



Food Premises Orientation Guide

October 2025

Health Approval Process

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INTRODUCTION

THE ORIENTATION PACKAGE

The Orientation Package consists of three separate documents designed to guide you through the process of obtaining a health operating permit for your food premises:

1. **Food Premises Orientation Guide - Health Approval Process:**
 - ◇ This document outlines requirements for plan approval and an inspection that must be completed before you can open your business¹.
2. **Food Premises Orientation Guide – Food Safety and Sanitation Plan Templates:**
 - ◇ This guide provides instructions on how to create a Food Safety and Sanitation Plan for your premises.
3. **Food Premises Orientation Guide – Operator Resources Package:**
 - ◇ This document provides various resources to assist you in operating your business.

Your Environmental Health Officer (EHO) will provide you with education, advice, and resources to promote food safety in your food premises. After you have completed the requirements in this package, your EHO will do an initial inspection of your business and determine if health approval can be given.

It is your responsibility as the operator of a food premises to comply with the requirements of the [BC Food Premises Regulation](#)², including:

- ◆ Ensuring employees practice safe food handling techniques
- ◆ Ensuring the food premises is well maintained and kept in a sanitary condition
- ◆ Preventing foodborne illness

During inspections, the EHO ensures you are complying with the [BC Food Premises Regulation](#), [BC Public Health Act](#), and [BC Food Safety Act](#).

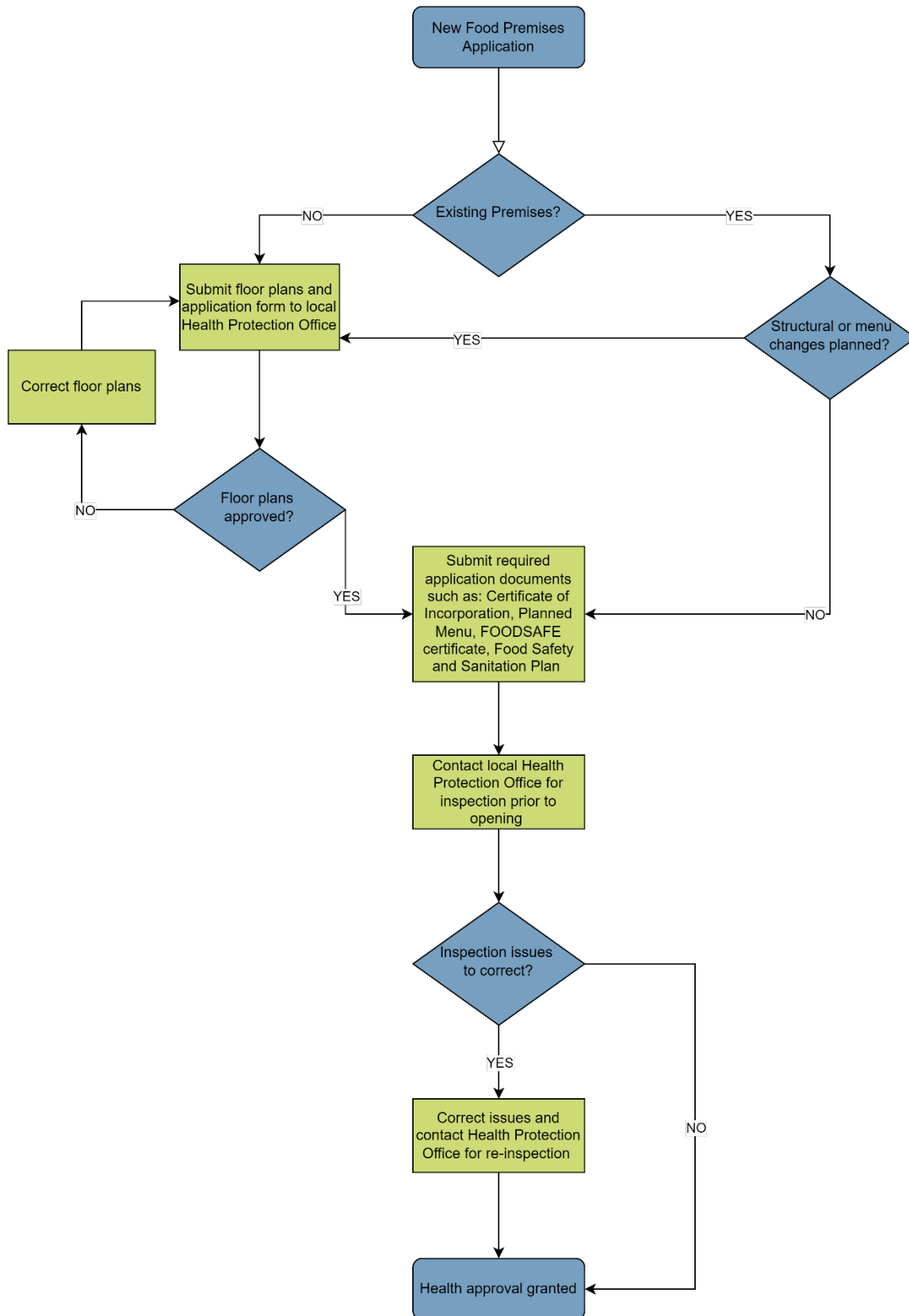
Contact your EHO if you have questions about your application. There is more information on the Vancouver Coastal Health website at [VCH Food Safety](#).

¹Contact other government agencies for their requirements before opening your food premises.

²Underlined words are website links.

³Blue italics lead to linked documents

HEALTH APPROVAL PROCESS



REQUIREMENTS FOR PLAN APPROVAL

1. PLAN DESIGN

Floor plans must be drawn to scale (showing dimensions either in metric or in imperial) and include the following:

AREAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food preparation Cooking area Dishwashing Janitorial Washrooms (public and staff) Dining and seating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beverage and bar station(s) Refrigerated and dry food storage Servery station(s) Floor drains (if any) Related areas (e.g., processing, retail)
EQUIPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ventilation equipment (e.g., range hood) Dishwasher and glasswasher (include type: high temperature or chemical) Sinks (hand washing, food preparation, dishwashing, and mop/utility sinks) Coolers, fridges and freezers Grease trap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food preparation table(s) Hot holding equipment (e.g., steam table) Cooking equipment (e.g., stove, oven, broiler) Hot water tank (include size) Ice Machine(s) Other equipment (e.g., coffee machines, water filters)
GENERAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surface material including floors, walls, ceilings, food contact surfaces Smooth, easy-to-clean and non-absorbent surfaces; sealed floor and wall joints Lighting layout and type of fixtures; indicate shatterproof fixtures in food handling areas Facility must be connected to potable water and a waste disposal system 	

Minimum dishwashing requirements (see [Guideline for Mechanical Warewashing in Food Service Establishments](#)):

- ◆ Dine-in premises: Mechanical or manual dishwashing options depend on factors such as the complexity of food preparation, seating capacity and type of equipment.
 - ◆ Three-compartment sink large enough to submerge your largest piece of equipment
 - ◆ Two-compartment sink and a high temperature or chemical/low temperature commercial dishwasher
- ◆ Takeout premises using single service utensils: 2-compartment sink large enough to submerge the largest piece of equipment

definitions

HAND WASHING SINK

a sink used for hand washing only

(More than one hand washing sink may be required)

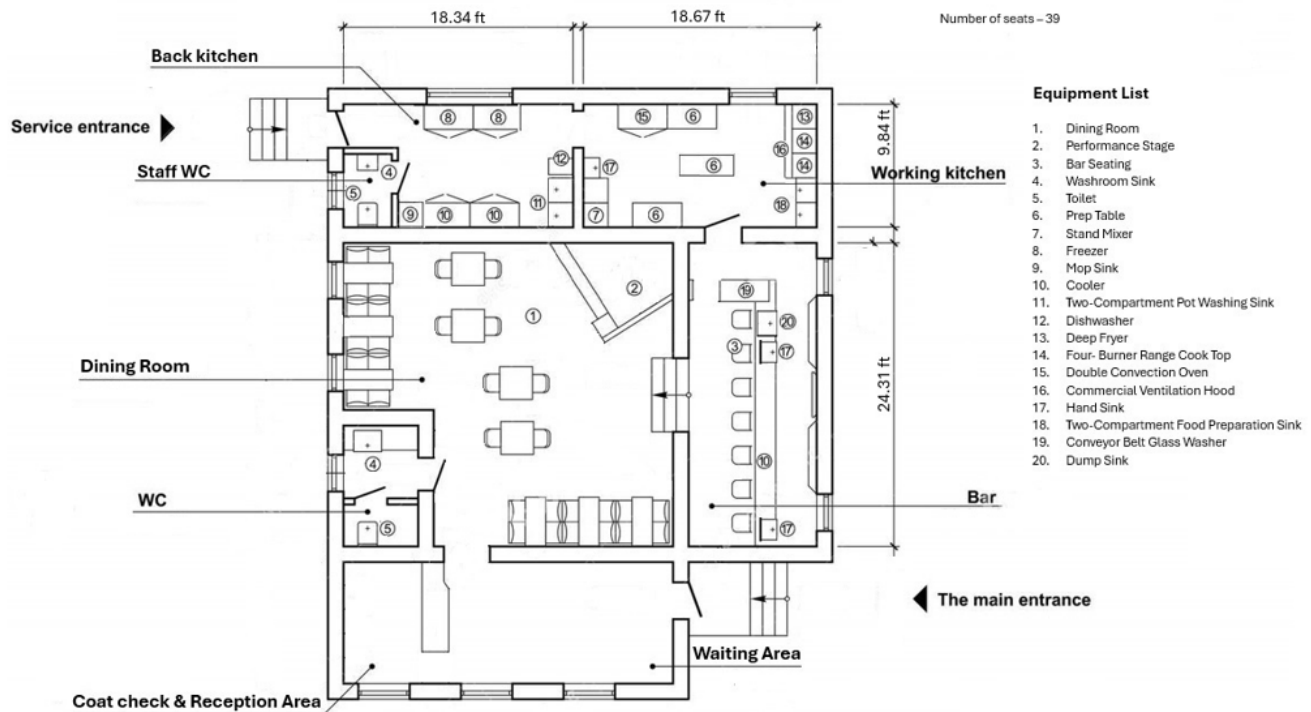
FOOD PREPARATION SINK

a sink used to thaw, cool, process and wash food

2- or 3- COMPARTMENT SINK

a sink used to wash and sanitize dishes and food equipment

SAMPLE FLOOR PLAN



2. PLAN SUBMISSION

- ◆ Submit a scaled plan drawing to your local health protection office. Note: Check with the municipality where you operate for the number of plans you must submit.
- ◆ Plans must be re-submitted if there are any alterations or revisions.
- ◆ Submit a copy of your business plan, including:
 - ◇ Type of operation (e.g., mobile, caterer, fast food, dine-in, take-out)
 - ◇ Proposed menu
 - ◇ Specialties (e.g., confit, sous-vide, Chinese BBQ meat, raw seafood, raw oysters, ready-to-eat/partially cooked foods, raw egg, fermented foods, charcuterie, in-house canning or bottling)
 - ◇ Copy of Certificate of Incorporation, information at the [BC Business Registry \(if applicable\)](#)

Submit plans for health approval to the appropriate health service delivery area below

(click [here](#) for the office address):

NORTH SHORE
RICHMOND
SQUAMISH
WHISTLER

POWELL RIVER
SECHELT
VANCOUVER

Note: Contact the municipality to apply for a business license and building permits (e.g., plumbing, fire, electrical).

REQUIREMENT FOR INSPECTION BEFORE OPENING YOUR BUSINESS

Prior to opening, you must call your EHO to do an inspection and receive health approval.

Complete the following items before requesting an inspection:

<input type="checkbox"/> Food Safety Plan	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sanitation Plan and cleaning schedule	
Renovation and/or construction	<input type="checkbox"/> Removal of construction materials <input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning and sanitizing of the food premises <input type="checkbox"/> Surfaces are smooth, easy-to-clean and non-absorbent, including: shelving, walls, counters, floors, cupboards, ceilings <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient hot water is available to meet the needs of the food premises <input type="checkbox"/> Sinks are connected to potable water and sewer systems <input type="checkbox"/> Backflow prevention devices are in place <input type="checkbox"/> Lighting is adequate with protective shields over food preparation and storage areas <input type="checkbox"/> Building design prevents entry of pests and conditions allowing for pest harbourage
Hand washing stations are functional and fully equipped	<input type="checkbox"/> Hot and cold running water <input type="checkbox"/> Liquid soap in a wall-mounted dispenser <input type="checkbox"/> Paper towel in a wall-mounted dispenser
Equipment must be operational	<input type="checkbox"/> Cooler temperatures are 4°C (40°F) or colder <input type="checkbox"/> Freezer temperatures are -18°C (0°F) or colder <input type="checkbox"/> Accurate thermometers are provided inside the units <input type="checkbox"/> Hot holding temperatures are 60°C (140°F) or hotter <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial dishwasher meets sanitizing requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ High temperature dishwasher: 71°C (160°F) at the plate level ◊ Low temperature/chemical dishwasher: 50 ppm chlorine residual ◊ Glasswasher: 100 ppm chlorine residual or 12.5-25 ppm iodine residual
Necessary tools and equipment are available	<input type="checkbox"/> An accurate probe thermometer that can measure 0°C (32°F) to 100°C (212°F) <input type="checkbox"/> An approved food contact surface sanitizer in a spray bottle and/or bucket, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ 100-200 ppm bleach sanitizer solution ◊ 200 ppm Quaternary Ammonium (QUATs) <input type="checkbox"/> Wiping cloths in a clearly labelled bucket of sanitizer <input type="checkbox"/> Test strips to test sanitizer concentration for dishwasher and surface sanitizer <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate waste containers (e.g., garbage, recycling, green waste)

What to bring to the inspection:

<input type="checkbox"/> Approved, stamped floor plans <input type="checkbox"/> Completed health permit application form with permit fee <input type="checkbox"/> Payment for permit fee if required: Visa, MasterCard, debit card, cash, cheque	<input type="checkbox"/> FoodSafe Level 1 certificate or receipt of registration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ Owner must be FoodSafe Level 1 certified ◊ At least 1 person, with FoodSafe Level 1, must be on-site at all times Find courses at www.foodsafe.ca
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