

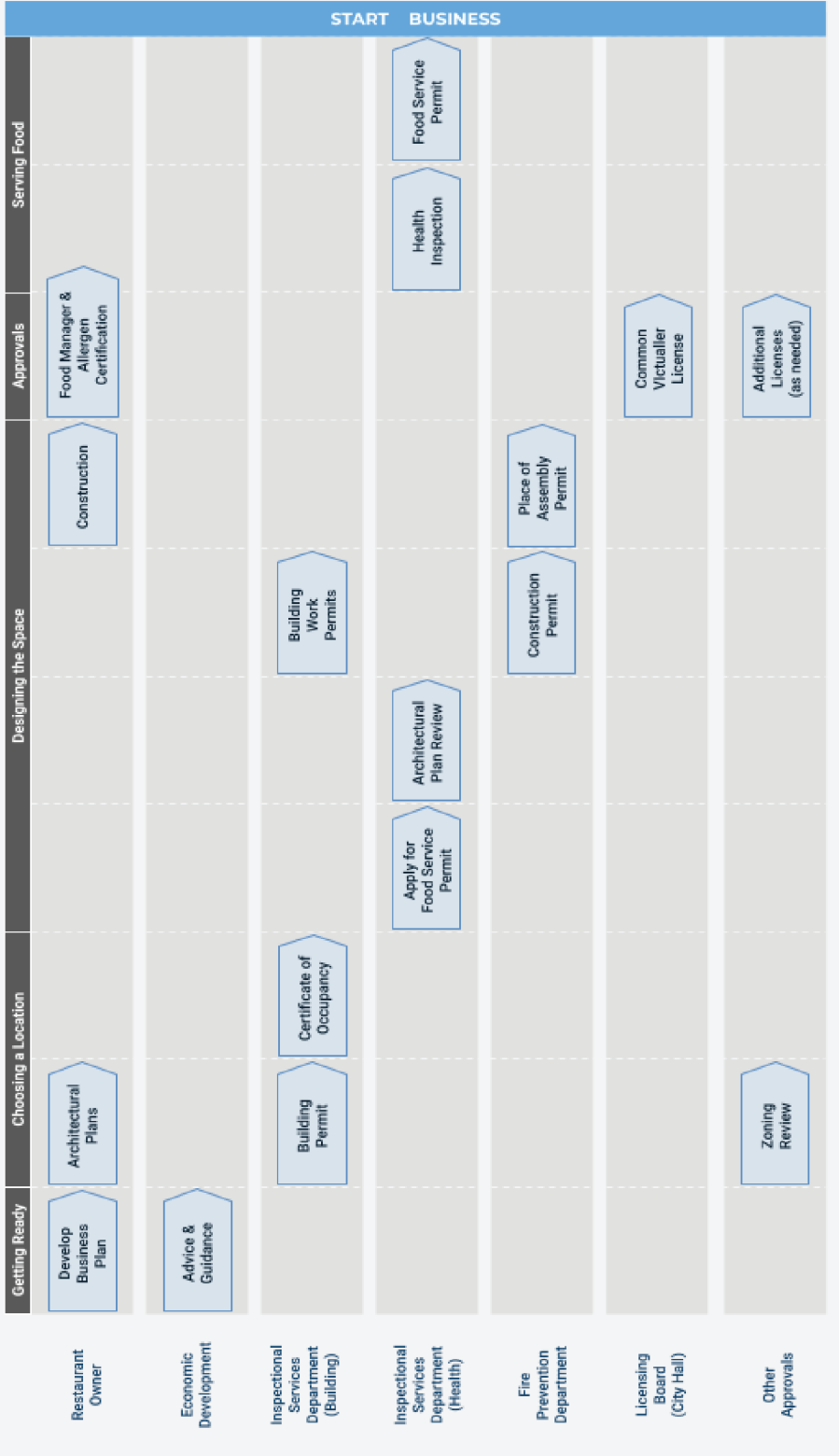
OPENING GUIDE FOR FOOD SERVICE ESTABLISHMENTS

A guide to starting your business, and getting permits, licenses inspections



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INTRODUCTION

Thanks for considering opening your food business in the City of Boston. Opening a food establishment is hard work. Our team is here to help!

This guide gives an overview and describes the restaurant-specific permitting and inspection process in the City of Boston. For questions, please contact Boston Inspectional Services (ISD) Health Division, and the Economic Development Department, or call 311.

STEP 1: GETTING READY

UNDERSTAND THE PROCESS AND MAKE A PLAN

Go to page 11 for a full list of web links.

- The Mayor's Office of Economic Development offers one-stop resources for all businesses in the City of Boston, including the Small Business Development Team and Boston Main Streets, both of which offer resources to start, grow, and build businesses in Boston.
- Start by connecting with your Neighborhood Business Manager (NBM). NBMs are experts in small business and can guide you on how to open a restaurant in Boston. Contact an expert to learn more about permitting and licensing, developing a business plan, selecting a location, or other critical business-related matters.
- The Economic Development Center offers workshops to increase access and opportunities, including workshop series tailored to food businesses.

STEP 2: CHOOSING A LOCATION

ZONING AND OCCUPANCY

Go to page 11 for a full list of web links.

- Check zoning online by searching for parcel designation on the Boston Redevelopment Authority's searchable map.
- Check whether Restaurant, Take-out, Drive-in, or Live Entertainment uses are allowed, forbidden, or conditional in the Zoning Code (by Neighborhood District in Articles 38-73).
- Check the building's existing legal use and occupancy online through the BuildingPermit Search.
- To change the zoning or use, file a Long Form online and appeal to the Zoning Board of Appeal if it is a conditional or forbidden use at that location.
- File a building permit application for any necessary construction. For major construction or structural changes, file a Long Form online. For minor changes, file a Short Form online. For more information on building permit types, visit **bit.ly/permit-isd**
- Obtain a Certificate of Occupancy by submitting your Certificate of Occupancy Application. If you have any questions please reach out to **ISDcertificates@boston.gov** (refer to the ISD's requirements for Certificate of Occupancy.).
- Once you have a lease in place, reach out to your Neighborhood Business Manager to discuss help with signage or storefront improvements for your business!

STEP 3: DESIGNING THE SPACE

CONSTRUCTION AND BUILDING APPROVAL

Go to page 11 for a full list of web links.

Get your plans reviewed; obtain Inspectional Services Department (ISD) Health Division approval of restaurant design before construction or alteration. Apply for the health permit at that time, pay for the permit provide 4 sets of site plans, equipment specifications from manufacturer for new equipment being installed that meet the NSF/UL certifications, a Food Establishment Review, menu with consumer advisories (if applicable). Request a Plan Review appointment by emailing **ISDHealth@boston.gov** or call **617-635-5326**

- The Boston Fire Prevention Division (BFD) also requires permits for construction projects.
- Secure the appropriate building/plumbing/gas/electrical/mechanical permits through ISD's online application system. Only licensed contractors may apply. Obtain all required inspections.
- Place of Assembly Permit (if occupancy is 50 persons or more) is issued by the BFD. Please check the relevant Guidelines and Requirements.
- Certificate of Inspection: Submit 3 sets of plans stamped with capacity approvals from ISD and BFD to ISD Counter 3A; await inspection. Download the checklist and/or application.

STEP 4: APPROVALS

GATHER ALL NECESSARY LICENSES AND PERMITS

Go to page for a full list of web links.

- Get a Common Victualler License from the Licensing Board.
- You need to get certified as a food manager by an independent company.
- Obtain an allergen awareness certificate.
- Depending on your specific business, you may also need one or more of the following approvals:
 - Live Entertainment License or Non-Live Entertainment License.
 - Pool Table License
 - Sidewalk Café Permit
 - Valet Parking Permit
 - Liquor License
 - Apply for Site Cleanliness License.
 - Apply for Dumpster Placement Permit: If larger than 3 cubic yards, file an Annual Permit Application Form.
 - Business Certificate from the City of Boston Clerk's Office
 - Kitchen Exhaust Hoods and Ducts require Building Division review and Boston Fire Department Certification.

STEP 5: SERVING FOOD

FOOD SERVICE PERMIT AND INSPECTION

Go to page 11 for a full list of web links. .

In order to complete the process and prepare for the Health Inspection, Please provide all the necessary remaining certificates, licenses and/or permits. They are as follows:

- Certificate of Occupancy or a Certificate of Inspection
- Your completed food service permit application Need updated forms for links
- A copy of your Food Manager Certification and Allergen Awareness Certification
- Your Common Victualler License

Please note: If you didn't pay your fees when you had your plans reviewed, you must bring your payment when you visit the ISD office. You must also bring copies of workman's compensation insurance and your Federal Tax ID number or Social Security number.

If all of your paperwork is in order, ISD will set up a pre-operational inspection request. The Health Division will help you set up your pre operational inspection and confirm your appointment. At the time of inspection, the Health Inspector will ensure that you are compliant with the code, and answer any questions you may have.

Division of Health Inspections

1010 Massachusetts Ave. Boston, MA 02118

Office hours: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

If you are paying with cash or credit card, you need to make your payment by 3:30 p.m.

INSPECTION CHECKLIST

Completion of this checklist does not guarantee inspection approval. This information is provided to help you prepare for the necessary inspection(s) in starting your restaurant. For questions, please contact the Health Division at ISDHealth@boston.gov, or call **311**.

BUILDING INSPECTION – CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY

- ☐ Emergency lights installed and functional
- ☐ Fire escapes in satisfactory condition
- ☐ Fire extinguisher tag dates current
- ☐ Commercial duct work cleaning on schedule
- ☐ Stairs properly railed
- ☐ Exits/directional signs visible and lit
- ☐ Sprinklers functioning properly
- ☐ Fire alarm system/smoke detectors
- ☐ Exit Ways unobstructed
- ☐ General conditions satisfactory

FIRE INSPECTION – PLACE OF ASSEMBLY PERMIT

- ☐ ISD Certificate of Inspection posted
- ☐ Place of Assembly Permit posted
- ☐ Flammability permits for all decorations, furnishings, and interior finishes
- ☐ Egress plan on site, consistent with layout of furniture
- ☐ Fire escapes clear and operable
- ☐ Door self-closers operate correctly
- ☐ Exit doors swing outward
- ☐ Exits unobstructed, lead to public way
- ☐ Good general housekeeping
- ☐ Stairwells clear with proper signage
- ☐ Alarm system inspections up to date
- ☐ Sprinkler inspections up to date

HEALTH INSPECTION – FOOD SERVICE HEALTH PERMIT

Establishments must ensure compliance with the Food Codes and the 2013 Federal Food Code with the 2015 supplement and have access to the regulations at the facility.

- ☐ Person in charge (PIC), knowledgeable, monitors food safety risks and takes corrective actions. PIC available all operational hours
- ☐ Employees trained in their duties and responsibilities
- ☐ Employee illness policy to inform in a verifiable manner requirement to report
- ☐ Separate hand wash sinks accessible and supplied for food preparation, dispensing and warewash areas; in addition to the restrooms
- ☐ Food contact surfaces properly designed, maintained, installed
- ☐ Adequate NSF equipment for cooking, holding food hot & cold and to properly cool.
- ☐ Non-food contact surfaces properly designed, maintained, installed
- ☐ Proper storage of clean and soiled pots and pans
- ☐ High-temp sanitizing dish machine or adequate 3 compartment sink with drainboards - testing equipment

PLUMBING AND WASTE DISPOSAL

- ☐ Properly plumbed potable (drinking) water and wastewater systems. No waste water back up; proper backflow devices installed
- ☐ Adequate number of refuse containers, clean, covered, adequate storage area.
- ☐ Food preparation sink provided for washing fruits and vegetables
- ☐ Mop sink provided

PHYSICAL FACILITIES

- ☐ Clean and organized
- ☐ Employee lockers to store clothing and personal care items
- ☐ Sufficient storage for dry goods, servicewares, maintenance items, and chemicals
- ☐ Light fixtures above food products have protective shields properly installed
- ☐ No evidence of rodents or insects
- ☐ Outside storage area clean
- ☐ Kitchen areas properly ventilated and hood inspection current
- ☐ See the entire list of health code violations at the Mayor's Food Court website.

CONTACT LIST

INSPECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Health Division

boston.gov/departments/inspectional-services/health-division

How to get a food service permit

boston.gov/departments/inspectional-services/how-get-foodservice-permit

Food codes

mass.gov/lists/retail-food

2013 Federal Food Code

fda.gov/food/fda-food-code/food-code-2013

Mayors Food Court Website

boston.gov/health-and-human-services/mayors-food-court
Zoning Code - library.municode.com/ma/boston/codes/redevelopment_authority

Permit Search

boston.gov/departments/inspectional-services/how-find-historical-permit-records

How to apply for a longform permit

boston.gov/departments/inspectionalservices/how-get-long-form-permit

How to apply for a short form

boston.gov/departments/inspectional-services/how-get-short-form-permit

How to file an appeal with the Zoning Board

boston.gov/departments/inspectional-services/how-file-appeal-zoning-board

Building permit types,

boston.gov/departments/inspectional-services/what-building-permit-do-i-need

Certificate of Occupancy

boston.gov/departments/inspectional-services/how-get-record-legal-occupancy

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**Economic Department**

boston.gov/departments/economic-opportunity-and-inclusion

Small Business Development

boston.gov/departments/small-business-development

Contact an expert

boston.gov/departments/economic-development/connect-your-neighborhood-business-manager

Economic Development Center

boston.gov/departments/small-business-development/economic-development-center

Small Business Development

boston.gov/departments/small-business-development

Boston Main Streets

boston.gov/departments/economic-development/boston-main-streets

Signage or storefront improvement

boston.gov/departments/small-business-development/storefront-improvements

LICENSING BOARD

How to get a Common Victualler License

boston.gov/departments/licensing-board/how-get-common-victualler-license

How to get a live entertainment license

boston.gov/departments/consumer-affairs-andlicensing/how-get-annual-live-entertainment-license

How to get a pool table license

boston.gov/departments/licensing-board/common-licensing-board-forms-and-applications

Boston Licensing Board

boston.gov/departments/licensing-board

Boston Redevelopment Authority's searchable map

maps.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/zoningviewer/

BOSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

Boston Fire Prevention (BFD) applications and guidelines

boston.gov/departments/fireprevention/fire-forms-permits-applications-and-fees

Places of assembly permit guidelines and requirements

onlinepermitsandlicenses.cityofboston.gov/BFD

