



**Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
Licensure & Regulatory Services**

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www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS/LandR/FoodServiceFacility.html

PLAN REVIEW GUIDELINES FOR FOOD SERVICE ESTABLISHMENTS:

The information contained in this document is intended to assist you in submitting the necessary documentation for a Plan Review Submission with our office. If you have any questions, please contact our Main Office during business hours, at 240-777-3986 (select option 1, then option 4).

A Montgomery County HHS Plan Review will ensure:

- Food establishments are built or renovated according to current State of Maryland (COMAR 10.15.03) and local Montgomery County (COMCOR Chapter 15) regulations and codes.
- Proper food safety and sanitation by promoting an efficient layout and flow-of-food based on the menu and food preparation processes.
- Future code violations are prevented by addressing any potential layout & design issues prior to construction or renovation beginning.

SECTION I: Documentation Required for Submission:

1. Submit an *Application for Plan Review* either by postal mail, hand-delivery, or online submission.
 - a. PDF Application form:
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS/Resources/Files/L%26R/Environmental%20Health/Food%20Service/PLAN%20REVIEW%20APPLICATION%20.pdf>
 - b. Online Application Form:
<https://forms.montgomerycountymd.gov/f/PlanReviewForm>
2. Submit one set of complete drawings with the Plan Review Application.
 - a. Plans must be drawn or printed with an accurate scale/dimension included. An architect's wet seal/stamp is not required for HHS submission.
 - b. Refer to **Section II** for all additional information or supplemental documents required to be specified or included within these plans.
3. Menu & HACCP Plan:
 - a. MENU: List all the food items and beverages you plan to offer. If your facility has an unplanned or rotating menu cycle, provide a representative list of the general food items and beverages you plan to offer.
 - b. A HACCP Plan is only required for Moderate & High Priority facilities. Low Priority

facilities do not need to submit a HACCP Plan, but should still include a “menu” or list of food/drink items to be sold at retail.

- c. HACCP Template Guidelines are provided online at:
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Special/Resources/Files/LandRdocs/FoodService/HACCP%20Guidelines%20modified%2003302015.pdf>
4. Manufacturer specification sheets must be provided for all equipment included on the facility layout (pre-existing equipment to remain & new additions).
 - a. Specification cut sheets must include the manufacturer company, specific make/model, equipment dimensions, and show proof of third-party verification obtained for commercial-grade sanitation (such as: NSF, ETL-Intertek, UL-Sanitation, UL-EPH, CSA Canada/US, BISSC, etc.).
 - b. Equipment may be rejected and require an alternative make/model as replacement, if the applicant cannot provide proof of a verified commercial-grade rating that is accepted by this Office.
5. If the facility is a franchise, chain, or has a prototypical build: an additional submission to the State of Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Office of Food Control for review and approval.
 - a. Prototypical Builds: When there is more than one facility in Maryland with the exact same menu, processing system, and/or facility layout.
 - b. Not all franchises/chains will be required to submit to the State MDH Office for review. Contact MDH Office at 410-767-8400 for further information.
6. Building Permits are issued by one of the following Permitting Divisions below, based on the facility’s physical location within Montgomery County, MD. Include the Building Permit number on our Plan Review Application to avoid delays with the final approval and permit issuance.
 - a. Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS): 240-777-0311
 - <https://montgomerycountymd.gov/dps/>
 - b. City of Gaithersburg Permitting Office: 301-258-6330
 - <https://www.gaithersburgmd.gov/services/permitting-inspections>
 - c. City of Rockville Permitting Office: 240-314-8240
 - <https://www.rockvillemd.gov/165/Permits-Inspections>

PLEASE NOTE: An HHS plan review & approval is required before a Building Permit will be issued by the Permitting offices listed above. It is strongly recommended to submit the application packet to HHS at the same time as the reviewing Permitting Division.

Once an Application Packet is submitted & processed by the HHS office, please allow for a minimum of fourteen (14) business days for the initial review to be completed. Upon completion, the applicant will receive an email with any comments for revisions or clarification needed, prior to approving the plans and Building Permit.

SECTION II: Include within the Plan Submission

1. GENERAL LAYOUT:

- a. Provide properly scaled drawing of entire Facility that identifies the location of all equipment, fixtures, walls, doors, lights, drains, counters, restrooms, storage rooms, offices, refuse storage, wait staff areas, dining rooms, etc.
- b. Identify the location of any detached units or auxiliary areas in relation to the main Facility (such as: external storage rooms, garbage areas, public or employee-use restrooms, basements and/or cellars used for storage or food preparation, etc.).

2. FINISH SCHEDULE:

- a. Provide specifications for the surface materials to be used on the floors, walls, ceilings and base cove in each area throughout the Facility.
- b. All ceiling surfaces above Kitchens, Bars and any areas with open/exposed food must be provided with a solid, smooth and washable surface; that is durable, non-porous, non-absorbent and grease resistant. NOTE: Fissured acoustical tiles with holes on the surface are not permitted in food/drink processing areas.

3. EQUIPMENT SCHEDULE:

- a. Each piece of equipment must be clearly labeled, marked, or identified on the floorplan layout. Include a numerical legend/key or another means to legibly identify all equipment to be installed on site. Floorplan layout must include & identify all pre-existing equipment to remain as well.
- b. The Manufacturer Specification sheets provided (as detailed in Section 1, #4) should correspond to all equipment included on the floor plan.
- c. Note: Elevation drawings are not required at this time but may be requested by this Office if further clarification is needed once an initial review has been performed.

4. MECHANICAL SCHEDULE:

- a. A detailed description of the proposed ventilation fans, HVAC ductwork, and Exhaust Hoods located within the facility.
- b. All ventilation systems must discharge directly outside the facility. Make-up air vents must be designed/installed to prevent the entrance of dust, dirt, insects, or other contaminating material and debris into the establishment.
- c. State & County Codes require restrooms to be exhausted at a minimum rate of 2 CFM per square foot of floor area.

5. PLUMBING SCHEDULE & SANITARY RISER:

- a. Include the location of all open-site drains, hub drains, floor troughs, floor sinks, water supply lines, overhead waste-water lines, backflow prevention, grease trap units, and wastewater discharge connections for all food-service equipment (when applicable).
- b. Sanitary Riser diagram shall indicate Direct and Indirect connections and receptors for all applicable equipment with wastewater discharge.
 - Direct waste connection: is provided with an approved, properly installed vacuum breaker or backflow preventer for any equipment directly connected to a potable water system or having a threaded hose bib.
 - Indirect waste drainage: is provided with a minimum one-inch air gap above an open site drain or floor sink as required for all food-service equipment, as detailed in *COMAR 10.5.03.18* regulations. This includes (but not limited to): any food preparation or utensil washing sink; refrigerator coil; condensate waste lines, ice making machine; ice machines, ice bins, steam kettle; coffee urn or brewer; hot or cold drink machines; steam tables; cold-wells, warewashing machines, glassware rinser, and/or any drop-in sinks or counted-mounted sinks installed on premises.

SECTION III: Additional Code Requirements:

FACILITY & EQUIPMENT:

1. Aisles or working spaces between equipment and between equipment and walls are:
 - a. Unobstructed and of sufficient width to permit employees to perform duties without contaminating food or food-contact surfaces by clothing or personal contact.
 - b. A minimum width of:
 - 3 feet where food preparation occurs on only one side of the aisle.
 - 4 feet where food preparation occurs on both sides of the aisle and employees work back-to-back.
 - 5 feet where food preparation occurs on both sides of the aisle, employees work back-to-back, and other employees must pass through the area; or
2. A designated area is provided for storing employee's personal belongings (such as: coats, purses, bags, etc.) that is also separate from any food preparation areas or food-contact equipment. Specify the location and type of storage provided (Such as: lockers, cubbies, coat hooks, office or dressing room space, shelving, etc.).
3. If on-site laundry service is provided, show the location of the washing machine and dryer; the storage location of clean and soiled laundry; and all applicable plumbing isometrics.

4. All doors to the outside must be self-closing and rodent-proof. Door sweeps and/or gaskets shall be in good repair and provide an air-tight seal upon closure.
5. All equipment is either moveable or sealed to adjacent equipment/wall surfaces; provided with casters/wheels; or spaced away from walls and adjacent equipment to facilitate adequate access when cleaning. Any cracks, holes, and gaps between non-portable or stationary surfaces are to be sealed or caulked to prevent seepage/debris accumulation.
 - a. Tabletop Equipment: Install Countertop equipment weighing more than 80 lbs. on approved 4-inch legs, or seal equipment to table surface. Portable equipment weighing less than 80 pounds (and has no rigid or permanent utility connections) do not require leg risers, as long as it can be moved for cleaning (as frequently as needed).
 - b. Floor Mounted Equipment: Floor-mounted equipment shall be placed on approved 6-inch legs; so that there is sufficient space for cleaning between adjoining units and the floor, or the unit and the adjacent walls. Heavy stationary items without legs/risers must be sealed directly to the floor around all adjoining edges to prevent water-seepage underneath when mopping/cleaning.
6. Shelving for walk-in units and dry-goods storage and display areas shall be constructed of durable, non- absorbent, and non-corrosive materials.
 - a. The bottom shelf of any storage unit should be at least 6 inches off the ground. However, if the bottom shelf is intended for storing open/uncovered foods or equipment, then it must be raised to be at least 18 inches off the floor.
 - b. Any exposed raw wooden shelves will be sealed with a lead-free, non-metallic, easily cleanable and water-resistant paint or high-quality varnish.
7. The design of salad bars, buffets, and bulk-food service equipment must meet the design standards set forth in this guide, as applicable to both State and local County Codes.
 - a. When unwrapped food is placed on display, provide overhead covers, lids or install sneeze-guards to prevent external contamination (i.e.: from customer's sneeze or cough). Food guards may be hung from the ceiling, anchored to an adjoining wall, attached on the display counter, or be free-standing directly over equipment.
 - b. Provide information on the guard dimensions and materials used; and/or submit a cross-section drawing or specifications of the intended installation.
8. An adequate number of preparation tables are provided for intended food service processes, and to keep raw meats separated from ready-to-eat foods when these items prepared at the same time during operation.

9. Adequate refrigeration and freezer units are provided for all food storage; and is capable of maintaining proper temperatures for intended food service. Adequate equipment to rapidly cool (i.e., freezers, blast chillers, etc.) and/or reheat food (i.e., ovens, stove, microwave, etc.) is also provided, if either of these processes are indicated in the HACCP Plan.
10. Adequate hot-holding equipment is provided and capable of maintaining proper temperatures when food is: to be hot-held until plated or served; placed on display for retail sale; or put on display for self-service by customer.
11. Dipper wells are provided to store dispensing utensils used for serving frozen desserts. Dipper wells must have: a water source with control valve; an air gap at the point that water is introduced into the water well; and an indirect waste drain for wastewater discharge (when applicable by design).
12. A three-compartment sink must be equipped with both left and right integral drainboards or tables; and each basin must be a sufficient size/depth to accommodate the largest utensil or equipment being cleaned in this sink.
13. A mechanical dishwashing machine must be provided with the following:
 - a. Chemical Dishwasher: A compartment sufficiently sized to accommodate the largest item to be cleaned, Built-in temperature gauge for the wash/rinse cycles, a booster heater capable of heating water to at least 120°F minimum required for rinse cycle, an automatic dispensing system for chemical sanitizer used in rinse cycle; and test strips to measure the amount of sanitizer distributed each cycle.
 - b. High-Temperature Dishwasher: A compartment sufficiently sized to accommodate the largest item to be cleaned, Built-in temperature gauges for the wash and rinse cycles, a pressure gauge for the final rinse cycle, and a booster heater capable of heating the water to at least 180 °F minimum rinse.
14. If a charbroiler, pit barbeque, smoker, or similar equipment is installed: an Air Quality Permit-to-Construct from the Maryland Department of the Environment (DEP) is obtained when equipment is at least five square feet or larger.
 - c. Contact the Division of Environmental Policy and Compliance at 240-777-7770 for forms or additional information.
15. Wastewater lines cannot be located over food preparation surfaces, food equipment or food storage areas. Sanitary Sewer lines above food preparation or storage areas must be adequately encapsulated with seepage pans underneath to prevent contamination from condensation, drips or leakage.

HAND WASHING SINKS:

1. All handwashing sinks are to be designated for hand-washing purposes only; and cannot be used as a dump/rinse sink, utensil-washing sink, or for any other food-contact activity.
2. Handwashing sinks are equipped with soap and disposable paper towel dispensers, and provided with hot and cold running water tempered by the use of a mixing valve or combination faucet. A minimum of 100°F hot water must be provided at all times during operation and inspection.
3. Hand sinks must be located in each food/drink preparation area, processing area or ware-washing area; and must be adequately accessible within 25 feet or less travel distance from all food/drink preparation areas and equipment.
4. Side splashguards are required when the handwashing sink is located within 12 inches or less from: adjacent countertops, unprotected food storage, preparation surfaces or equipment. Splash guards shall exceed the vertical height of the faucet to prevent any splashing or cross-contamination while washing hands.

RESTROOMS:

1. Facilities providing tables & chairs for on-site dining/seating (either indoors or outside dining areas) must also provide a public-use restroom. A customer may not pass through any food preparation or food storage area to gain access to the restroom facilities.
2. All restrooms must be fully enclosed, with a self-closing and inward-opening door; provided with mechanical ventilation, and a lidded trashcan for feminine hygiene waste and/or diapers (when diaper changing stations are provided).
3. Restroom ventilation must be provided at a minimum rate of 2 CFM per square foot of floor area; remain separate from other ventilation systems within facility; and is vented directly to the outside.
4. Handwashing sinks must be located in or adjacent to each toilet facility, and adequately supplied with soap and hand-drying supplies (paper towels or automatic air dryers).
5. Any public single-user restroom must be made available for use by individuals of any gender; and identified with appropriate gender-inclusive signage (per Montgomery County Bill #4-22). Additional information is available at: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS/LandR/GenderInclusiveRestrooms.html>
 - a. Single-user restroom is: a single-occupancy restroom with an entry door that can be locked from the inside by the occupant, and has at least one toilet.
 - b. A single-user restroom does not include: restrooms with multiple toilet

stalls in same space; a private restroom in a residence, hospital, inn, hotel, motel; or ensuite restrooms that are only accessible from within a private room or office.

- c. Signage for single-user restrooms may not indicate any specific single-gender restriction (such as “Men” or “women” icons or language), nor contain descriptive language other than “restroom”, “toilet” or “bathroom” and can include a picture or icon of a toilet. Signage stated as “All-Gender restroom” is acceptable under this law.

GARBAGE & WASTE DISPOSAL:

1. Specify the trash storage located within the facility. The location of garbage grinders and trash compactors is to be included on layout, in relation to the facility, if used/provided.
2. Specify the location of exterior/outdoor dumpsters or grease containers. Outside storage of all trash receptacles must have vermin-proof containers/lids, stored on a paved non-absorbent surface, and contain a drainage system/outlet.
3. Any Food Service Establishment that might discharge any fats, oils, and grease or grease-laden wastewater; must also apply for a FSE Wastewater Discharge Permit from WSSC. If you have not already done so, apply using the application link below. More information is available online at: <https://www.wsscwater.com/fog>.
 - FSE Wastewater Discharge Permit Application:
<https://www.wsscwater.com/sites/default/files/2021-02/GENERAL%20INSTRUCTIONS%20WSSC%20FSE%20%20with%20application%20LOGO.pdf>

CUSTODIAL EQUIPMENT:

1. A mop sink or raised utility sink is provided solely for the disposal of wastewater after cleaning/mopping floors. A mop sink cannot be dually designated or used as a handwashing or food preparation sink.
2. A rack/hook for allowing wet mops and brooms to drip-dry when not in use. Suggested placement to be directly over mop sink or utility sink, so that wet equipment can drip into the mop basin, without having water pool on the floor.
3. Adequate storage space is provided for all other janitorial equipment used to clean facility, including sufficient space for chemical storage.

EXHAUST HOODS:

1. Exhaust Hood is capable of capturing steam, vapor, or smoke; and air flow is exhausted uniformly from within the hood. The hood ventilation is not blocked by solid over-shelves, charbroiler, or salamander units above grease-cooking equipment, unless an adequate angled deflector shield is provided underneath unit (with sides enclosed to prevent

grease accumulation on interior surfaces). Contact this office for example if needed.

2. Canopy-type hoods must overhang the leading edge of cooking equipment by a minimum of 6 inches on all sides for (UL/NSF) rated exhaust hoods. A custom-fabricated canopy-type hood must overhang the cooking equipment a minimum of 12 inches on all sides. The minimum depth of any exhaust hood must be at least 24 inches.
3. The hood has a smooth interior and is free of interior lips or edges that may allow grease or dirt to accumulate. It is provided with an approved means to capture and dispose of accumulated grease, such as a removable grease trough or collection pan.
4. The hood system is constructed of stainless steel or a durable, smooth, easily cleanable material (paint is not approved).
5. Filters are baffle-type, or an alternative design approved by the County Fire Marshall. Filters must fit tightly against the supporting framework, be easy to remove for periodic cleaning, and provide no wide gaps/spaces to affect air flow/exhaust.
6. A fire suppression system is provided and centered over required cooking equipment, as required by the Fire Marshall. It must be smooth, easily cleanable, and not create a surface on which grease or condensation will collect.

LIGHTING:

1. The type and location of lighting is specified for each area, as is the method of shielding (when applicable/required). Shatterproof LED is required if bulbs are to remain exposed by design/aesthetic, or if adequate shielding cannot be provided.
2. A minimum of 50 foot-candles of illumination is required in all food preparation and utensil washing areas; and a minimum of 20 foot-candles (30 inches from the floor) in food storage, walk-in cooler/freezer units, dining areas (when cleaning), and restrooms.

ADDITIONAL COUNTY LAWS & RESTRICTIONS:

1. **Healthy Meals for Children:** If a food service facility offers children's meals, at least one of them must be a healthy children's meal choice. More info available online at: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS/LandR/HealthyChildMenu.html>
2. **Menu Labelling requirements:** Establishments with at least 20 locations throughout the United States, shall provide: the total calories for each standardized menu item posted on the menu or menu board, adjacent to the name of that item, and that additional nutritional information can and will be provided to a consumer upon request. Details available at: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS/LandR/MenuLabeling.html>
3. **Trans Fats Restrictions:** Establishments that prepare food may not use partially hydrogenated vegetable oils, shortenings, or margarine that contain more than 0.5 grams

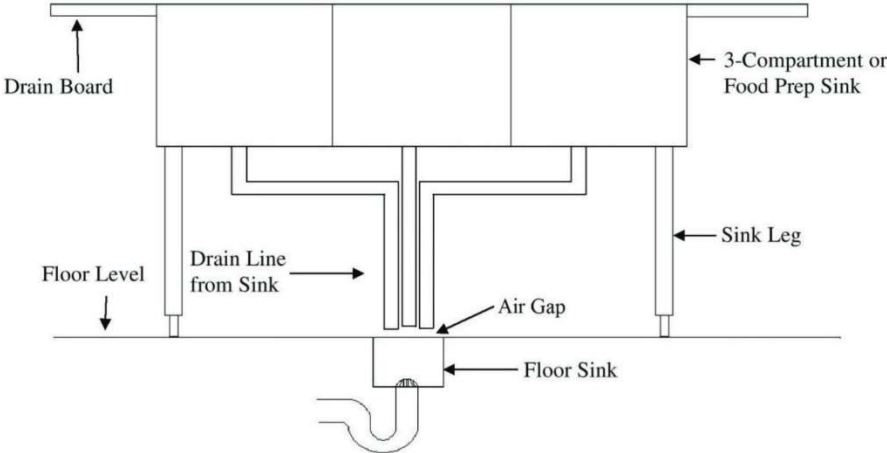
trans-fat per serving. This includes oils and shortenings used for deep frying. Details available at: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS/LandR/TransFat.html>

4. **Styrofoam Ban:** County Legislation requires that Food sold at retail and/or any Take-Away and Carryout containers provided to customers cannot be made of Styrofoam or polystyrene. Plastic, Paper or recyclable materials are recommended. Details available online at: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DEP/Resources/Files/trash-recycling/programs/switchfromsix/bill-33-20.pdf>
5. **Plastic Straw Ban:** County Legislation prohibits the distribution of single-use straws except in certain circumstances. Details available online at: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DEP/Resources/Files/trash-recycling/programs/straw/bill-32-20.pdf>

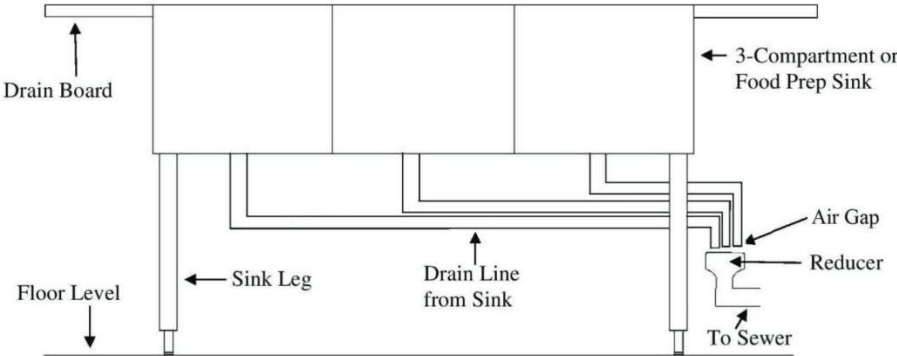
SECTION IV: Other Links & Resources

- HHS Homepage – Food Service Facility Licensing & Information: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS/LandR/FoodServiceFacility.html>
- HHS Plan Review Application:
 - a. Online submission: <https://forms.montgomerycountymd.gov/f/PlanReviewForm>
 - b. Printed Application to mail in with check payment: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS/Resources/Files/L%26R/Environmental%20Health/Food%20Service/PLAN%20REVIEW%20APPLICATION%20.pdf>
- HACCP Template & Guidelines: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Special/Resources/Files/LandRdocs/FoodService/HACCP%20Guidelines%20modified%2003302015.pdf>
- Certified Food Manager Training (Required for Moderate & High Priority Facilities only): <http://www.ansi.org/Accreditation/credentialing/personnel-certification/food-protection-manager/ALLdirectoryListing.aspx?menuID=8&prgID=8&statusID=4>
- Allergen Awareness Training (Required for Moderate & High Priority Facilities only):
 - a. AllerTrain: <http://www.allertrain.com/allertrain/allertrain-lite>
 - b. ServSafe: <http://www.servsafe.com/allergens>
 - c. Above Training: <http://www.statefoodsafety.com/food-allergens>
 - d. Tap Series: <http://www.tapseries.com>

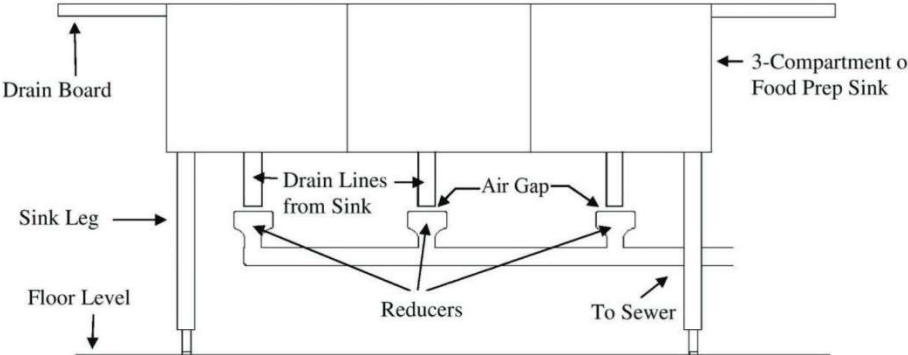
Indirect Drain Connections for Food Prep and Ware Washing Sinks



Indirect Drain Connection Using a Floor Sink



Indirect Drain Connection Using One Reducer



Indirect Drain Connection Using Three Reducers

NOTE: Must provide an "air gap" at least 1 ½ times the diameter of the pipe used.