

## Can I operate a catering business out of my home?

No, homes are not acceptable, unless the food service area is completely sealed off from the home and entrance to the food service area can only be obtained by going outside the home. You cannot use the same kitchen facilities to prepare food for your family and customers.

## What are some of the requirements I must meet to be permitted as a food service?

1. Quarry tile floor and cove base in food preparation areas. Other types of tile may be acceptable, but vinyl is not acceptable for food preparation areas.
2. Appropriate wall and ceiling material should be smooth, durable, nonabsorbent, easily to cleanable, and light colored.
3. One 3-compartment sink with a drainboard on each side for dishwashing that is big enough to hold  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the largest items that you will need to wash. A dishwasher may be added, but not substituted.
4. Employee hand wash sink supplied with liquid soap and paper towels.
5. Mop sink or utility sink with a back siphonage prevention device and a hose bibb.
6. A separate sink with one drainboard for food preparation, such as washing vegetables.
7. Restroom exterior doors must be self closing and sealed.



8. Restrooms must be ventilated to the outside, and have a handwash sink with hot and cold water. Women's restrooms must have a lid on the trash can.
9. Enough storage area to keep all food and single service articles at least six (6) inches off the floor.
10. All lighting over the food preparation and storage areas must be properly shielded.

## When do I pay the fees for the permit?

Fees are collected after the food service passes final inspection to open.

## What types of Food Service businesses are not permitted in Clayton County?

Mobile food units, vending trucks, push carts, catering facilities in private residences is strictly forbidden in Clayton County. Mobile food units serving pre-packaged products are regulated by the Department of Agriculture.



Pre-packaged does not include food wrapped by restaurant, carry-out box or other nondurable container used to containerize food for the purpose of serving to the consumer.

If you see one of these illegal facilities in operation **please contact our office**. These illegal food operations are serving food to the unsuspecting public, and operating without supervision or being monitored for food safety, food protection, proper food temperature control, or sanitation.

## Do I have to get a permit if my food service is going to be for non-profit?

No, events such as for a private or charitable organization, association, or club; an activity of a church or other religious congregation; any outdoor recreational activity sponsored by the state, county, or municipal entity.

To be eligible for non-profit organization which is exempt from taxes, you must produce proof of your 501 (c) (3) documentation.

## Temporary Food Services

Temporary food establishment" means a food service that operates at the same location for a period of no more than 14 consecutive days in conjunction with a single event or celebration.



## Conclusion

The permit must be displayed in public view in your establishment and your most current inspection report must always be displayed in public view in your establishment.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact the Environmental Health Office to speak with an environmentalist. We will be glad to assist you throughout the process to avoid mistakes that could cost you both time and money.

Clayton County Board of Health

1117 Battle Creek Rd., Jonesboro, Georgia 30236

Ph. 678-610-7199 Fax 770-603-4874

Revised 9-26-2006

# STARTING A FOOD SERVICE BUSINESS IN CLAYTON COUNTY



## CLAYTON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

## Introduction



The mission of the Clayton County Board of Health is to protect the public's health by preventing food-borne illness, assuring that food served to public customers is wholesome and free from contamination or spoilage by controlling environmental health risks in food services in Clayton County.

The purpose of this brochure is to assist and direct you in your planning and preparation for a food service business in Clayton County. It contains a short summary of Clayton County's Food Service Rules and Regulations. For full details, consult the Clayton County Environmental Health office.

According to the FDA 2001 Food Code, ensuring safe food is an important public health priority for our nation. An estimated 76 million illnesses, 323,914 hospitalizations, and 5,194 deaths are attributable to food-borne illness in the US each year.



All food service operations must receive a permit from the Clayton County Board of Health to operate in Clayton County. A business license, liquor license, zoning approval, and certificates of occupancy from the building and fire inspectors offices is necessary. Check with each appropriate Clayton County and appropriate city department concerning their specific regulations that is applicable to their establishment location.

The following are the most frequent asked questions (FAQ'S) we experience at the environmental health office concerning starting a food service business in Clayton County.

### What is a Food Service Establishment?

The Environmental Health office is responsible for ensuring public safety for all food service facilities within Clayton County. A food service is defined by the Georgia Department of Human Resources (DHR) as an establishment for the preparation and serving of meals, lunches, short order sandwiches, frozen desserts, or other edible products. The term includes restaurants; coffee shops; cafeterias; short order cafes; luncheonettes; taverns; lunchrooms, places which manufacture, wholesale, or retail sandwiches or salads; soda fountains; institutions, both public and private; itinerant restaurants; industrial cafeterias; catering establishments; food vending machines and vehicles and operations connected therewith.

### What should be my first plan of action?

When planning your food service business one of the first things you must do is find a suitable location that will fully comply with the Clayton County Board of Health and other applicable county and/or municipal requirements.

Determine if your proposed site is serviced by public sewer or an individual On-Site Sewage Management System. Restaurants utilizing septic systems require more land and have more restrictions than those serviced by public sewer. Check with the Clayton County Water Authority for the status of your site.



### What is the plan review process to get a Food Service Establishment Permit?

The proposed restaurant/food service establishment shall provide evidence of satisfactory compliance with the provisions of the Clayton County Board of Health Rules and Regulations for Food Service in order to open. Contact our office to get a plan review package. A set of plans and specifications must be submitted to Environmental Health for review and approval before construction is started. The plan review is to insure the establishment will meet state regulations. The two types of plan review procedures are 1) new food services, and 2) existing food services.



### What is the difference in the two plan review processes?

1. A new food service establishment is a newly constructed facility or conversion of a non-food service establishment to a food service establishment.
2. An existing food service establishment is a facility that has undergone a change of ownership or extensive remodeling and renovations have occurred.

The plan review will provide detailed information outlining any changes or remodeling which may be required to bring the facility up to current standards. Since standards have changed over the years, even a restaurant that is presently operating may not meet the current regulations. The new owner will be required to bring the facility into compliance.

### What should I do before I begin construction of my restaurant?

The plans and specifications shall be submitted to the environmental health office at least fourteen (14) days prior to beginning construction. New food service plans shall indicate the proposed layout, arrangement, mechanical plans, and construction materials of work areas, and the type and model of proposed fixed equipment and facilities.

Existing food service shall submit similar equipment layout plans, floor plans, changes in existing facility, etc. (see our office for an example)



### When do I apply for my food permit?

The owner/authorized agent of the food service establishment shall submit to the board of health an application for a permit at least ten (10) days prior to the date of opening.

### How many days can I operate as the new owner after the change of ownership without having valid food permit?

You should not stay open without notifying our office and following proper procedures. If compliance is not met in 15 days, you must close.

### How much does a food permit cost?

The permit fee is based on answering these four questions on the fee application: the number of employees, operational hours, number of customers served daily, and seating capacity.