**FOOD SERVICE REQUIREMENTS**

The list below is intended to give you an idea of what is required for approval of a proposed food service establishment. Local health and building codes may vary or have additional requirements. A completed plan review form and a floor plan must be submitted with the appropriate fees to the local health department *before* construction for review and approval. You may obtain a complete copy of the Virginia Department of Health Food Service Regulations from the local Health Department or at the Virginia Department of Health Web Site: [www.vdh.virginia.gov](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov).

**\*\*Catering is not permitted from a home-based kitchen.**

**Water & Waste Water**

* Approved water supply – A Class IIB Non-community well, public water supply or other approved water supply.
* Approved sewage disposal system-properly sized on-site sewage disposal system (septic system) or public sewer.
* Grease trap as required by health department, building codes or public service authority.

**Floors, Walls & Ceilings**

* Floor materials should be grease resistant, impervious and easily cleanable.
* If floor drains are provided, floor drains should be graded to drain.
* All wall and floor junctures to be coved. (sealed with baseboard, molding, silicone or by other approved methods)
* Walls and ceilings should be smooth and easily cleanable in the kitchen and restrooms.
* Drop ceilings are permitted but the inserts must be smooth and cleanable.
* Peg board or other attachments to the walls in the kitchen should be removable and cleanable.
* No carpet or carpeted mats in kitchen, food prep, food storage or ware washing areas.
* No beams, piping or sewer lines should be exposed over food prep or food and equipment storage.
* Conduits leading to equipment should not be set directly on the floor or attached directly to the wall so that it does not hinder cleaning.
* Floors, walls and ceilings must be properly finished around ducts, pipes and cables.

**Restrooms**

* Public restrooms must be provided if seating is provided. Check with local building codes regarding number and handicap accessibility requirements.
* Employee restroom must be provided if only take-out service available.
* Restroom doors must be self closing.
* Restrooms must have outside ventilation such as mechanical fans, screened windows or air shaft.
* Restrooms must have hand washing sinks with hot and cold running water, soap dispenser, paper towel dispenser or air dryer.
* Ladies restrooms must have covered trash cans.

**Hand washing**

* Hand sinks must be provided in all food preparation and ware washing areas.
* Hand sinks must be provided with tempered hot and cold running water through a mixing faucet.
* Hand sinks must be supplied with soap and paper towels or other approved hand drying devices.
* Hand washing signs must be posted at all sinks where employees wash their hands.

**Plumbing**

* All plumbing must meet local or state building codes requirements.
* All water supplied equipment to be installed to prevent back-siphonage or cross connections, i.e., water supplied to a garbage disposal below the flood rim of the sink must be plumbed with a vacuum breaker.
* Hoses hooked to utility sinks or spigots must have the appropriate back flow preventer, vacuum breaker or air gap.
* All waste lines for 3 compartment sinks, culinary or prep sinks, walk-in refrigerated compressors, ice bins, ice machines, ice cream machines, dipper wells, steam kettles, coffee urns, ware washing machines and similar equipment are considered indirect waste and must be discharged through an air gap into a properly vented drain.
* Any sinks used for food prep must be air gapped.

**Lighting**

* 50 foot candles of light must be provided over food prep and cooking areas.
* 20 foot candles of light must be provided over buffets, in reach in refrigerated units, utensil storage, hand washing & ware washing areas and restrooms.
* 10 foot candles of light must be provided in storage areas.
* All lighting must be shielded even at buffets, salad bars, in refrigerated units and in displays.

**Ventilation & Fire Suppression**

* Heat, steam, noxious odors and grease laden vapors must be ventilated.
* Hood and fire suppression systems are required over cooking and frying surfaces by local & state building code requirements.

**Trash & Pest Control**

* All trash must be stored in dumpsters or cleanable, covered containers.
* All trash and waste grease containers must be on easily cleanable paved or concrete pad. The asphalt or concrete should be reinforced in front of the dumpster so trash trucks to not damage the area.
* Dumpsters must have plugs.
* All outer openings must be properly protected with doors, screens or fans.
* All exterior doors must be self closing.
* Fly control devices should not be placed over food prep, food storage, ware washing and equipment storage.
* A certified pest control operator should be contracted to control pests.

**Storage**

* Shelving units must be properly constructed. Wire shelving is recommended over wooden shelving.
* All food, single service and other supplies must be kept at least 6 inches off of the floor.
* A separate area should be provided for storage of poisonous products and cleaning supplies.
* A separate area should be provided for storage of personal items (employee lockers)
* Adequate cold storage facilities such as refrigerators, walk ins, and freezers must be provided.
* Refrigerated units must be at 41°F or below. Freezers should be at 0°F or below.
* All refrigerated units must have numerically scaled thermometers and be located in the warmest part of the unit.
* Adequate hot holding units such as steam tables, heated cabinets, etc. must be provided.
* Food in hot holding units must be maintained at 135°F or above.

**Ware washing & Utility areas**

* A 3 compartment sink for wash, rinsing and sanitizing dishes and equipment with double drain boards is required. Adequate space to accommodate dirty equipment before cleaning and adequate space to air dry clean equipment should be provided.
* Soap and paper towels should not be installed over 3 compartment sinks. This sink is only for ware washing or food prep.
* Dish washing machines are optional but if provided must be commercial grade and sanitize with heat or chemicals.
* A mop/utility sink or curbed floor hopper is required for disposal of mop water.
* If a premix chemical system is to be installed it is recommended that a separate plumbing fixture be installed.
* If a washer and dryer is to be installed it should be located in a separate area away from food prep or food or equipment storage.
* A bin or hamper should be located for storage of soiled linen.

**Miscellaneous Requirements**

* A metal stem, digital thermometer or thermocouple must be provided for checking food temperatures.
* A thermometer with a thin probe must be provided if thin foods are prepared.
* A chemical test kit must be provided for checking the concentration of all sanitizers used.
* Sneeze guards must be provided over any buffets, salad bars or self-service food items.
* There must be a “person in charge” (PIC) of the food establishment at all times. This person must demonstrate knowledge of food safety by taking a quiz administered by the Health Department or have passed a recognized food safety program.
* An Employee Health Policy is required. Employees must be aware of what symptoms of illness to report to the PIC (person in charge). The PIC will than make the determination if the employee is restricted or excluded from handling food.
* A menu must be provided and a menu review should be done with the Environmental Health Specialist assigned to the facility prior to operating.
* Any changes to the menu should be discussed after opening with the Environmental Health Specialist at the time of the inspection.
* Any changes/construction to the facility after opening such as remodeling or moving of equipment must be pre-approved by the Environmental Health Specialist.
* A Certificate of Occupancy from the Department of Building must be issued prior to the issuance of a Food Service Operations Permit by the Health Department.

**\*Certified Food Protection Manager Requirement**

At least one employee with supervisory & management responsibility & the authority to direct & control food preparation & service shall be a **Certified Food Protection** **Manager**, demonstrating proficiency of required knowledge & information through passing a test that is part of an accredited program.

(Some exceptions apply)

It is recommended that the certification be posted or easily accessible. **Go to** [**www.vdh.virginia.gov**](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov) **to find out what programs are accredited or ask your Environmental Health Specialist**