



WHATCOM COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

GUIDELINES FOR CATERING OPERATIONS

509 Girard Street
Bellingham, WA 98225
Telephone: 360-778-6000
Fax: 360-778-6001

This packet will help guide you through the steps to begin a catering operation. This packet is intended as a guide only and may not answer all of your questions. If you have questions after reading this packet, please call our office at (360) 778-6000.

A caterer is defined as a person or food service establishment preparing food with prior order or agreement in an approved facility for final cooking and or service at another location. The key difference between a caterer and a temporary food service establishment is the prior order or agreement. You must also have a commissary for preparation, cleanup and storage of all items relating to your business. If a licensed caterer wants to set up at a street fair, carnival, festival or similar event and sell their product on a per order basis, a temporary food service permit will be needed for each event.

Your project may also need approval from other agencies or departments. Be sure to contact the appropriate city, county or state offices for information on other permits or inspections required.

Complete and return the following information:

1. The application packet along with the \$331.00 plan review fee, which covers the first hour of plan review. Additional review time will be billed at \$126.00 per hour.
2. A **commissary** or **servicing area** agreement.
3. A copy of your **menu**.
4. The enclosed **Method of Food Preparation Chart** showing how items are prepared.
5. A list of equipment which includes all **refrigeration, cooking equipment, food warmers, sinks, ice machines, display cases, espresso machines, etc.** Please include the make and model numbers, if known. If you have not purchased the equipment, indicate whether you intend to buy commercial or residential style equipment.
6. A floor **plan drawn to scale** (show all dimensions), for both the your **permanent kitchen** or your **commissary** which includes:
 - A site plan outlining the food preparation areas
 - the location of worktables and counters;
 - the **finish materials** for all areas;
 - the location of all **plumbing fixtures**; and
 - the location of the **ventilation system**.
7. The location of restroom facilities. Restroom facilities must be available for food workers within 200 feet.
8. A copy of your **Report of System Status (ROSS)** if site is served by a On Site Sewage system (OSS).

Once this information has been reviewed, you will receive notice of either plan approval or of changes required for Health Department approval. **IMPORTANT!! CHANGES TO YOUR PLANS MAY BE REQUIRED. DO NOT PROCEED WITH CONSTRUCTION UNTIL APPROVAL HAS BEEN GRANTED.**

Prior to opening for business you will need to complete the additional steps:

1. Pay for your annual operating permit and any outstanding plan review fees; and
2. Call our office to schedule a pre-operational inspection at least **two business days** prior to the date of your desired inspection. Written approval for opening must be obtained prior to any food preparation or service.



WHATCOM COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
**FOOD ESTABLISHMENT PLAN
 REVIEW APPLICATION**
FEE \$331.00

509 Girard Street
 Bellingham, WA 98225
 Telephone: (360) 778-6000
 Fax: (360) 778-6001
 www.whatcomcounty.us

New Facility

Remodel

Food Establishment Name _____

Food Establishment Address _____

City, State & Zip Code _____ Facility Phone # _____

Business Owner Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

City State Zip: _____

Phone #: _____

Email: _____

Type of Ownership: Individual Corporation
 Partnership LLC

If partnership, corporation or LLC, attach list of all partners or corporate officers as registered with the State of Washington.

Plan Review Contact for Correspondence
 (If different from owner)

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City State Zip: _____

Work Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

Water Supply System Name _____
 Specify Name of Public Water System (for example "City of ____") – non-public systems cannot be approved

Method of Sewage Disposal: Sewer On Site Septic (OSS) (Attach copy of current ROSS)

Parcel # / Geo ID #: _____

Projected Seating Capacity _____ Projected Number of Meals per Day _____

Days Open:	<input type="checkbox"/> Mon	<input type="checkbox"/> Tues	<input type="checkbox"/> Weds	<input type="checkbox"/> Thurs	<input type="checkbox"/> Fri	<input type="checkbox"/> Sat	<input type="checkbox"/> Sun
Hours of Operation:							

Meals Served (Check all that apply): Breakfast Lunch Dinner Catering Brunch

If you selected "Yes" for Catering, choose all that apply: Full service (staffed events) Take away platters
 Catered events at this facility

If seasonal, operating dates and hours: _____

New Construction / Remodel: Start Date _____ Completion Date _____

Do you own other food establishments in Whatcom County? If so, list _____

Important: Please provide all materials requested at the time plans are submitted (see page 1 for list of required information). Failure to do so can result in delays to your project. Changes to your plans may be required. Do not proceed with construction until your project has been approved. I understand that, in consideration for the review of these materials by the Whatcom County Health Department, this application shall constitute a contract and a promise to pay all applicable fees as established by the Whatcom County Council.

Applicant Name _____ **Signature** _____ **Date** _____

Office Use Only

Received By _____ Date _____

Amount Paid _____ Receipt # _____



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COMMISSARY AGREEMENT

A commissary means an approved location, usually a food establishment, where food is stored, prepared, portioned, or packaged for service elsewhere. A commissary may also be used to service and store food vehicles or carts. Once our office approves of this commissary agreement, you may not use a different facility for food preparation and storage without the written approval of Whatcom County Health Department. Food code requires you to return to your commissary every day.

Persons wishing to operate at one of the following must submit this form for our review (check one):

- A mobile unit or push cart; or
A temporary food establishment requiring off-site or advanced food preparation; or
A temporary food establishment lasting two days or more; or
A farmer's market food vendor or processor stand; or
A catering business

The owner or person in charge of the approved food establishment or commissary must complete the following information:

Commissary Owner Information

Commissary User information

Facility Name: _____

Facility Name: _____

Contact Name: _____

Contact Name: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

City State Zip: _____

City State Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Round trip mileage from commissary kitchen to service location and back: _____ Miles

Afterhours accessibility – key provided to commissary user? [] Yes [] No

Commissary tasks (mark all that apply):

- Cooking foods
Hot Holding foods
Raw Meat/Seafood Prep
Vegetable / Ready to Eat Food Prep
Other Food preparation (trimming, assembly, re-portioning)
Dry Goods Food storage (i.e. shelving for dry goods)
Refrigerated Food storage (i.e. walk-in cooler, sandwich prep cooler)
Cooling of hot foods (If yes, which method: [] shallow pan or [] ice bath)
Other: _____
Potable water re-supply
Wastewater disposal
Cleaning of utensils
Restroom Available

I grant permission for _____ to use my facility for the tasks indicated above. This agreement is voided immediately if the commissary owner or user sells or closes his/her business. The commissary owner consents to inspection of the facility by the Whatcom County Health Department.

Commissary operator signature _____ Date _____

Commissary user signature _____ Date _____

Comments: _____

Approved: _____ Denied: _____ Date: _____ EHS: _____ PR: _____

METHOD OF FOOD PREPARATION – Part A: Food Preparation

Provide the food preparation steps for all menu items. For each menu item:

- Provide a narrative of all food preparation steps
- Fill out the Method of Food Preparation Chart.

Narrative Instructions and Examples

Instructions: List by number the order of food preparation steps used for the menu item you will be serving. Include preparation steps that include cooling, grill marking, partial cooking, packaging, smoking, sous vide, unattended and overnight cooking, reduced oxygen packaging, **etc.** Include how each menu item is obtained, stored, thawed, prepared, cooked, cooled, and how it is kept hot or cold before serving. Include anticipated quantities. Indicate if the menu item has multiple ingredients and list them. Menu items that are prepared in an identical way may be grouped together (such as BBQ beef and pork).

Example 1: Roasted Chicken Breast –

1. Chicken breasts are delivered frozen and are stored in the walk-in refrigerator to thaw.
2. Raw chicken is kept in the walk-in refrigerator until it is time to cook it in the oven.
3. Raw chicken is cooked in the oven to an internal temperature of at least 165°F.
4. Chicken is then held hot in the display case.
5. Leftover chicken is cooled in a single layer, on a sheet pan that is uncovered in the walk-in refrigerator. When the temperature reaches 41°F, we cover the chicken with plastic wrap.
6. The cooled chicken is cut up and used in our chicken salad.

Example 2: Chicken Salad –

1. We use leftover roasted chicken breast. Salad ingredients are first rinsed in the morning in the food prep sink and then cut up.
2. Salad ingredients are held in the refrigerator.
3. Chicken is mixed with greens and salad toppings per order. Salad toppings include canned cranberry sauce, green onion, celery, pickles, hard boiled eggs, almonds, grapes, cubed apple and commercial dressing.

Example 3: Hamburgers –

1. Frozen patties are placed on the grill once ordered. Hamburger patties are not cooked in advance.
2. We cook them on the grill until they reach at least 155°F. We use a digital thermometer to check the temperature.
3. Patties are served with buns. Toppings include cheese, lettuce, tomato, onion, guacamole made on-site, and commercial condiments (catsup, mustard, mayo).

Example 4: BBQ Beef/Pork –

1. Beef and pork are delivered frozen and stored in the walk-in refrigerator to thaw.
2. They are marinated in our special sauce in the walk-in refrigerator overnight.
3. Meats are cooked in the smoker. We use our thermometer to make sure they reach at least 145°F.
4. The beef and pork are shredded while still hot and mixed with our BBQ sauce.
5. We hot hold the meat for use during the day.
6. Leftover meat is cooled in hotel pans with a 2 inch food depth in the walk-in refrigerator. After meats are cooled to 41°F, they are covered with plastic wrap.
7. Meats are reheated in the steamer as needed and kept in the steam table until served. Leftover items are cooled uncovered in the walk-in refrigerator with a 2 inch food depth.

Method of Food Preparation Chart Instructions and Examples

Instructions:

1. Place an “X” indicating if the food will be purchased already prepared or made on site. Place an “X” indicating if the menu item is made with raw meat (beef, pork, or poultry), raw seafood or unpasteurized eggs.
2. Then, list, by number, the order of food preparation steps used for the menu item you will be serving. If food is purchased prepared, you do not need to complete the food preparation steps unless you plan to add additional ingredients. You can use the same food preparation step multiple times for the same food if needed.

Example 1: Roasted chicken breast - This food is prepared on-site, so an “X” is marked in that column. Since the chicken is raw, this column is also marked with an “X”. Thawing chicken is the first step in preparation so that box is given a “1”. After thawing, the raw chicken is held cold, so that box is given a “2”. Next, the chicken is cooked so that box is given a “3”. The chicken is then hot held, so that box is given a “4”. Any leftovers are cooled in a single layer in the walk-in refrigerator, so that box is given a “5”. The cooled chicken is served on top of a salad, so the serve box is given a “6”; See the example in the chart below.

Example 2: Chicken Salad – This food is prepared on-site, so an “X” is marked in that column. Since the chicken is raw, this column is also marked with an “X”. The process for the chicken is outlined above already. The leftover cold chicken is diced, so that box is given a “1”. Next the chicken is mixed with other chilled ingredients and held cold, so that box is given a “2”. The chicken salad is then served, so this box is given a “3”.

Example 3: Hamburgers – This food is prepared on-site, so an “X” is marked in that column. Since the hamburger is raw, this column is also marked with an “X”. Keeping the patties frozen in cold holding is the first step, so that box is given a “1”. Next, the frozen patty is placed on the grill to cook, so that box is given a “2”. Once cooked, the hamburger is assembled, so this box is given a “3”. Then, the hamburger is served. See the example in the chart below.

Method of Food Preparation Chart Examples:

Food or menu item	Food purchased prepared		Is menu item made with raw meat, seafood or eggs?	Thaw	Cut or assemble	Cook (include final cooking temperature)	Hot Holding at 135F or more	Cooling	Cold Holding at 41F or less	Choose one reheating method per menu item			Serve	Office use only
										Reheat food cooled on site to 165F	Reheat to order per customer order 135F for hot holding	Reheat commercially made product to 135F for hot holding		
Roasted Chicken breast	X	X		1		3 165F	4	5	2				6	
Chicken Salad	X	X			1				2				3	
Hamburgers	X	X			3	2 155F			1				4	
BBQ Beef/Pork	X	X		1	4	3 145F	5	6	2	7			8	
Potato salad	X								1				2	
Chili		X	X		1	2 165F		3	4		5		6	
Pad Thai		X	X		1	3 165F			2				4	

Complete your menu narrative and method of food preparation chart on the next pages.

METHOD OF FOOD PREPARATION – Part A: Food Preparation

Complete the Method of Food Preparation Chart – include each menu item.

<i>Food or menu item</i>	<i>Food purchased prepared</i>	<i>Food preparation on site</i>	<i>Is menu item made with raw meat, seafood or eggs?</i>	<i>Thaw</i>	<i>Cut or assemble</i>	<i>Cook (include final cooking temperature)</i>	<i>Hot Holding at 135F or more</i>	Cooling+	<i>Cold Holding at 41F or less</i>	<i>Reheat food cooled on site to 165F</i>	<i>Reheat to order per customer order 135F for hot holding</i>	<i>Serve</i>	<i>Office Use Only</i>
										Choose one reheating methods per menu item			

+ If you marked “Cooling”, complete Method of Food Preparation – Part B: Cooling

METHOD OF FOOD PREPARATION – Part B: Cooling

Cooling is when:

- Hot foods are properly cooled down to 41°F or less with the intention of reheating the food at a later time, either for hot holding (such as soup in a soup warmer) or for immediate service (such as BBQ pork in a microwave), or
- Hot foods or ingredients are properly cooled down with the intention of serving food cold (such as pasta salad), or
- Ingredients that are over 41°F (or that warm to over 41°F during preparation) are cut, mixed or assembled with the intention of offering the food cold (such as tuna salad, bean salad made with canned beans, sandwiches, salads).

Allowed cooling methods:

- Shallow pan (food depth in pan is 2 inches or less and uncovered while cooling in refrigerator)
- Food is cut into smaller portions ≤4 inches thick (roasts and whole poultry)

Alternative methods: If you choose an alternative method, you must provide written documentation that the food item cools from 135°F – 70°F in 2 hours and 69°F - 41°F in 4 hours with the total time not exceeding 6 hours.

- Ice and water bath
- Ice paddle or cooling wand
- Blast chiller

Here is an example of a cooling table:

Food Item	Cooling Method Used	Amount of food cooled in gallons, quarts, pieces, or pans (include volume or size)	Number of times per week food is prepared and cooled.
Chicken	Shallow pan	One hotel pan – chicken pieces in single layer	Every 3 days
Soup	Cream based – shallow pan	Leftovers only	Every 2 days
Chili	Shallow pan	5 gallons	Once a week
Pork roast	Meat cut into 4 inch pieces	Approx. 15 pounds	Once a week

METHOD OF FOOD PREPARATION – Part C: Consumer Advisory

Will you be offering any of the following items undercooked or raw?

Eggs (over easy/poached or raw as part of an entrée, salad, dessert, recipe)? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, list menu items: _____ _____ _____	Hamburgers	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Steaks	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Roasts	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Fish or seafood	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Oysters or other shellfish	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Other:	

If you marked yes to any of the above, you will be required to provide a consumer advisory on your menu and/or at your point of sale.

Provide a sample consumer advisory for the menu items you plan to offer raw or undercooked.

Consumer advisories are made of up two parts: Disclosure and Reminder.

1. **Disclosure:** Identifies which food items are raw. Disclosure is satisfied when the cooking status is explained in the menu description:
 - “Oysters on the half shell (raw oysters)”
 - “Caesar salad dressing (contains raw egg)”
 - “Our steaks and hamburgers are cooked to order”.

Or a footnote with an asterisk or other indicator at the menu item and at the bottom of the menu page stating that the menu item is:

- Served raw or undercooked or
- Contains raw or undercooked ingredients

2. **Reminder:** Reminds the customer that there is a health risk associated with eating raw or undercooked food. Example: “Consuming raw or undercooked meats, seafood, shellfish or egg may increase your risk of foodborne illness”.

The consumer advisory must be placed at the point where the food is ordered by the customer which may include menu, table tent, or menu board. Statements on menu boards must be readable from a point at which customers would normally stand.

EXAMPLES OF CONSUMER ADVISORIES

MENU	
<u>Hamburgers*</u>	
Bacon Cheeseburger	Jr. Burger
Deluxe Burger	Cheeseburger
* Can be cooked to order. Consuming raw or undercooked meats may increase your risk of foodborne illness.	

MENU
Garden Salad
Chef’s Salad
Caesar Salad (contains raw eggs)
NOTICE: Consuming raw or undercooked meats, poultry, seafood, shellfish, or eggs may increase your risk of foodborne illness.

Beverages
Soda Pop (Sm, Med, Lg)
Milkshakes (Chocolate or Strawberry)
Strawberry Fruit Smoothie
Apple Cider*
(SQUEEZED ON-SITE EVERY 3 DAYS)
*Notice: Unpasteurized juice may increase the risk of foodborne disease to people with certain medical conditions.

More information on consumer advisories can be found at:
<http://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/332-017.pdf>

METHOD OF FOOD PREPARATION – Part D: Other Questions

1. Do you plan to do any of the following?

Smoking fish/meats <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Sous vide <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Vacuum packaging or reduce oxygen packaging <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Making yogurt on site <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Water bath or pressure canning <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Fermenting or pickling <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Using food additives as preservatives (nitrite/nitrate, vinegar) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Curing <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Par-cooking or grill marking <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Dehydrating <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Sprouting seeds or beans <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Juicing wheatgrass <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Live shellfish tank (mollusk or crustacean) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Juicing produce <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

If you marked yes, you may need to submit a HACCP plan or variance request along with this application. Please contact the Health Department for more information.

2. Is sushi or sashimi offered on your menu? Yes No

If yes, you will need to submit the supplemental application.

3. Will you be cooking any raw chicken, beef, pork, fish, shellfish, eggs Yes No

If yes, please list items you will be cooking from raw: _____

4. The Food Code requires fruits and vegetables to be washed under running water before preparation. Will produce be washed on site? Yes No

- If yes, which produce items will be washed on-site?

- If no, which produce items will be purchased pre-washed?

5. Will any foods be unattended while cooking or hot holding (such as overnight): Yes No

If yes, list food items: _____

6. Do you have to go outside to access any refrigeration / freezers, food storage, equipment, cooking (such as a BBQ or smoker) or preparation areas? Yes No **All locations must be clearly marked on the floor plans. Note these areas must be protected from sources of contamination.**

7. Are all ice machines, ice bins, dish machines, food preparation sinks, drip trays, espresso machines, beer taps, and dipper wells indirectly drained with an air gap? Yes No

8. Are all food and single-service items protected from customer contamination by a sneeze guard? This includes self-service condiment bars, salad bars, buffet lines, espresso counters, and all other food preparation areas. Yes No If no, explain: _____

CLASSIFICATION →	"R"	"M"	"F/P"	"G"
REQUIREMENTS ↓	Restaurant, caterer, snack bar, espresso, smokehouse, etc.: Preparation of ready-to-eat potentially hazardous foods.	Retail meat/seafood market, or meat/ seafood depts. in grocery stores.	Bulk foods, produce stands, and produce depts. in retail grocery stores.	Convenience stores selling only prepackaged foods and low risk unpackaged foods.
Food Service Permit	Food service permit required prior to operation.	SAME AS CLASS R	SAME AS CLASS R	Same as Class R
Health Cards	Required for owners, managers, and employees.	Required	Required	Required if unpackaged foods are served.
Hand washing Sink Locations	Separate sink with hot/cold water, mixing faucet located in food prep areas, bars, wait station(s) and restrooms. Hot water to sink in 15 seconds.	SAME AS CLASS R	SAME AS CLASS R	Required if unpackaged foods are served.
Cooking Equipment	Capable of heating food to 165°F in 2 hours or less.	NOT ALLOWED	NOT ALLOWED	For hot dogs and coffee only. Otherwise NOT ALLOWED.
Hot Holding Equipment	Capable of holding cooked foods above 140°F.	NOT ALLOWED	NOT ALLOWED	For hot dogs and coffee only. Otherwise NOT ALLOWED.
Refrigeration	Must be conveniently located. Amount and type depends on menu. Commercial style refrigeration is required in most cases. Must hold food at 41 F or below.	Same as Class R. Raw meats and seafood must be stored and displayed in areas separated from ready to eat foods.	Must hold potentially hazardous foods at 41°F or below.	All refrigeration units must keep potentially hazardous foods at 41°F or below.
Dishwashing and Cleanup Facilities	3-compartment sink equipped with drain boards. See Food Code 4-301.12 for exceptions. Sinks are stainless steel. Indirect waste may be required.	3-compartment sink with drain boards for cleaning knives, utensils, equipment parts, etc. Appropriate facilities to clean large equipment in place.	Access to a 2-compartment sink for utensil cleaning. Produce prep sink may not be used for utensil washing.	A 2-compartment sink is required if any unpackaged foods are served.
Food Preparation Sink	Required if ready to eat foods are washed before serving. Separate sink may be required for raw meat.	May be required for thawing and/or washing meat or seafood.	Required for produce stands and produce depts.	Required if produce preparation is done in the store.
Food Contact Surfaces, i.e., counter tops, cutting boards, equipment	Stainless steel, plastic, plastic laminate, or hard wood. Smooth, non-absorbent, easy to clean, non-toxic.	SAME AS CLASS R	SAME AS CLASS R	SAME AS CLASS R
Structural Requirements i.e., floors, walls, ceilings	Floors: sheet vinyl, tile, or smooth sealed concrete. Walls: smooth, non-absorbent, and easily cleanable. Plastic laminate, stainless steel or similar required in some areas. Ceilings: easily cleanable.	SAME AS CLASS R	Bulk food sections same as Class R Produce stands: Foods must be off of ground on cleanable surfaces and must be protected from contamination from above.	SAME AS CLASS R
Mop Sink	Required. Mop water <u>cannot be dumped</u> in a dishwashing sink, food sink or outside.	SAME AS CLASS R	SAME AS CLASS R	SAME AS CLASS R
Restroom Facilities	Required for employees. Required for patrons if seating is provided. Must have hand sink w/hot & cold running water and mixing faucet.	SAME AS CLASS R	SAME AS CLASS R	SAME AS CLASS R

