COUNTY of VENTURA PUBLIC INFORMATION
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SHARED PERMANENT FOOD FACILITY GUIDELINES

The Ventura County Environmental Health Division (Division) recognizes that there is growing demand by caterers, aspiring food entrepreneurs and other food operators to have access to local permanent food facilities to prepare their food products. This guidance serves to provide clear information on the requirements and process to obtain a permit as a dependent food operator within a permitted permanent food facility. The goal is to provide a smooth process while ensuring that all food operations are conducted in a safe manner and in compliance with the Retail Food Code in order to protect public health.

TYPES OF SHARED PERMANENT FOOD FACILITIES

- **Commissaries –** are designed primarily for use by permitted Mobile Food Facilities (MFFs) to ensure that the operational and sanitation requirements are met by the MFFs. These facilities are permitted as "commissaries" with this Division. The MFFs using these services do not need to apply for an additional permit to use the commissary.
- **Existing & Permitted Retail Permanent Food Facilities:** are permitted food facilities (e.g., shared kitchens, restaurants, markets) equipped with infrastructure that can support multiple food operations. These facilities must possess the adequate space and equipment necessary for the safe operation of each dependent food operator. No two operations may occur at the same time.

DEFINITIONS

- **Primary Food Operator** is the owner/permittee of a permitted permanent food facility who is allowing a dependent food service operator to use their kitchen to prepare food.
- **Dependent Food Operator** is the operator who rents or leases the permitted food facility for the purposes of preparing food that will be sold within the retail or wholesale marketplace with no public facing storefront at the primary permittee location. The dependent food operator is required to obtain a health permit that allows them to conduct specific food production activities at the permitted primary food facility.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PERMANENT FOOD FACILTY OPERATOR (PRIMARY OPERATOR)

1. The permanent food facility must have a Permit to Operate issued by this Division.
2. The Primary Food Operator is responsible for ensuring that each dependent food operator has adequate storage space (i.e., dry storage, finished product storage, refrigerated and freezer storage, as applicable) that is clearly labeled to identify the Dependent Food Operator. Storage space will be evaluated during the

permit review process based on the Dependent food operator's proposed operation.

3. The Primary Food Operator is required to maintain a current scheduling calendar for dependent food operator(s) which is to be shared monthly with this Division for inspection purposes.
4. The Primary Food Operator is required to ensure that each Dependent Food Operator has obtained a Permit to Operate issued by this Division prior to operating within the permanent food facility.
5. Maintain all necessary shared equipment and utensils in good working condition. It should be noted that the day-today cleaning and sanitizing of utensils and/or equipment used solely by the Dependent Food Operator is the responsibility of the Dependent Food Operator.
6. Provide access to all areas of the permanent food facility for the purpose of conducting inspections by this Division.
7. Immediately notify this Division of the cancellation of a Dependent Food Operator. Permits are not transferrable.

HOW TO APPLY FOR A DEPENDENT FOOD OPERATOR'S HEALTH PERMIT

Step 1: The Dependent Food Operator must submit the "Shared Facility Review Form" and copies of the following documents along with the evaluation fee in the amount of $274.90 to the Environmental Health Division (Division)to begin the permit review process:

□ **Shared Food Facility Review Form**

□ **Shared Food Facility Agreement** must be signed by both the Primary Permitted Food Operator and the prospective Dependent Food Operator

□ **Sample menu** or **package food label(s) sample** that will be prepared/packaged within the proposed permanent food facility (see resources below)

□ **Processed Food Registration**, if required by the California Department of Public Health (see resources below)

□ **Canning License,** if required by the California Department of Public Health (see resources below)

Step 2: Division staff will review all documents and contact the Dependent and/or the Primary Food Operator as needed to complete the evaluation. Upon completion of the evaluation, an approval or rejection letter will be sent to the Dependent Food Operator.

Step 3: Upon approval, Division staff will contact the interested parties to arrange for a site visit and a permit issuance inspection. Subsequently, a Permit to Operate will either be issued or denied pending upon completion of contingent items.

RESOURCES

Food Manager Certificate: All retail food facilities that handle unpackaged food, are required to have at least one (1) owner or employee who has successfully passed one of the approved and accredited food safety certification examinations within 60 days of operation.

Food Handler Cards: Any paid employee of a Dependent Food Operator's business that is involved in the preparation, storage or service of food at retail must have a valid food handler card (unless they possess a valid food manager certificate) within 30 days of hire. A California Food Handler Card must be issued from a certification organization that is accredited as meeting the requirements of the Conference for Food Protection's "Standards for Accreditation of Food Protection Manager Certification Programs."

For more information on accredited food certification or food handler programs, visit the Division's website at https://docs.vcrma.org/images/pdf/eh/food/CFH_requirement_-_2021.pdf or ANSI-CFP Accreditation Program at https://anabpd.ansi.org/Accreditation/credentialing/personnel-certification/food-protection-manager/ALLdirectoryListing?menuID=8&prgID=8&statusID=4

Packaged Food Label Guidance: Food packaged prior to sale or distribution require labels. Obtain information on labeling requirements by visiting

https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CEH/DFDCS/CDPH%20Document%20Library/FDB/FoodSafetyProgram/GeneralFoodLabelingRequirements.pdf

State of California Processed Food Registration: The California Department of Public Health's Food and Drug Branch (FDB) regulates the manufacture, processing, storage and distribution of food products in California. California law requires that businesses obtain an FDB license, certificate, or registration for these activities. Processors of general food commodities (e.g., baked goods, noodles, processed fresh vegetables, seafood, snack foods, dietary supplements, etc.) must obtain a Processed Food Registration (PFR) from FDB when the packaged product will be sold offsite. The PFR allows firms to manufacture products not specifically covered by another FDB license. For information on what food production may require a PFR and how to obtain one, call (916) 650-6500 or visit https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CEH/DFDCS/Pages/FDBPrograms/FoodSafetyProgram/ProcessedFoodRegistration.aspx

Canning License: Retail food operators that are interested in low-acid or acidified canned, jarred, or hermetically sealed foods are to contact the FDB to determine if their food item requires a Processed Food Registration (PFR) or Cannery License. It is the responsibility of the dependent food operator to obtain the required registration/license from the FDB. For information regarding whether the food you process requires a PFR or Canning License, call (916) 650-6500 or visit

https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CEH/DFDCS/Pages/FDBPrograms/FoodSafetyProgram/CanneryInspectionProgram.aspx

Milk Products Plant Licenses: Milk Products Plant Licenses are issued by California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) for various types of businesses that handle or manufacture milk and milk products. As required by the Food and Agricultural Code, a person shall not engage in the business of dealing in, receiving, manufacturing, freezing, or processing milk, or any product of milk unless a license or permit has been obtained from CDFA for each separate milk products plant or place of business. All milk products plants must be inspected and approved by CDFA. Contact the nearest CDFA Regional Office of the Milk and Dairy Food Safety Branch to obtain an application and schedule an appointment with an inspector. For more information, call (916) 654-0466 or visit https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Milk_and_Dairy_Food_Safety/Milk_Product_Licenses.html#Soft_Serve