

# 2024 Food Licensing Newsletter



HEALTH  
Department

## License Renewal

License renewal applications are being sent out by mail, and are sent to the current license's mailing addresses.

- Review the information on the renewal application for accuracy.
- Please ensure you have filled out all required entries. Failure to do so will require us to delay renewing your license or possibly result in late fees.
- If ownership changes have taken place, please call our department at 269-673-5415 for the correct procedures for these changes.

- The due date for license fee payment is **April 30, 2024**
- Late fees begin to accrue on **May 1, 2024**

**NOTE:** License renewal applications must be sent in with the payment for review and crediting the correct company with your payment. Our department accepts cash, checks, and credit card payments for your license fee. Please call our office at (269) 673-5415 for information regarding credit card payment.

## Certified Food Manager (CFM) Courses

Michigan State University (MSU) Extension will provide CFM classes in the Allegan County Human Services Building for the 2024/2025 year. Upcoming dates for the CFM course are **April 19, 2024**, and **January 17, 2025**.

The number of classes offered at the Allegan County Human Services building has been reduced due to poor enrollment.

The flyer for the April 19, 2024, class is included, and more information can be found at: <https://events.anr.msu.edu/ServSafeAllEganApril24/>

### Neighboring counties also providing/hosting CFM courses:

- Barry-Eaton District Health Department: [www.barryeatonhealth.org](http://www.barryeatonhealth.org)
- Ottawa County Department of Public Health: [www.miottawa.org/Health/OCHD/training\\_education.htm](http://www.miottawa.org/Health/OCHD/training_education.htm)
- Kalamazoo County Health Department: [www.canr.msu.edu/servsafe/events](http://www.canr.msu.edu/servsafe/events)

**Tell us how we are doing**

Take our Customer Satisfaction Survey at the top of the page at [www.allegancounty.org](http://www.allegancounty.org) and select "Health Department" from service areas, or scan the QR code:



# Why Sanitizer Test Strips are Required



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By Emily McGrew, REHS

Routine cleaning and sanitizing of food contact surfaces and equipment is necessary to prevent bacteria growth, especially those that cause food-borne illnesses. When making a sanitizing solution, the first step is to ensure you are using an approved sanitizer for food contact surfaces. Products clearly state that the chemical can be used in a commercial kitchen. Always read the labels and directions for use before using in your kitchen.

All utensils, dishes, etc., must be properly washed, rinsed, and sanitized. One of the most frequent violations cited at food establishments is no test kit available for sanitizer. This can be written up in two ways: 4-501.116 for dish machines: Concentration of the SANITIZING solution shall be accurately determined by using a test kit or other device. (Pf) and or 4-302.14 when manual washing: A test kit or other device that accurately measures the concentration in mg/L of SANITIZING solutions shall be provided. (Pf)

Food establishments that utilize a chemical concentration to sanitize must possess a test kit to measure the amount of chemical used for the sanitizing step accurately. To properly sanitize an item, it must be submerged in hot water at 171 degrees Fahrenheit for at least 30 seconds, or a chemical sanitizer must be used. The most popular chemical sanitizers used in food establishments are chlorine (bleach), quaternary ammonia (quat), iodine, and hydrogen peroxide. Not all sanitizers are the same. Each product has specific manufacturer directions for the temperature range of the water being combined, the time needed for the sanitizer to work properly, and the required amount for a proper concentration.

The person in charge of the food establishment is responsible for monitoring the chemicals used in the restaurant. This includes knowing where the test strips are located and how to use them. When introducing a highly concentrated cleaning chemical into your kitchen, it is important to understand how to safely use the product. This includes manually pouring and mixing or using a dispensing machine. It is up to the person in charge daily to ensure that all the products used to support food safety within a food establishment are properly stored and regularly monitored.

The best way to accomplish this goal and ensure you provide a clean, safe, and sanitized environment to prepare food is to frequently test the chemicals in use with an easy-to-use sanitizer test kit. Remember that each sanitizer has a special test kit for measuring concentration. If your establishment utilizes more than one chemical, it is a requirement to have the proper test kit for each sanitizer in use.

Machines age, hoses crack, supply chain issues occur, and gaskets stretch in every restaurant. Frequent testing of the sanitizer solution is a good practice. It ensures the concentration is correct, promotes a safe work environment, and provides insight into whether your dish machine or other dispensing equipment is working and calibrated properly. If the concentration is too high, there is a greater chance of a chemical reaction, depending on other chemicals. Leftover chemical residue on utensils is harmful when ingested or when it comes in contact with the skin, and higher concentrations can be corrosive on hands and equipment. If the concentration is too low, the mixture does not adequately provide enough to sanitize an object properly. In either situation, the end goal is not met, and material is wasted, including the money used to purchase the products.

Possessing the proper test kit to measure your chemical concentration may seem inconvenient or annoying to have to maintain, but possessing the proper test kit for the chemicals used avoids violations, enhances safety measures, demonstrates organization, and ensures utensils and kitchen surfaces are being properly washed, rinsed and sanitized.



# Plan Review: What is it? When is it Required?



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By Eric Menke, REHS

Time for a remodel? What about adding a bar area or expanding operations to your food establishment? In addition to contacting the local zoning and code authorities on what might be required, you can contact your local health department to see what additional paperwork, documentation, or approvals may be needed. Per 8-201.11 in the Food Code, a permit applicant or permit holder shall submit to the regulatory authority adequately prepared plans and specifications for review and approval before the construction of a food establishment, the conversion of an existing structure for use as a food establishment, or the remodeling of a food establishment or a change of type of food establishment.

For existing food establishments, if an additional area to a kitchen is added, new water or drain lines are proposed, extra hood ventilation is installed, or even a walk-in cooler, a plan review may be required from this department.

When proposing a new food operation not on municipal water and sewer, it is highly recommended and sometimes required to complete an on-site well and septic evaluation of the property when submitting any plan review documentation. If the proposed establishment is on a well, it will likely be considered a Type II well and required to complete more testing. The on-site septic must be evaluated to ensure it is appropriately sized for the proposed operation.

What is required with a plan review? Under 8-201.12 in the Food Code, along with the plan review application, worksheet, and fee, the following are typically required: intended or updated menu, volume of food or number of meals expected to be served, specification sheets or make/model information of proposed equipment, updated or new standard operating procedures (SOPs), and scaled drawings that show: hot and cold-water lines, equipment layouts, lighting, and overall scale of the project.

Once received by this department, they are reviewed for compliance with the Food Code and Michigan Food Law. If they are deemed incomplete or inadequate, the applicant will be notified in writing of a request for more information. Once they are deemed complete and adequate, an approval letter will be sent to the applicant authorizing a food establishment's construction, conversion, alteration, or remodeling.

Cosmetic changes such as new flooring, painting, or replacement counters are considered part-for-part replacements and often do not require a plan review. For equipment, as long as the new equipment replaces existing equipment, typically, no plan review is needed. However, the specification sheets can be emailed to your inspector for review, and this department may still require a site visit to approve any changes before use.

Suppose a food establishment is observed to have undergone a remodel, renovation, or expansion without prior department approval. In that case, a stop-work order may be issued by this department, resulting in a cease and desist of the operation in question. The food establishment will then be required to submit the proper documentation and paperwork for potential approval. It will be allowed to use any new additions once this department completes the entire process.



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