Policies and Procedures
Applying for a
Food Establishment
Permit

Lincoln County Department of Environmental Health has the following set of policies and procedures for the permitting process for any food establishment. These policies and procedures are effective for any permitted establishment under G.S. 130A-248. Exemptions to these policies and procedures may be found in G.S. 130A-250.

When a new facility requests a food service permit from this Department, the following must be submitted to our office in accordance with NC Food Code section 8-201.11:

1. Plans, drawn to scale, of the proposed facility
2. Manufacturer specification sheets for each piece of equipment shown on the plans
4. Proposed menu
5. Food service application from this Department

When dimensions of food preparation areas, seating capacity or the addition of rooms to existing food service establishments are changed, the following must be submitted to our office:

1. Plans, drawn to scale, that include changes related to the increase in dimensions of food preparation areas, seating capacity or the addition of rooms
2. Specifications including a proposed menu noting any changes to the prior menu
3. Plan review fee payment

Plans from franchised or chain food establishments must be submitted for review and approval to the Environmental Health Section Branch, NC Division of Public Health. [http://ehs.ncpublichealth.com/](http://ehs.ncpublichealth.com/)

Once plan review materials have been submitted they will be reviewed for approval by this Department. Upon review, an approval or denial letter will be issued by this Department and sent to all interested parties. All changes to the original plan must be approved in writing or approval will be withdrawn.

Construction site visits will be made by this Department during building and renovation. The Applicant for permit must contact this office at least two weeks prior to the planned opening of the facility for a final construction visit. Permits must be issued to the facility prior to the preparation or selling of any food product to the public. Legal action will be taken to stop illegal selling of food products to the public in accordance with G.S. 130A-248.
Applicants:

Please allow at least 2 weeks for first comment on plans and applications.

Application for a permit to operate a food establishment or move equipment into an existing building (that may have previously been a food establishment) should be submitted to our office at least one month before construction is planned. We strive to prioritize plan review but the field of Environmental Health includes inspections and services that require ample time in the field and away from the office each day.

To assure the plan review process can be conducted as efficiently as possible, be sure you have submitted all required information. As with all application submittals questions will likely arise. You can help move the process along by thoroughly completing the application and providing a proper floor plan, drawn to scale as required.

What to expect after submitting your plan, application, fee payment and other required information:

1. Your submission will be assigned to a Registered Environmental Health Specialist for review.
2. The REHS will conduct a preliminary review to assure all pertinent information has been submitted. A letter or email may be sent asking for clarification or more information.
3. The REHS will conduct a full plan review and may issue a Preliminary Plan Review letter (which may contain the word “DISAPPROVED.”) You will answer this letter in writing to clarify or provide more information.
4. When the plan review is complete, an APPROVAL letter will be mailed or emailed approving the plans as submitted or re-submitted.
5. Once you receive the approval letter and have received approval from other Lincoln County agencies (as required) construction of your establishment may begin.
6. Construction visits will be made during the building of the establishment to assess conformity to the approved plan, light intensity and equipment location, etc.
7. When construction of the food establishment is complete and all other agencies have issued approval to occupy the building you will call or email your REHS for a final walk through for permitting.
   A memo will be issued to you detailing how to prepare the establishment for permitting.
8. Call or email to schedule the final walk through for permitting at least 2 weeks prior to your planned opening.
9. NOTE: If the submitted plans cannot be approved, a disapproval letter will be mailed or emailed explaining why. Construction of a food establishments is prohibited unless plans are approved by this department.

If you have questions about this process please call 704-736-8426.

Sincerely,

Your Registered Environmental Health Specialist