A Guide to Permits and Licenses

Opening a Stationary Food Business in the City of Philadelphia

For other applications and instruction manuals, go to:
www.phila.gov/health/foodbusiness

Office of Food Protection
Philadelphia Department
of Public Health
321 University Avenue, 2nd Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19104
215-685-7495

City of Philadelphia
LIFE • LIBERTY • AND YOU™

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Congratulations and thank you!

The City of Philadelphia is excited to welcome your food business to the City's outstanding array of restaurants and other food establishments. It is the City of Philadelphia's goal to make the process of opening a food business as smooth, transparent, and customer-friendly as possible for the business owner.

Purpose of the manual

This manual is for you if you plan to:

- Start a new stationary food business
- Renovate an existing stationary food business
- Take over an existing stationary food business ("change of ownership/licensee")

Every food business in Philadelphia must comply with the local zoning code, the local building code, and the health code. This step-by-step manual was created jointly by the Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections and the Philadelphia Department of Public Health to help you understand and comply with local regulations and to minimize any surprises along the way.

Food safety is an important responsibility of every food business. That is why the Philadelphia Department of Public Health will work with you to ensure your personnel have appropriate food safety knowledge and your facilities have the capacity to operate safely. The Philadelphia Department of Public Health must grant approval before the Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections can issue your actual food license. Food poisoning can be very serious, yet it is often underreported. It impacts **one in six** people annually in the U.S. Most people will recover without any lasting effects from their illness. However, for some the effects can be devastating and even deadly. Serious long-term effects associated with common types of food poisoning include: kidney failure, chronic arthritis, brain and nerve damage and death. Most commonly, food can become contaminated from poor sanitation, improper preparation, or storage at the wrong temperature. You can find out more about foodborne illnesses at www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/facts.html

What is not included in the manual?

This manual assumes you have already completed the critical first steps to opening any business, including business planning, financing, and identifying your ideal location, menu, pricing and marketing plan (either by yourself or with the help of professionals). This manual is specific to the requirements of the City of Philadelphia and does not include information about potentially applicable state and federal requirements. Please see the resources listed in the appendix or contact the City's Commerce Department's Office of Business Services for assistance with pre-planning or state and federal regulations and requirements.

This manual only applies to stationary food businesses and does not apply to other food business types, such as mobile vending and special events. For more information on starting these other types of businesses, please go to www.phila.gov/health/foodbusiness.

DEPARTMENT CONTACTS

Philadelphia Department of Public Health	Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections
www.phila.gov/health Office of Food Protection	www.phila.gov/li Zoning Engineering Services License/Permit Issuance
Mailing: 321 University Avenue, 2nd fl, Philadelphia, PA 19104 **Mapping: 401 Curie Boulevard, Philadelphia, PA 19104** **Phone: (215) 685-7495** **Hours: Monday – Friday 9 am - 4 pm**	**Municipal Services Building** **1401 JFK Blvd, Lower Level Concourse, Philadelphia PA 19102** **Phone: 311 or (215) 686-8686** **Hours: Monday – Friday, 8 am- 3:30 pm (last Wednesday of each month 8 am - 12 pm)**

Philadelphia Commerce Department - Office of Business Services (OBS)
Client Services Hotline – (215) 683-2100
Email business@phila.gov
Web: www.phila.gov/business

Food Protection "visiting hours" at Licenses and Inspections

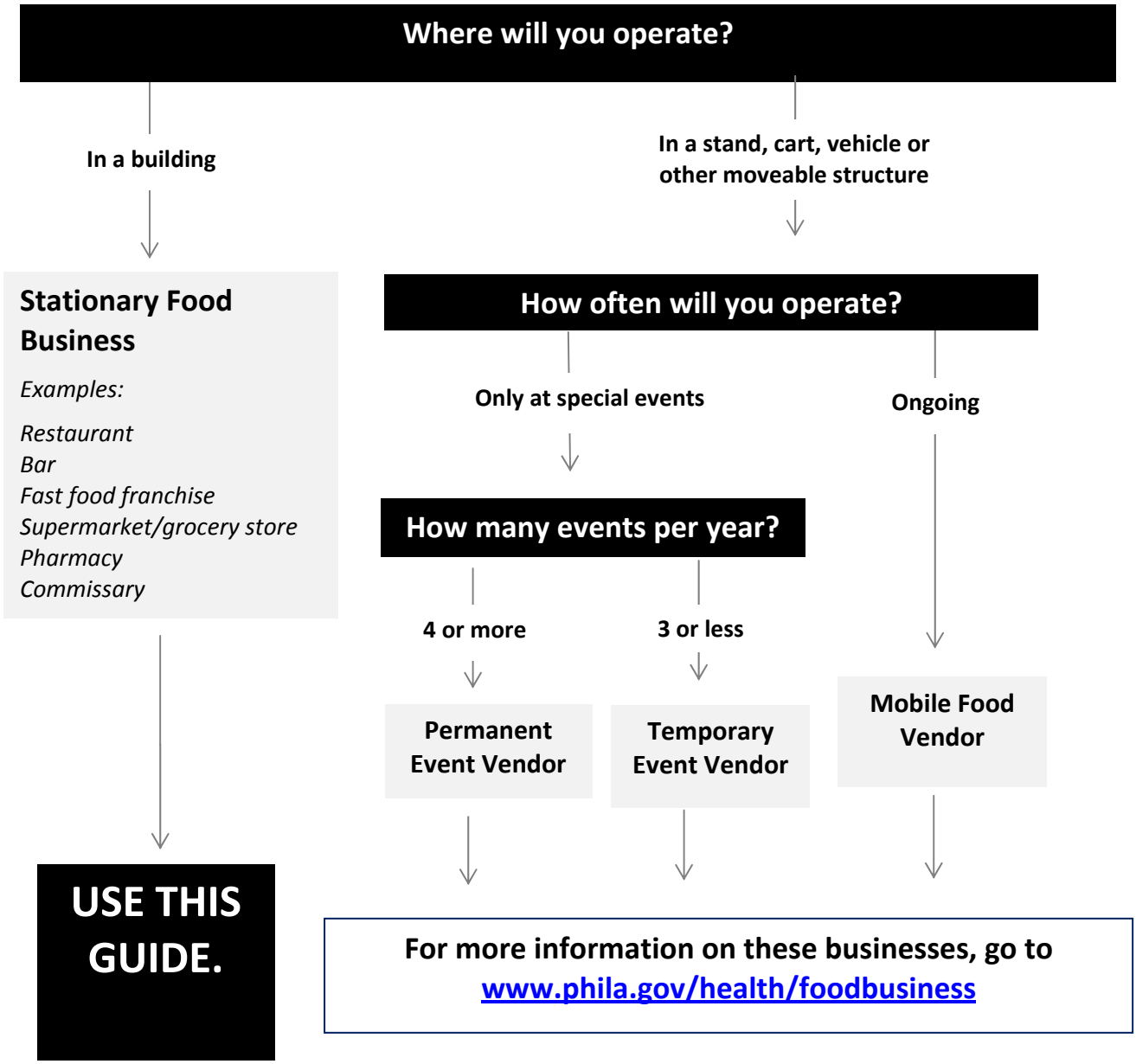
Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday
10:00 am – 2:30 pm
Municipal Services Building (MSB)
1401 JFK Blvd, Lower Level Concourse
Philadelphia, PA 19102

You can now get all of your questions about food protection, zoning, building, and licensing addressed by visiting only one location - the Municipal Services Building ((1401 JFK Blvd, lower level concourse, Philadelphia, PA 19102). A public health representative is available on-site during the above listed hours to answer your questions about plan review, equipment needs, and food safety training for employees. To find out more, call (215) 685 - 7495, or go to the "L&I Ticket Counter" at the Municipal Services Building (1401 JFK Blvd, lower level concourse, Philadelphia, PA 19102). *Note that all public health licenses and permit applications (e.g., plan review, food safety certification, and special events) must still be mailed or delivered in-person to the Department of Public Health - Office of Food Protection (For mailing: 321 University Avenue, 2nd Fl, Philadelphia, PA 19104; For mapping: 401 Curie Blvd, Philadelphia, PA 19104).*

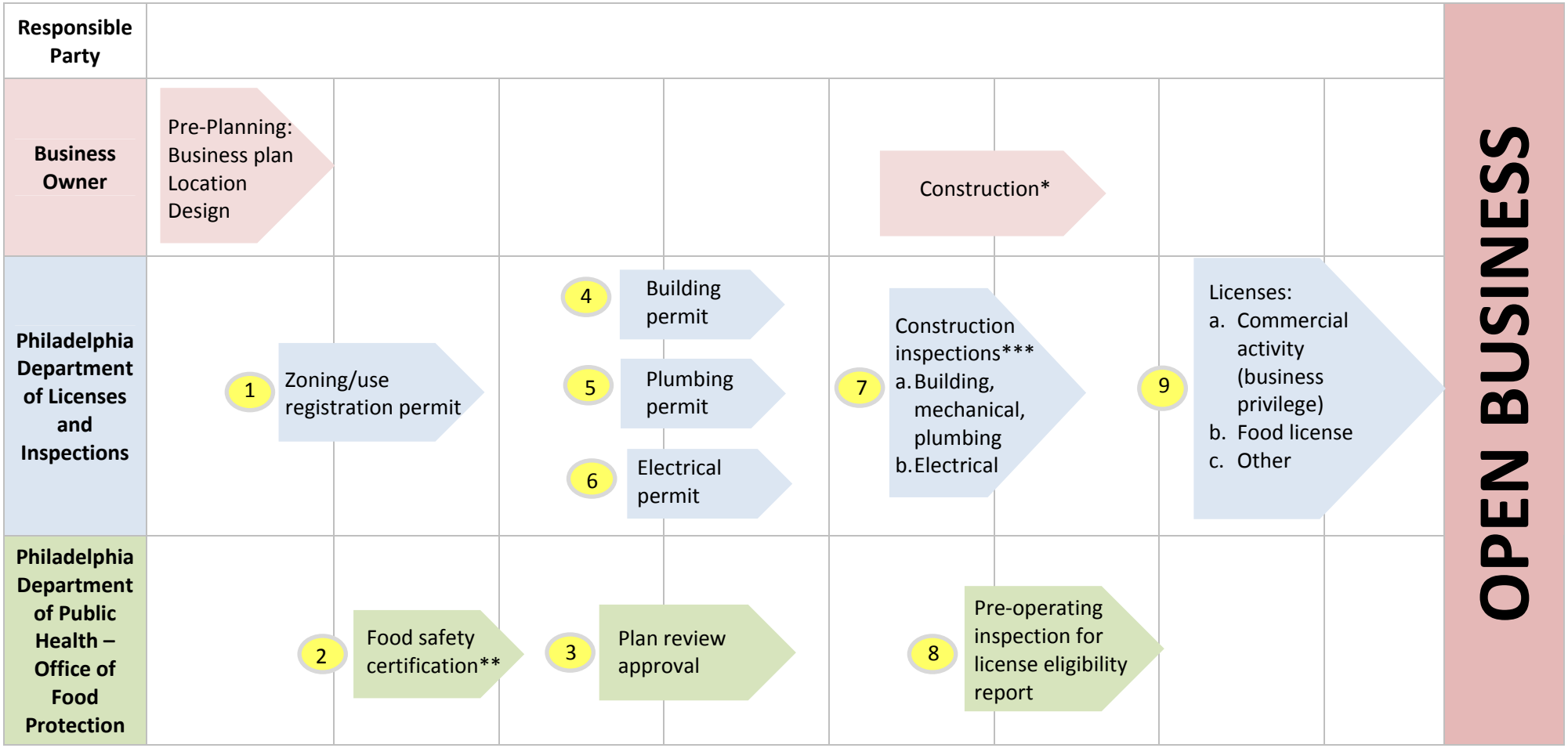
Food business types: Is this manual for you?

This manual is for **stationary food businesses**. The first step to using this manual is to determine if that is the kind of business you are. A "food business" is any retail or wholesale facility whose operation involves any of the following: preparing, serving, storing, processing, transporting, handling, bottling, baking or selling food. "Food" is any item used, or intended to be used, for human consumption (including manufactured foods, packaged candy, chewing gum and bottled water and beverages).

Here are some key questions to determine your business type:



Steps to opening a stationary food business



**Plan review application (Step 3) should be submitted AFTER zoning approval but BEFORE construction covered in the plan review. If you have questions, call (215) 685-7495 or stop by the Municipal Services Building (1401 JFK Blvd, lower level concourse, Philadelphia, PA 19102) during "visiting hours" (see p. 4).*
***Businesses that sell only prepackaged, non-hazardous foods are exempt from this requirement, not including institutional businesses such as child care.*
****Note that inspections may be required prior to construction, during construction, and at the end of construction.*

Document checklist for stationary food businesses

Use this page before opening your business to ensure you have all the necessary documentation!

1. Zoning (L&I[a])

- ☐ Zoning/Use Registration Permit

2. Food safety certification (PDPH[b])

- ☐ Food safety course completion certificate (i.e., ServSafe)
- ☐ City of Philadelphia Food Safety Personnel Certificate

3. Plan review approval (PDPH)

- ☐ Final plan review approval letter
- ☐ Philadelphia Department of Public Health Field Office Phone Number

4-6. Construction permits (L&I)

- ☐ Building permit
- ☐ Plumbing permit
- ☐ Electrical permit

7. Construction inspections (L&I)

- ☐ Building/plumbing inspection – final certificate of occupancy
- ☐ Electrical inspection – copy of final electrical certificate on file

8. Pre-operating inspection (PDPH)

- ☐ License eligibility report

9. Final licenses (L&I)

- ☐ Commercial activity license (formerly business privilege license)
- ☐ Food license
- ☐ Other licenses as needed

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[a] Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections
[b] Philadelphia Department of Public Health – Office of Food Protection

1 Zoning/use registration permit
Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections

Do you need to apply?
A zoning/use registration permit is required for any of the following:
- Changing the use or activity of the building from the last legal use
- Making any changes to the height or gross floor area of the building
- Installing signage for your business

Determine what zoning allows
Before purchasing a property or even signing a lease, you should determine if the site is appropriately zoned for your business. If it is not, it could be a timely process to appeal to the Zoning Board of Adjustment and approval is not guaranteed.

a. Search the Zoning Map to find the base and overlay zoning districts for your desired location.
b. Check §14-602 of the Zoning Code to see if the Zoning Classification allows the use you are proposing.

Make sure that you include all activities you intend to do on the property in your application, as it might impact zoning. For example, you must explain if you are going to be engaged in retail **and** food preparation (such as a corner store with a deli). If you do not get the zoning approval now, it might delay your ability to get your food license later (see Step 9).

If zoning does not allow your use, or requires special approval, you will need to appeal to the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA). However, all appeals to the ZBA first require an official referral or refusal from the Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections. Even if it is clear that current zoning does not allow your intended use, you must apply first to the Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections to get an official referral or refusal before appealing to the ZBA. For example, "Eating and Drinking Establishments" are not allowed in most residential districts, and would be required to go through an appeal process. This can add time and cost and ZBA approval is not guaranteed.

Determine the last legal use
If the use is allowed, you also need to determine if the use you are proposing is different from the last legal use of that property. If you are taking over an existing food business, do not assume that the previous business had a legal permit for all activity taking place at that location. Search the zoning archive to see the last legal use on file for that address. The archive is an online database of all previous zoning and use registration permits.

If the use in the archive is the same as what you are proposing, you can print a copy of the last use registration permit from the archives and do not need to apply for a new one.

If there is no use on file, or the use is different from what you are proposing, you must submit an application for a new use registration permit.

NOTE: If the archive does not load properly, email zoningrm@phila.gov with the address. You will receive a response with an attached copy of the last use registration permit, if available. You can also go in person to the Municipal Services Building (1401 JFK Blvd, lower level concourse, Philadelphia, PA 19102) to print out a copy of the last use registration permit or talk to the Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections staff at the zoning counter.

Prepare to apply.
The Application for a Zoning/Use Registration Permit is available online. Consult the Zoning/Use Permit Checklist for all required documents and prerequisite approvals required.

Please consult the Zoning Administrative Manual for more information, checklists, and helpful graphics of the zoning process.

a. If your food business is located in a multi-tenant building or site, such as a shopping center, a key plan identifying your tenant space will be required.
b. If you plan to install signage for your business (including window signs), it is recommended, but not required that you include the signage on your initial zoning application. Otherwise, it could be a timely and expensive process later on (see box below).

Submit the application and pay the fee.
Completed zoning applications must be submitted by the owner of the property, or a tenant with a signed lease **in person** at the Municipal Services Building (1401 JFK Blvd, lower level concourse, Philadelphia, PA 19102). A non-refundable filing fee of $100 (personal check or money order made payable to the City of Philadelphia) will be applied towards the final permit fee.

The application review process
The length of time it takes and the decision you will get from the Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections depend on the type of application you submitted.

Type of Application: Use Change Only **Or** Use Change + Signage (1-2 signs)

a. If the use is permitted in the code ("by-right") you will get "over the counter" approval. You must pay the remainder of the fee to obtain the permit.
b. If the use is not permitted in the code ("does not conform"), you will receive an official response (referral or refusal) from the examiner within 5 business days. You may choose to appeal to the Zoning Board of Adjustment – which will require a

A NOTE ABOUT SIGNS
Both zoning and building permits are usually required for most sign types, including wall signs, projecting signs, and awnings with copy. Permits are required before sign construction or installation begins. Applications must include details such as description, dimensions, location and photos. Permits may not be required for all sign types, such as window signs which cover less than 20% of the total window area. Consult the Zoning Code and contact the Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections (phone number: 311) to determine if a zoning or building permit will be required for your proposed sign type and if any additional approvals, such as Art Commission or Historical Commission, are necessary.

hearing and community meetings. Please see the Zoning Administrative Manual or contact the Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections for more information on the process. If ZBA grants approval, you must return to the Municipal Services Building (1401 JFK Blvd, lower level concourse, Philadelphia, PA 19102) to pay the fee and obtain the permit.

Type of Application: Use Change + Construction

All applications including construction will need more time for review by the examiner. You will receive the results within 20 business days by email, or by regular mail.

a. If the use and development are permitted in the code ("by-right"), you will receive a billing statement within 20 business days by email or by regular mail. You must return to the Municipal Services Building ((1401 JFK Blvd, lower level concourse, Philadelphia, PA 19102) to pay the remainder of your fee to obtain the permit.
b. If the use and proposed development are not permitted in the code ("does not conform") you will receive an official refusal within 20 business days by email or by regular mail. You may choose to appeal to the Zoning Board of Adjustment – which will require a hearing and community meetings. Please see the Zoning Administrative Manual or contact the Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections for more information on the process. If ZBA grants approval, you must return to the Municipal Services Building (1401 JFK Blvd, lower level concourse, Philadelphia, PA 19102) to pay the fee and obtain the permit.

If you have questions about this step, you can contact the Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections by calling 311 or (215) 686-8686. Hours: Monday – Friday, 8 am - 3:30 pm, (last Wednesday of each month 8 am - 12 pm) or go to the Municipal Services Building ((1401 JFK Blvd, lower level concourse, Philadelphia, PA 19102).

This step is complete when you have the following:

- ✓ **Zoning/Use Registration Permit**

2 City of Philadelphia food safety personnel certificate
Philadelphia Department of Public Health – Office of Food Protection

Do you need to apply?
Stationary food businesses must have an employee certified in food safety present at all times, whether or not they are open to consumers. Businesses selling only pre-packaged, non-hazardous foods are exempt from this requirement. These designated employees, often referred to as the Person In Charge or PIC, must complete a food safety course that is approved by the Philadelphia Department of Public Health **and** obtain an official City of Philadelphia Food Safety Personnel Certificate. The Certificate must be posted at the food business where customers can view it. Certifications are valid for five years, after which the employee must complete and pass another food safety course approved by the Philadelphia Department of Public Health.

PLAN AHEAD!
All food businesses have the responsibility to ensure that personnel have knowledge of food safety practices. Be sure to register for a food safety class early and submit information to the Philadelphia Department of Public Health as soon as the course is complete. Processing the food safety certification applications can take 30 business days after the Philadelphia Department of Public Health has received your course materials.

Prepare to apply.
Take a food safety course with an approved Food Safety Course Provider (16 hours of instruction) and receive a course certificate. In addition to English, courses are offered in Spanish, Mandarin, and Korean. During a health inspection, your food safety certified person or Person in Charge will be asked to show a photo ID to the health inspector. The name on the course certificate must match the name on the valid photo ID.

Submit the application and pay the fee.
You can apply by mail or in person at the Office of Food Protection (For mailing: 321 University Avenue, 2nd Fl, Philadelphia, PA 19104; For mapping: 401 Curie Blvd, Philadelphia, PA 19104). Submit a copy of the course certificate, a completed application for a City of Philadelphia Food Safety Certification Form and a **certified check or money order** for $30 made out to the City of Philadelphia – EHS. By Fall 2013, you will be able to apply online and pay with a credit card.

Approval process (maximum of 30 business days)
Beginning March 1, 2013, you will no longer have to pick up your certificate in person. Within 30 business days of the receipt of your materials and payment, the Philadelphia Department of Public Health will send the certificate by mail, unless you request to pick up in person. If you request to pick up in person, you will receive an email when it is ready. You can call (215) 685-7495 for more information.

This step is complete when you have all of the following:

- ✓ **A certificate from your food safety course documenting completion.**
- ✓ **A City of Philadelphia food safety personnel certificate** (valid for five years)

3 Plan review approval
Philadelphia Department of Public Health – Office of Food Protection

Do you need to apply?
All stationary food businesses must have an approved plan from the Philadelphia Department of Public Health to ensure compliance with the City's Regulations Governing Food Establishments.

Prepare to apply.
The plan review application should be submitted AFTER zoning has been approved but BEFORE beginning construction that is covered in the plan review (i.e., modification of the interior or installation of food equipment). You may incur additional fees if you begin construction that impacts the Philadelphia Department of Public Health Plan Review before receiving Plan Review approval. Call (215) 685-7495 or stop by the Municipal Services Building ((1401 JFK Blvd, lower level concourse, Philadelphia, PA 19102) during "visiting" hours (see p. 4) with specific questions about when construction can begin.

Submit the application.
The Food Business Plan Review Application and instructions are available online or at the Office of Food Protection. There is a separate application for change of ownership/licensee (see box).

You can apply by mail or in person at the Office of Food Protection (321 University Avenue, 2nd fl, Philadelphia PA 19104; For mapping: 401 Curie Blvd, Philadelphia, PA 19104). Do not submit payment until you receive your fee assessment letter (see below).

The application review process (60 business days).
Within 30 business days, the Philadelphia Department of Public Health will mail (or email upon request) a **fee assessment letter** and **preliminary worksheet**. The preliminary worksheet will outline what (if any) additional information is needed before the plan can be approved. You will have 30 business days to submit your payment along with any additional information. The plan review fee is based on establishment square footage (see below), plus pre-payment of $190 for the pre-operating inspection (see step 8). Payment in the form of cashier's check or money order should be made out to the City of Philadelphia – EHS. You can also pay your fees online (see "NEW!," below).

CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP/ LICENSEE WITH NO RENOVATION OR CONSTRUCITON

For establishments that are only changing ownership or the name of licensee, with no renovation or construction, there is a simplified application and a set plan review fee. The Change of Ownership/Licensee Plan Review Application is available here. There is a $255 fee which consists of a $65 nonrefundable filing fee and a $190 pre-operating inspection fee (see step 8). Approval and inspection can take place within 20 business days. Expediting is available for an additional fee of $380. Expedited review and inspection would occur within 10 business days.

NEW! You can now pay your plan review fees online with a credit card. You will need an email address, a daytime phone number, your invoice number, and the amount owed (from your preliminary worksheet). To learn more, call (215) 685-7405.

Plan Review Fee	
1000 square feet or less	$375
1001-5000 square feet	$875
5001-10000 square feet	$1500
10000-14000 square feet	$2125
Above 14000 square feet	$2125.00 plus $15.00 for each add'l 100 square feet or portion thereof

NEW! You can now pay your plan review fees online with a credit card. You will need an email address, a daytime phone number, your invoice number, and the amount owed (from your preliminary worksheet). To learn more, call (215) 685-7405.

Within 30 business days of receipt of a completed application along with payment, the Philadelphia Department of Public Health will mail (or email upon request at time of application) a plan review decision.

- If your plan review is **APPROVED**, you will receive an official plan review approval letter by mail (or email upon request) including the phone number of the Philadelphia Department of Public Health Field Office to contact when construction is complete and you are ready for a pre-operating inspection (see step 8).

- If your plan review is still **INCOMPLETE or changes are needed**, you will be notified by mail (or email upon request) and have 30 business days to submit additional information or make corrections.

If you want an expedited review and inspection, bring your application form and all required materials to the Office of Food Protection (For mailing: 321 University Ave, 2nd Fl, Philadelphia PA 19104; For mapping: 401 Curie Blvd, Philadelphia, PA 19104). **For change of ownership/licensee with no construction:** there is an expediting fee of $380 in addition to the $255 fee (this includes the $65 nonrefundable filing fee and pre-operating inspection fee of $190). **For all other new businesses:** the expediting fee is $315 for new businesses in addition to the plan review fee (see above) and the pre-operating inspection fee of $190.

Inspection will be completed within 10 business days of receipt of a completed application. Before review can begin, you must have all required materials and pay by cashier's check, money order or by credit card at the computer kiosk at the Philadelphia Department of Public Health - Office of Food Protection (For mailing: 321 University Ave, 2nd Fl, Philadelphia PA 19104; For mapping: 401 Curie Blvd, Philadelphia, PA 19104).

This step is complete when you have the following:

- ✓ **Plan Review Approval Letter**
- ✓ **Philadelphia Department of Public Health Field Office Phone Number**

4 Building permit
Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections

Do you need to apply?
A building permit is required if you are:
- Doing any type of construction, including alterations and additions
- Changing the use or occupancy as defined by Chapter 9 of the Philadelphia Building Code

REMEMBER!
There are two additional permits for electrical and plumbing work. See steps 5 and 6.

> **EXCEPTIONS:** See section A-301.2 of the Philadelphia Administrative Code for work that does not require a permit.

Prepare to apply.
You or your contractor must submit an Application for a building permit and construction plans. Three sets of professional quality construction documents must be submitted for any work proposed. Refer to the building permits checklist for all application requirements.

a. The licensed contractor that will be performing the work must be identified on the application.
b. If the cost of work is greater than $25,000, the plans must be sealed by an architect or professional engineer registered in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
c. If you are proposing the installation of mechanical cooking equipment, submit all manufacturers' specifications and any plans for ductwork and/or venting. If the cooking equipment produces grease or smoke you must have a Type 1 exhaust hood as required by the International Mechanical Code and an approved fire suppression system.

Submit the application and pay the fee.
Completed applications and plans must be submitted in person at the Municipal Services Building ((1401 JFK Blvd, lower level concourse, Philadelphia, PA 19102). You must pay a non-refundable filing fee of $100 (personal check or money order made payable to the City of Philadelphia) which will be applied towards the final permit fee.

The application review process (20 business days)
The application will be assigned to an examiner who will review your application for compliance with all relevant codes. The

PLAN AHEAD!
You must get a building permit AFTER zoning has been approved but BEFORE any construction or renovation begins. You may incur additional fees if you begin construction that impacts the Philadelphia Department of Public Health Plan Review before receiving Plan Review approval (see Step 3). You should contact the Philadelphia Department of Public Health before construction begins. Call (215) 685-7495 or stop by the Municipal Services Building (1401 JFK Blvd, lower level concourse, Philadelphia, PA 19102) during Food Protection "visiting hours" (see p. 4) with specific questions about when construction can begin.

examiner will email, or if you do not have an email address, mail you the results of the review to you within 20 business days.

- If the application is **APPROVED**, the examiner will issue a billing statement for the final building permit fees. The invoice must be paid in person at the Municipal Services Building (1401 JFK Blvd, lower level concourse, Philadelphia, PA 19102) before a permit can be obtained. The final approved permit will also provide the name of the Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections district office you must contact to schedule a building inspection (see Step 7).

- If the application is **NOT CODE COMPLIANT**, the examiner will send a request for additional information. All required information must be submitted within 60 calendar days.

If you want an expedited review, bring your application form and all required materials to the Municipal Services Building ((1401 JFK Blvd, lower level concourse, Philadelphia, PA 19102). There is an expediting fee of $540 in addition to the standard permit fees. Your review will be completed within 5 business days of receipt of a completed application.

This step is complete when you have the following:

- ✓ **Building permit**

5 Plumbing permit
Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections

Do you need to apply?
A plumbing permit is required for
- Plumbing installation, alteration, renewal, replacement and repair
- New construction, additions and alterations
- Site drainage

A permit is NOT required for the following:
- Minor repairs with like material or material serving the same purpose.
- The removal and reinstallation of toilets not including the replacement or rearrangement of valves, pipes or fixtures.
- The sealing of sewer laterals for building demolitions contracted by the Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections
- Stopping leaks in a drain, water, soil, waste or vent pipe, provided that no piping is replaced with new material.
- Clearing stoppages or repairing leaks in pipes, valves or fixtures, provided that those fixtures are not replaced or rearranged.

REMEMBER!
The plumbing permit application can be submitted at the same time as the building permit (step 4) and electrical permit (step 6).

Prepare to apply.
A Master Plumber licensed by the City of Philadelphia must submit the Application for a plumbing permit and perform all of the associated work. See list of licensed professionals here.

> **EXCEPTIONS:** Some work requires a permit application but not a detailed plan ("fast permits"). See the full list here. Also check the Plumbing permits guide for all scenarios requiring plans and other requirements for the permitting process.

Submit the application.
Completed plumbing applications and plans must be submitted in person by the Master Plumber at the Municipal Services Building ((1401 JFK Blvd, lower level concourse, Philadelphia, PA 19102). A non-refundable filing fee of $100 (check or money order made payable to the City of Philadelphia) will be applied towards the final permit fee.

Application review process (20 business days)
An examiner from the Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections will determine if the proposed installation is in compliance with the Philadelphia Plumbing Code and email you the results of the review within 20 business days. The cost of plumbing permits depends on the type and amount of fixtures to be installed but you can look at the fee schedule to see what fees would be related to your project.

This step is complete when you have the following;
- ✓ **Plumbing permit**

6 Electrical permit
Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections

Do you need to apply?
An electrical permit is required for the installation, alteration, replacement or repair of electrical communication and alarm wiring and equipment within or on any structure or premises.

A permit is NOT required for:
- Minor repairs and maintenance work
- Connecting approved portable electrical equipment to approved permanently installed receptacles
- Installing electrical components used in connection with the installation or reinstallation of partition systems listed in published reports of inspected electrical equipment listed and labeled by an approved listing organization such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL).

Prepare to apply.
Only an Electrical Contractor licensed by the City of Philadelphia can submit the completed application and plans and complete the work. To find a licensed professional, please see the list here. An Electrical permit application is available online. Consult the Electrical permits basics for all the application requirements. All applications must be submitted with plans.

Submit the application and pay the fee.
Applications must be submitted by the licensed contractor in person at the Municipal Services Building ((1401 JFK Blvd, lower level concourse, Philadelphia, PA 19102). A non-refundable filing fee of $100 (check or money order made payable to the City of Philadelphia) will be applied towards the final permit fee.

Application review process (20 business days)
The application will be assigned to an examiner to determine if the installation is in compliance with the Electrical Code and send you the results of the review within 20 business days.

- If the application is **APPROVED**, the examiner will issue a billing statement for the final electrical permit fees. The invoice must be paid in person at the Municipal Services Building ((1401 JFK Blvd, lower level concourse, Philadelphia, PA 19102) within 60 calendar days (personal check or money order made payable to the City of Philadelphia).

- If the application is **NOT CODE COMPLIANT**, the examiner will send a request for additional information. All required information must be submitted within 60 calendar days.

This step is complete when you have the following:
- ✓ **Electrical permit**

7 Construction Inspections (Electrical and Building/Plumbing) to obtain a Final Electrical Certificate and Certificate of Occupancy/Approval Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections

A. Electrical Inspection

Electrical inspections must be conducted by third party Electrical Inspection Agencies licensed by the Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections. The permit holder is required to contact a licensed agency to schedule inspections. If you pass the inspection, the inspector will issue a final certificate ensuring compliance with the National Electrical Code. The contractor will receive a copy of the approved final certificate from the inspection agency and must submit to the Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections. More information on Electrical Inspections is available here.

B. Building, Mechanical and Plumbing Inspection

A building mechanical and plumbing inspection must take place at least 48 hours prior to the start of construction and can be scheduled by contacting the Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections district inspector listed on your building permit.

a. Your construction site must be made accessible to the inspector at all times during construction.
b. After the work is completed and a final inspection is performed, the building inspector will issue a Certificate of Occupancy or a Certificate of Approval (no change in use or occupancy) will be issued to ensure all work complies with the permit.

This step is complete when you have the following:

- ✓ **Final electrical certificate from third party inspector on file with the Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections**
- ✓ **Final certificate of occupancy (or a certificate of approval)**

8 Pre-Operating Inspection to obtain a License Eligibility Report (LER) Philadelphia Department of Public Health – Office of Food Protection

A pre-operating inspection of your food business will confirm your final construction matches your approved plan review application and the food safety certified staff on site is well-versed in food safety practices. To schedule a pre-operating inspection, contact the Philadelphia Department of Public Health Field Office listed on your Plan Review Approval Letter (see Step 3) AFTER all construction is complete but BEFORE you open for business. Inspections are scheduled within 10 business days.

> **NOTE**: In order to pass the pre-operating inspection, a person with an original City of Philadelphia Food Safety Personnel Certificate (see Step 2) must be present during the entire pre-operating inspection. The certificate and the person's ID must be available for the inspector.

At the end of the inspection, your inspector will sit down with you to review your inspection report.

If you PASS the inspection, you will receive a **license eligibility report (LER)** from the Philadelphia Department of Public Health. You then will have 30 calendar days to take the LER to the Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections at the Municipal Services Building (1401 JFK Blvd, lower level concourse, Philadelphia, PA 19102) to obtain the **food license** that is specified on your license eligibility report (LER.) You must have a food license issued by the Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections before you can open your business to the public.

> **NOTE: The license eligibility report (LER) is NOT your food license.** This is a common source of confusion. After receiving your LER you must go in person within 30 calendar days to the Municipal Services Building ((1401 JFK Blvd, lower level concourse, Philadelphia, PA 19102) to pay for your food license (see Step 9).

If you FAIL the inspection, you will need to make the required corrections and schedule another inspection by calling the assigned field office. The Philadelphia Department of Public health will make every effort to come out promptly for a re-inspection. Once you pass the re-inspection, you will receive a License Eligibility Report to be brought to the Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections to obtain your food license.

This step is complete when you have the following:

- ✓ **License Eligibility Report (LER)**

9 Final Licensing: Commercial Activity License, Food License, Other Licenses Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections

A. Commercial activity license (formerly business privilege license)

Do you need to apply?
All businesses operating in Philadelphia, including a stationary food business must have a commercial activity license (formerly known as a business privilege license). You can apply for this at any time. You do not have to wait until all other steps in starting a business are completed. Some people recommend that you wait until you are confident your business will open without any problems before getting this license while others prefer to get it early in the process. In any case you must have a commercial activity license to begin operating a business in Philadelphia.

Prepare to apply
Pre-requisites
- Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) from the IRS[3]
- City of Philadelphia Tax Account Number
- Pennsylvania State Sales and Use Tax Number (only for businesses collecting sales tax)

Potential exemptions:
- Non-profits (must file IRS exempt letter with the Department of Revenue (if questions contact 311))
- Some new businesses (can be confirmed with Philadelphia Department of Public Health staff at the Municipal Services Building (1401 JFK Blvd, lower level concourse, Philadelphia, PA 19102) or by calling 311.

Submit the application and pay the fee
You can apply online and pay via credit card or apply in person at the lower level concourse of the Municipal Services Building ((1401 JFK Blvd, lower level concourse, Philadelphia, PA 19102) and pay via personal check, money order (or credit card at a kiosk). The current fees are $300 for a Lifetime License or $50 for an Annual License**. In 2014 any fees for the license will be eliminated although a Commercial Activity License will still be required for any business operating in Philadelphia.**

Application review process.
If you apply in person, you can receive the license over the counter. If you apply online, you will receive an email confirmation with the license attached. You can print the license at your home/office for your records.

[3] Sole proprietorships can use a social security number in place of a FEIN.

B. Food license

Do you need to apply?
The food license is issued by the Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections and is required before you can open for business. It ensures that you have complied with all of the applicable regulations and laws, have obtained your commercial activity license and have obtained a license eligibility report (LER) from the Philadelphia Department of Public Health - Office of Food Inspection after passing your pre-operation inspection (see Step 8). You will receive the type of food license listed on your LER, which must also match the use you were approved for via zoning (see Step 1).

Prepare to apply
Prerequisites
- Commercial activity license (see A)
- License eligibility report (LER) (See Step 8)
- Completed food license application

Submit an application and attachments and pay the fee
You must apply in person at the Municipal Services Building (1401 JFK Blvd, lower level concourse, Philadelphia, PA 19102). Be sure to have a copy of your commercial activity license, LER and a completed application with you when you apply.

The fee will depend on the type of business you are (as designated on the License Eligibility Report).
- Food Establishment (Retail, Permanent Location, 5,000 Sq. Ft. or less) $200.00
- Food Establishment (Retail, Permanent Location, over 5,000 Sq. Ft.) $500.00
- Food Manufacturer, Wholesale Processed $350.00
- Food Preparing and Serving, up to 50 seats $300.00
- Food Preparing and Serving, more than 50 seats $300.00
- Food Preparing and Serving, Caterer $300.00

NOTE: Food licenses expire April 1st of each calendar year and the fee is not pro-rated. You will receive a renewal notice from the Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections. You may submit payment on-line or in person at the Municipal Services Building ((1401 JFK Blvd, lower level concourse, Philadelphia, PA 19102). Receipt of a renewal license does not require an updated food safety inspection.

Application Review Process
If you have the proper documentation and payment, you should be immediately approved and receive your food license when you apply.

C. Other Licenses

When you apply for your food license, the License and Inspections staff will advise you if you need any other licenses for your business. Examples of what you may need include:

- Dumpster License: Private or Public Right of Way
- Sidewalk Café License
- Electronic Scanner System & Sales License
- Handbill Distribution License

For more information on the various license requirements go to www.phila.gov/li or call (215) 686-8686.

This step is complete when you have the following:

- ✓ **Commercial activity license (annual or lifetime)**
- ✓ **Food license matching the license eligibility report (LER)**
- ✓ **Other licenses**

CONGRATULATIONS!!!
We wish you much success in your new business.
Thank you for choosing Philadelphia.

Resources

NOTE!
Additional links throughout the manual are in blue and underlined

City of Philadelphia
Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections: www.phila.gov/li

Philadelphia Department of Public Health: www.phila.gov/health

Philadelphia Department of Commerce: www.phila.gov/business

Food Safety Course Providers:
http://www.phila.gov/health/pdfs/Food%20Safety%20Certificate%20Brochure%20March2012.pdf

Philadelphia Tobacco Retailer Permit: https://business.phila.gov/pages/tobaccoretailerpermit.aspx

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture: www.agriculture.state.pa.us

Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board: www.lcb.state.pa.us/PLCB/index.htm

Pennsylvania Entrepreneurs' Guide: http://www.newpa.com/webfm_send/1439

Pennsylvania Open for Business Site: http://www.pabizonline.com

Starting a Business in Pennsylvania: http://www.pabizonline.com/starting-a-business/Documents/rev-588.pdf

Federal Government
United States Food and Drug Administration: www.fda.gov

United States Department of Agriculture: www.usda.gov