

CAMERON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

Esmeralda Guajardo, MAHS
Health Administrator



James W. Castillo II, MD
Health Authority

The following documents are required to process the establishment application:

The Cameron County Public Health (CCPH) Environmental Health Program **requires** the following documents for the operation of a food service establishment, and/or retail food store (i.e., restaurants, cafeterias, hamburger stands, taco stands, day care centers, retail food store, etc.). Documents listed below shall be submitted to the Cameron County Public Health Environment Health Program located at *1390 W. Expressway 83, San Benito, Texas*, office number (956) 247-3599.

To initiate the application process:

1. **Application** (Application will be completed by CCPH staff)
 - a. Application should be filled in with applicant's personal information and information of the owner of the premises, if not owned by applicant.
2. **Sketch**
 - a. A sketch shall be submitted before the construction or major remodeling and in case of change of ownership of food service establishment, retail food store, and/or mobile vending unit. The plans and specifications shall indicate the proposed equipment layout arrangements, floor, wall, ceiling construction, restroom, garbage disposal area, etc. No food service establishment, retail food store, and/or mobile vending unit shall be constructed, extensively remodeled, or operated except in accordance with plans, and specification approved by Cameron County Public Health and the Cameron County Building Department.
3. **Food Menu**
 - a. Food menu should be typed or printed and it should specify what products would be sold in the business (i.e. tacos, hamburgers, sodas, canned foods, pre-packaged items). Any changes made in the future should be notified to the department and a new menu should be turned in to the office.
4. **Certificate of Occupancy**
 - a. A Certificate of Occupancy shall be obtained from Cameron County Building Permit Department (956) 247-3517 (*1390 W. Expressway 83 San Benito, TX*). This certificate pertains to complying with building, plumbing, and electrical codes; if located within a municipality, contact local building department.
5. **Fire Marshall Report**
 - a. A Fire Marshall inspection shall be obtained to comply with fire safety code. If you are located within a municipality that has a Fire Marshall office, contact the local Fire Marshall inspector. Otherwise, if located outside city limits, contact the Cameron County Fire Marshall at (956) 547-7000.
6. **Registration of Business**
 - a. Applicant is required to register their new business with the Cameron County Clerk's office located in *San Benito (956) 247-3510 or Brownsville (956) 550-1425*.

7. **Texas Sales and Tax Permit**

- a. Applicants will contact the Comptroller's office to obtain a Tax ID and follow proper method to report their monthly taxes. *Comptroller's office – Brownsville (956) 542-8426.*

8. **Contract Proof of Water/Waste Water**

- a. A letter from the local water company will be required to verify that water and sewer services are available in the business. If water well is the primary supply of service, water analysis will be required and a PWS License will be required and approved by the Texas Commission of Environmental Quality (TCEQ). If septic system is the method for sewage disposal, a probe inspection will be required to verify that septic system is adequate and functional to operate the business, prior to obtaining a probe letter. A probe letter will substitute the letter from the water company. You can obtain a probe letter from Cameron County Public Health Environmental Health Program at (956) 247-3599.

9. **Rent or lease agreement**

- a. A rent or lease agreement will be required to verify applicant has permission to operate a business on the location listed in the application. If owned by applicant, a deed will be required to show proof of ownership.

10. **Driver License/Photo ID/Other**

- a. A Driver License or photo identification will be required to verify information listed on the application.

11. **Certified Food Managers**

- a. Certified food managers certification(s) must be submitted and may be obtained online, or you may contact a local company that is accredited by the State of Texas, which may provide the services. The certification will prepare you to protect the client from potential food hazards.

12. **Letter of authorization**

- a. If the business is located within a municipality, you must request permission to operate inside city limits; a letter signed with a statement allowing you to operate will be issued and turned in along with your application.

13. **Fee**

- a. The annual health permit fee for each type of operation is **\$150.00** (i.e., restaurants, retail food stores, bakeries, tortillerias, barbeque, etc.). An annual inspection and a six month inspection are required to renew permit before expiration date on permit. The fees are non-refundable.

Note: In accordance to Cameron County Public Health Codes, establishments operating without a valid health permit will be cited with a class C misdemeanor by the local Justice of the Peace and each day on which a violation occurs constitutes a separate offense.

Guidance Principles

The following are basic guidelines for permitting and inspection maintenance of eating and drinking facilities as outlined in the ***Texas Food Establishment Rules (TFER) of the State of Texas***. These guidelines are not to be construed as complete or as the final requirements. Each facility shall be evaluated on its own merit and requirements adjusted for each facility to achieve compliance in accordance with the **TFER**. For more rules and regulations visit www.txrestaurant.org/tfer.

1. Surfaces

- a. Surfaces such as floors, walls and counter tops in the kitchen area shall be sealed material that cleans easily. Stainless steel or Formica are some recommendations for food contact surfaces or preparation table.
- b. No raw or hazardous chemically treated wood capable of oil aerosol absorption shall be utilized in any area of the kitchen. (Such as counter tops or wood cutting boards)

2. Equipment Surfaces

- a. All food contact utensils (tongs, spoons, spatulas, etc.) shall be stainless steel or Teflon coated approved metals. No raw wood utensils are to be utilized.
- b. All food contact cooking containers (pots, pans, skillets, etc.), shall be stainless steel, cast iron, or coated Teflon. Unapproved ceramic equipment (clay pots from Mexico) shall not be used.
- c. All Teflon coated equipment shall be replaced when coating is scarred and/or metal is exposed.

3. Ware Washing Equipment

- a. A three compartment stainless steel sink, with a single service valve to serve all three compartments supplying hot and cold water. The largest cooking pot or pan must be completely immersed into each compartment. Ware wash unit should be of such construction and size to permit air drying without utilizing compartments for drying. A backflow device should be installed to prevent sewage water from returning into the three compartment sink or handwashing sink.

4. Handwashing

- a. A handwashing sink must be accessible at all times in preparation area, it should be used only for handwashing procedure and must be fully stocked at all time with soap, paper towels and trash can with pedal lid. *Accessible- present in the preparation/kitchen area and unrestricted of obstruction by any means.

5. Water Supply

- a. The water supply shall be from an approved potable water source by the Texas Commission of Environmental Quality (TCEQ).
- b. Water from a well shall be analyzed by a certified laboratory annually and shall meet basic potable water standards of TCEQ. If business provides services to more than 25 people a PWS permission should be obtain from TCEQ.
- c. Hot water shall be a minimum of 110° (degrees) Fahrenheit, and 170° (degrees) Fahrenheit for mechanical systems is recommended. Hot water shall be available on demand and during peak times of demand.

6. **Refrigeration Equipment**

- a. All refrigerators and freezers must be for commercial use (***no household appliances will be accepted***) and shall be maintained in a clean condition and monitored frequently for appropriate temperatures. Refrigerators shall be 41° to 45° (degrees) and freezers at 0° (degrees).

7. **Hot Food Equipment**

- a. All hot food equipment shall be maintained in a clean condition and maintain temperatures appropriate to the specific food as designated by **Texas Food Establishment Rules (TFER)**.

8. **Buffet lines and display equipment**

- a. All hot and cold food retention equipment shall be equipped with approved shield protection to prevent contamination by environment or person coughing or sneezing.

9. **Temperature Monitoring**

- a. All temperature sensitive equipment (i.e. refrigerators, freezers, hot holding cabinets, cold hold tables) shall be equipped with metal, easily readable thermometers. Mercury thermometers shall not be used.

10. **Kitchen Staff**

- a. Management is responsible that all kitchen staff be clear of any illness which may present a potential of contamination of product presented for sale.
- b. Management is responsible for the training of all kitchen staff on food safety procedures. Certification from a *State of Texas Health Department Food Safety Course* is required. Employees will be required to obtain food handlers certification within 30 days of employment.
- c. Hair restraints shall be worn at all times by personnel preparing food.
- d. While preparing food, food employees may not wear jewelry on their arms or hands.

11. **Miscellaneous Food Preparation**

- a. Custom food preparation procedures such as specialty Bar-B-Que shall be conducted in an enclosed environment such as a completely screened shelter. Other specialty methods shall be evaluated on their own merits to prevent environmental contamination.
- b. Catering services or transfer of custom specialty preparation shall be by methods which will protect from environmental contamination and ensure appropriate temperature maintenance for the product if final destination is lengthy distance.

12. **Ventilation System**

- a. Ventilation system should be installed and approved by Fire Marshall Inspector requisites.

Cameron County Public Health
Environmental Health Program
Gustavo Olivares, Environmental Health Director

FACILITY SKETCH

Business Name: _____

Date: _____

Permit #: _____

Signature: _____

Phone#: _____