

# **Answers** **for Food** **Service** **Operators**



McLean County

**McLean County Health Department**  
**Environmental Health Division**

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[www.mcleancountyil.gov](http://www.mcleancountyil.gov)

*Partners in Prevention*



Many individuals who are thinking about entering the food service industry are unfamiliar with the code requirements for food establishments. This pamphlet provides potential food establishment owners and operators with important facts about the McLean County Health Department's Food Protection Program.

# LICENSING DETAILS



**What law requires a retail food establishment in McLean County to obtain a food permit from the McLean County Health Department?**



The McLean County Revised Code requires permits for Food Service Establishments, Retail Food Stores, Bed and Breakfast establishments and Temporary Food Establishments.



**What are examples of establishments that require a food permit?**



Examples include restaurants, mobile foods and pushcarts, coffee shops, school and employee cafeterias, soda fountains, taverns, bakeries, caterers, vending commissaries, daycares and grocery stores, or similar establishments in which food or drink are prepared for direct consumption.



**How much will a food permit cost?**



The permit fee is determined by the food permit classification of the establishment.

# INSPECTIONS

**Q. How frequently is a food establishment inspected by the health department?**

**A.** The McLean County Revised Code requires a minimum of one to four inspections a year depending on the food permit classification. Other visits to the establishment may be necessary for reinspections, responding to complaints from the public or investigating possible foodborne illnesses.

**Q. Is advance notice given when an inspection visit is planned by the health department?**

**A.** No. Routine inspections are made unannounced. Reinspections, however, may be scheduled.

**Q. Can a manager or supervisor accompany the sanitarian during the food establishment inspection?**

**A.** Yes! The McLean County Health Department encourages management to accompany the sanitarian. This allows for prompt identification and discussion of any problems, as well as explanations of any corrective measures needed.

**Q. What happens if the sanitarian finds violations during an inspection?**

**A.** If critical violations are found that could be of immediate danger to health and safety, the Person-In-Charge will be asked to correct them immediately. Under some circumstances, the Person-In-Charge may be asked to voluntarily close the establishment or the McLean County Health Department may suspend the food permit. If violations are non-critical, a reasonable amount of time will be given for correction.

**Q. Will the result of inspections be made public?**

**A.** Each month, the inspection scores and number of violations found during each inspection are posted on the McLean County website. All food service establishment records are subject to public disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act. This means that a news reporter or a private citizen has a right to examine all food records on file.

# FOOD RELATED ILLNESS

**Q. What should the Person-In-Charge do if an employee comes to work ill or with an infected cut or sore?**

**A.** Send them home! Many kinds of foodborne illnesses can be transmitted to customers from a sick employee or an employee with an infected cut or open sore. By removing sick workers from the establishment until they have recovered, a major foodborne disease outbreak that could have had disastrous consequences for the business may have been prevented.

**Q. What should the Person-In-Charge do if a customer reports becoming ill from eating at the restaurant?**

**A.** Notify the McLean County Health Department. The department will investigate the situation to determine if food consumption was the possible cause of the illness and will attempt to find out how it occurred. The health department does not automatically close an establishment that is suspected of being associated with a foodborne illness outbreak, however, circumstances may necessitate that response. The department is primarily concerned with determining what caused the illness and preventing recurrence.

# **NEW CONSTRUCTION AND REMODELING**

**Q. Must construction and equipment plans be submitted to the McLean County Health Department before starting any construction or remodeling for a proposed food establishment?**

**A.** Yes, the McLean County Revised Code requires that properly prepared plans and specifications must be submitted to the health department and approved PRIOR to the work being started. This will prevent any misunderstandings as to what is required and ERRORS that might later result in additional cost to the owner/operator.

**Q. Should a proposed menu be included with the plans?**

**A.** Yes, a proper plan review cannot be done without a menu.

**Q. Does all the equipment associated with the food preparation areas, dishwashing areas and dry storage areas have to be commercial equipment?**

**A.** Yes. All equipment must be commercial grade and approved by the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) or an equivalent testing company.



## What kind of information must plans for remodeling or new construction contain?



### I. General Construction Requirements

- A. Floor plan and equipment layout
- B. Floor, wall and ceiling surface schedules
- C. Cookline exhaust hoods, ventilation and make-up air
- D. Plumbing layout
- E. Employee toilet room and/or public toilet rooms
- F. Water supply
- G. Sewage disposal
- H. Catalog cut sheets or spec sheets for equipment
- I. Lighting layout
- J. Individual proposals may require additional information

### II. General Equipment Requirements

- A. Commercial dishwashing machine and/or a commercial three compartment sink with two integral drainboards.
- B. Handwashing sinks in food preparation **and** utensil washing areas. (In small kitchens, one handwashing sink may satisfy the requirement)
- C. Janitorial mop sink.
- D. Adequate commercial grade refrigeration units.
- E. Adequate dry storage area with freestanding shelves.
- F. All equipment in the food prep area, utensil washing areas and dry storage areas must be on a minimum of 6" legs. (Cookline equipment and other large pieces of equipment should be on castors).
- G. Wall hung or island hoods must overhang cooking equipment by a minimum of 6" on all exposed sides.

**\*Note:** Wood or plastic laminate equipment, cabinets and shelving are **NOT** allowed in the food prep areas, utensil washing area or dry storage areas.

# MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION



**Are food service establishments required to have managers or supervisors certified in food service sanitation by the State of Illinois?**



All food service establishments are categorized according to the State of Illinois Food Service Sanitation Code as being high, medium or low risk for causing foodborne illness. The risk categorization is determined by the relative risk of causing foodborne illnesses based on the number of high-risk food operations that occur at the establishment.

General examples of high, medium and low risk facilities are: High–large full service restaurants; Medium–fast food, pizza and small restaurants; Low–taverns and concession stands.

High-risk establishments must have a certified food service sanitation manager or supervisor on the premises at all times that potentially hazardous food is being handled.

Medium risk establishments must have one full-time certified manager or supervisor.

Low risk establishments are not required to have a certified manager or supervisor.



**Is each food service establishment required to have a certified supervisor or manager before it opens?**



No, but a manager(s) or supervisor(s) must be enrolled in an approved course that will be completed within three months of opening and must be able to show evidence of registration.



**How does a person become certified?**



By successfully completing an approved course with a minimum of 15 classroom hours and passing a monitored examination offered by the State of Illinois or other approved testing agencies.



**Are the course and examination offered locally?**



Yes, Illinois State University offers a non-credit course in Foodservice Manager Training three times a year. Also, other approved private firms or agencies may offer the course and examination.



# GENERAL INFORMATION

**Q. Does the health department provide any food sanitation services other than issuing permits or performing inspections?**

**A.** Yes, the health department is available for consultation with food service operators regarding any aspect of the food protection program. We can supply training materials, videos, signs (including non-English) and give educational sessions to groups of food service employees regarding food service sanitation.

**Q. Can the McLean County Health Department be contacted to discuss opening or purchasing a food establishment or discussing food service sanitation?**

**A.** McLean County Health Department  
Environmental Health Division, Room 204  
200 West Front Street  
Bloomington, Illinois 61701  
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