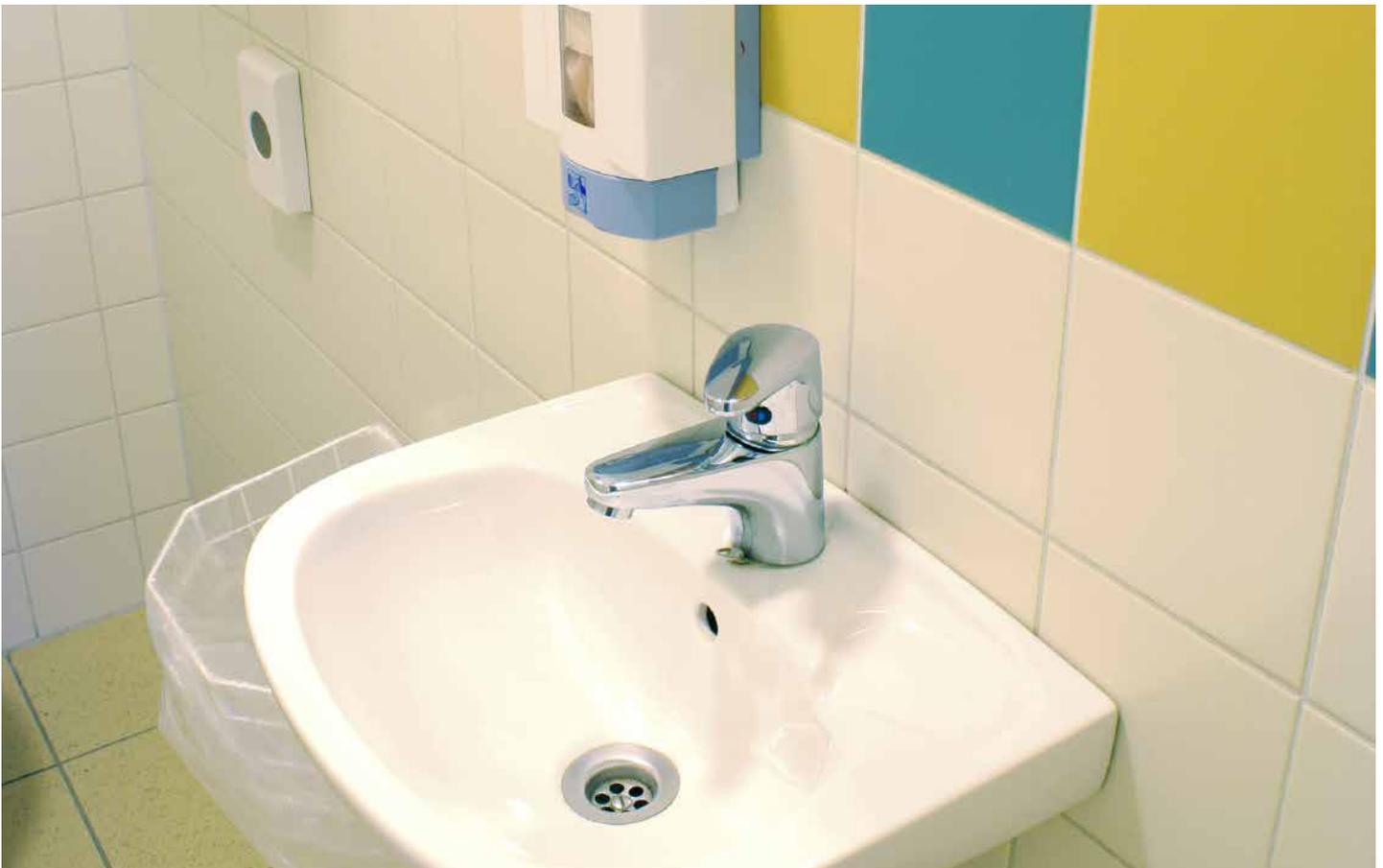
- Unless daily pickup has been arranged, garbage must be stored in a separate room, compartment or bin that is constructed and maintained so as to prevent entry of insects and rodents.

## Ventilation

- Externally vented exhaust canopies are required over cooking equipment and high temperature dishwashers that produce heat, steam, condensation, smoke, or fumes. A fire protective shield may be required behind equipment as well. Please contact the building inspector, and the local fire department for further information.

## Employee Lockers

- Provide a locker or other facility suitable for the storing of employee clothing and personal belongings.



# Equipment Requirements

Any article or piece of food-grade equipment that is used in the food premise must be of sound, tight construction, kept in good repair and made from material that can be easily cleaned and sanitized.



## Refrigerators and freezers

- Refrigerators and freezers must be equipped with accurate visible indicating thermometers so that staff can monitor their temperatures.
- Adequate refrigeration facilities are required for keeping cold foods at 4°C or lower.
- Frozen foods shall be maintained at -18°C or lower until sold or prepared for use.
- Adequate facilities are required for keeping hazardous hot foods at 60°C or higher.
- Accurate indicating probe thermometers that can be easily read are required to measure the internal temperature of hazardous foods.

## Shelving

- Stainless steel or prefinished shelves are recommended for food storage. Properly sealed, wood shelves are satisfactory. Shelves must be at least 15 cm (6") off the floor.

## Cutting Boards

- All cutting boards, work tables and other food contact surfaces must be free from cracks and crevices and maintained in a clean and sanitary manner.
- Polyethylene (plastic) is the recommended material for cutting boards and blocks. Hardwood may also be used.

## Dishwashers

- Dishwashers must be commercial machines that are designed and maintained such that: the wash water is sufficiently clean at all times to clean the dishes and is maintained at a temperature not lower than 60°C or higher than 71°Celsius, and
  - the sanitizing rinse is
    - o water that is maintained at a temperature not lower than 82°C and is applied for a minimum of ten seconds in each sanitizing cycle, or
    - o a chemical solution described in clause 75(1)(b), (c), (d), or (e); and
- All dishwashers must have accurate indicating thermometers



### **Food storage containers**

- Food storage containers must be food grade plastic or other non corrosive food grade material.

### **Dipper Wells**

- Scoops and dippers for ice cream, frozen confections or desserts, should be kept in a dipper well with running water.

### **Natural Gas Cooking Equipment**

- Gas ranges, fryers, woks, grills, etc., should be equipped with wheels and flex connectors (and protective chains) to allow cleaning and sanitizing of walls and floors around the equipment. Contact your local gas company for details.

### **Freezers/Sneeze Guards**

- Sneeze guards are required in all public areas where food items are not individually packaged (e.g., salad bars, buffet tables, etc).
- Effective sneeze guards are transparent to allow an unobstructed view of food items, no more than 45 cm (18") in height and overlapping the table by 7.5 cm (3").

# Other Considerations before Opening and Operating a Food Premise

## Well Water

- If private well water is to be used, ensure it is safe and potable.
  - Bacterial levels are safe when water results are Total Coliform = 0 and E. coli = 0.
  - An accredited laboratory will have to be used to analyze the water. A list of laboratories can be obtained from the Ministry of the Environment or accessed on-line at [www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/water/sdwa/lablicensing.htm](http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/water/sdwa/lablicensing.htm).
- Your drinking water system must be registered with the Health Unit. Contact the Health Unit to register your drinking water system.

## Home Food Preparation

- Food intended for public consumption is not permitted to be prepared in the kitchen of a private residence.
- A completely separate kitchen, with a separate entrance from the private residence, is required.
- All applicable legislation will apply and this kitchen will need to be regularly inspected by a public health inspector.



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