



TO: FOOD OPERATORS, CONTRACTORS, and DESIGNERS  
FROM: PLAN REVIEW AND CONSTRUCTION UNIT  
CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH  
DATE: AUGUST 3, 2001  
SUBJECT: STORAGE IN FOOD FACILITIES

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**1. DRY FOOD STORAGE**

- a) Adequate and suitable space must be provided and designated on the plans for dry storage purposes. This area must be equipped with adequate and approved shelving to accommodate anticipated needs. This storage area must include only the aisle space and floor area where shelving, cabinets, or equivalent storage space is located. It must not include floor areas where desks, equipment, ladders, or other items may be placed. The amount of storage space shall be one of the following:
  - i) The floor space required for backup dry food storage must be a space equal to 25%<sup>1</sup> of all kitchen area or a minimum of 100 square feet of floor space, whichever is greater.
  - ii) At least 96 linear feet of approved shelving dispersed throughout the kitchen area.
- b) Shelving must be a minimum of 18 inches in depth and must be at least three (3) tiers high.
- c) All tiered shelving must be secured in such a way as to prevent tipping.
- d) The shelving material must be smooth, easily cleanable, nonabsorbent, and vermin proof. The lowest shelf must be at least six (6) inches above the floor with a clear and unobstructed area below. **Unfinished wood is not acceptable.**

**2. OTHER REQUIRED STORAGE FACILITIES:**

- a) Adequate and suitable space must be provided for the storage of clean linens, including apparel, towels, and cleaning cloths. Soiled linens, apparel, towels, tablecloths, and cleaning cloths must be kept in cleanable containers which are provided for that purpose only.
- b) A room, area or cabinet, separated from any food preparation or storage area, or utensil washing or storage area, must be provided for the storage of all cleaning equipment and supplies and poisonous substances.

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<sup>1</sup> Calculations of the percentage of kitchen area used for food storage purposes are based on the wall-to-wall dimensions of the food preparation areas.



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DATE: AUGUST 3, 2001  
SUBJECT: PASS-THROUGH WINDOWS

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The following will apply to all newly proposed food facilities and to those facilities that are to be remodeled:

**1. PASS-THROUGH WINDOWS**

- a) When food is passed through a window to a customer on the outside of a building, the size of the window opening may not exceed 432 square inches.
- b) Food service pass-through window openings exceeding 216 square inches must be equipped with an air curtain or equivalent protection equipment to prevent the entrance of flies.
- c) In the event that an air curtain is used, the air discharge must be eight (8) inches thick with airflow of not less than 600 feet per minute across the entire window opening.
- d) An electrical switch must be incorporated in the design that will actuate the air curtain upon opening the window.
- e) Food service pass-through window openings less than 216 square inches must have the option of either installing an air curtain or be equipped with a self-closing screen or window.
- f) The minimum distance between the openings may not be less than eighteen (18) inches.
- g) The counter surface of the pass-through window must be smooth, free of channels and crevices, and be easily cleanable.



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SUBJECT: GREASE RETENTION DEVICES

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This department is concerned about the type and location of grease retention devices commonly used in commercial food establishments. The size, type, installation, and location of the grease retention device is critical to the ongoing maintenance of the food establishment.

For purposes of clarification, the following guidelines are used as department policy:

1. All installations of grease retention devices must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Plumbing Code.
2. The maximum size of any grease retention device used within a food establishment must not exceed 100 pound capacity.
3. Unless adequate space is provided between the grease retention device and the wall for cleaning purposes, the grease retention device must be flush-mounted in the floor.
  - a) Flush-mounted devices may be installed in vaults provided the vault is constructed to be watertight and of such construction so as not to create a nuisance.
4. Multiple grease retention devices may be approved on a case-by-case basis.
5. Each grease retention device must be clearly identified on plans submitted to this department.
6. Each grease retention device must be readily accessible for servicing.
7. The local plumbing official, Water Pollution Control Plant, and this department must approve the size, type and location.
8. Revisions to approved plans, caused by changes in the size or location of the grease retention device, must be resubmitted to this department for review and approval.
9. All individual grease retention devices exceeding 100 pound capacity must be located outside the facility unless specific written approval is granted by this department.



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DATE: AUGUST 3, 2001  
SUBJECT: FLOOR SINKS AND FLOOR DRAINS

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This department is concerned about the location, installation, and type of fixtures used within commercial food establishments to receive indirect and direct liquid waste. The following is the policy of this department regarding floor sinks and floor drains:

**1. FLOOR SINKS**

- a) All installations must comply with the local building and/or plumbing codes
- b) All steam tables, ice machines and bins, food preparation sinks, display cases, and other similar equipment that discharge liquid waste must be drained by means of indirect waste pipes, and all wastes drained by them must discharge through an air gap into an open floor sink or other approved type of receptor that is properly connected to the drainage system.
- c) Floor sinks may be approved with or without grates, flush mounted, rim mounted or raised mounted. If raised mounted, the space between the rim and the floor must be grouted thoroughly to facilitate cleaning.
- d) Final authority regarding the type of installation must be the responsibility of the local building/plumbing official.
- e) All installations must be done in a manner to allow complete accessibility for cleaning and must not create a tripping hazard.

**2. FLOOR DRAINS**

- a) Floor drains must be provided in floors that are water-flushed for cleaning or where pressure spray methods for cleaning equipment are used.
- b) A positive slope of 1:50 must be provided in floors that are provided with floor drains. This slope must be measured from wall to wall within the food preparation or utensil wash area. Sloping the floor immediately adjacent to the floor drain, e.g., a three to four diameter depression, is not acceptable.



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SUBJECT: OVEN HOODS

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Under Section 114140 of the California Uniform Retail Food Facilities Law, ventilation is required to remove toxic gases, heat, grease, vapors, and smoke from a food establishment.

If the size of an oven precludes the installation of a canopy hood, a modified canopy hood can be installed over the opening of the door to remove products from the baking process. This ventilation requirement also applies to ovens with a directly vented flue. Either a full or modified hood, (pant-leg), must be installed over the opening even if the oven is NSF approved or has UL and/or AGA listing.

The State Department of Health Services (DOHS) has granted exemptions from this ventilation requirement for some ovens. This exemption is granted after the piece of equipment has been submitted to DOHS and has not been found to produce toxic gases, heat, grease, vapors, and smoke when operated under conditions recommended by the manufacturer. However, this department always reserves the right to review that exemption on a case-by-case basis.



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SUBJECT: OUTDOOR GARBAGE COMPACTORS

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Outside garbage compactors may be installed at retail food establishments under the following conditions:

1. The installation has been approved by the local Building and Planning Departments
2. The entire compactor and storage bin is completely fly, maggot, and rodent-proof, i.e., all doors, covers, and access panels are provided with gaskets and are tight-fitting.
3. Compactors are installed on concrete pads that slope to a sanitary sewer drain. The concrete pad and sewer drain must be accessible for cleaning and designed as follows:
  - a) Only the concrete slab under and immediately around the compactor unit is to be tributary to the sanitary sewer drain.
  - b) All contiguous parking or walkway areas must drain away from the slab to appropriate storm sewer drains.
  - c) Rainwater must not drain into the sanitary sewer drain. Installation of a roof system over the area may be necessary. In this case the local Building Department may require a fire suppression system in this structure. Check with the your local Building or Fire Department representative for the current requirements.
4. Hot and cold water, through a mixing-type faucet, and outfitted with an approved anti-siphon device is required.
5. The appropriate refuse collection company removes compacted garbage at intervals which comply with local ordinances and this departments requirements.
6. A schedule of cleaning and maintenance is provided at the time of building clearance.



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SUBJECT: FISH TANKS

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When planning food facilities that have fish tanks, please plan for the following:

1. The type of support structure that will support the tank(s). The metal support structure must be corrosion resistant. Stainless steel or a similar material is the metal of choice for this application. Remember that you are dealing with a salt-water environment in almost all cases.
2. Where is the location of the disinfection equipment? Most tanks use an ultraviolet light source to disinfect the water. This type of equipment uses a light source that requires yearly replacement. It is important that the operator be able to get to and then replace these lights at the required interval.
3. Location of possible electrical hazards. All electrical circuits must consist of 3-wire grounded outlets. Where is the nearest source of electrical power? Will extension cords be necessary to provide additional power for tank cleaning, etc? Will the outlets be designed to withstand wet environments? Is an electrical bond wire required?
4. That there are no rough wooden platforms stored directly on the floor, which are used to house pumps, chillers, etc. All equipment needs to be accessible and suitable for the task required. There should be adequate space, perhaps six (6) inches, below all support structures to facilitate drainage.
5. Pipes, filters and similar components are durable and are meant for salt-water use. Recirculation system components must consist of food grade materials. Refer to NSF Standard 51 for details.
6. That there is adequate protection of the potable water supply. Backflow prevention devices should be suitable for the degree of hazard present in the tank area. Tank filling should be accomplished through an air gap separation from a fixed piping system.
7. There is a floor drain in the area of the tank to allow for wet area cleaning. Be certain that the floors slope to that floor drain.
8. Is there suitable space for the storage of filter aids. Such material may be in the form of sacks of sand, gravel or charcoal.
9. Is there adequate space for the storing of testing equipment, such as hydrometer and ammonia test kits near the tank?

Everything that deals with the tank and its environment, if looked at carefully during the plan review process, will make it that much easier for the operator to properly maintain the tank. Proper tank maintenance is essential to providing a safe food product to the public.