

GUIDELINE FOR CLASSIFYING FOOD SERVICE ESTABLISHMENTS

The Public Health Code (PHC) Section 19-13-B42(s) (3) states that “the Director of Health, Registered Sanitarian or authorized agent shall classify each food service establishment by using the criteria outlined in this subdivision...”

Similar requirements may be found for itinerant food vending and catering food service operations in PHC sections 19-13-B48 (j)(2) and 19-13-B49 (t)(2), respectively.

It should be noted that food establishments that do not provide individual portion service of food to the public (e.g., wholesale and retail markets, bakeries, confectionary stores, etc.) are regulated by PHC section 19-13-B40 and therefore are not subject to classification and qualified food operator (QFO) requirements.

The following provides a guide for classifying food service establishments based on the type of food preparation/heating and also provides examples of types of establishments in each classification.

CLASS I ESTABLISHMENTS

Description of Food Preparation Permitted

- Commercially prepackaged food (e.g., cold commercially packaged sandwiches and sandwich meat and cheeses, pastries, confectioneries, etc.).
- Hot and cold beverages (e.g., coffee, tea, soft drinks, etc.).
- Hot and cold food preparation limited to non-potentially hazardous foods (e.g., popcorn, pretzels, donuts, etc.) AND potentially hazardous foods heated and served in original package within four (4) hours (e.g., commercially prepared processed and packaged sandwiches).

Examples of Establishment Types

- Convenience stores with prepackaged foods and beverages
- Snack bars at theaters serving prepackaged foods and popcorn and beverages
- Newspaper stands
- Coffee shops serving pastries, beverages and prepackaged foods.

CLASS II ESTABLISHMENTS

Description of Food Handling

- Cold or ready-to-eat foods including potentially hazardous foods may be prepared (e.g., cold deli sandwiches, salads, etc.).
- Hot or cold beverages (e.g., coffee, tea, soft drinks, etc.).
- Commercially packaged precooked potentially hazardous foods may be heated and served in original package within four (4) hours (e.g., commercially prepared processed and packaged sandwiches).
- Commercially precooked: hot dogs, kielbasa, and soups (not chili, stew, or other canned products), may be heated if transferred directly out of the original package and served within four (4) hours. (*Transferred directly out of the original package* means opening a can or package of soup that is in a ready-to-eat form and does not require the addition of water, milk, or other ingredients.)

Examples of Establishment Types

- Delicatessens
- *Convenience stores
- Cafes
- Sandwich shops
- Ice cream and yogurt shops
- *Donut shop
- No hot potentially hazardous foods except hot dogs, kielbasa and commercially processed soups

CLASS III ESTABLISHMENTS

Description of Food Handling

- Hot preparation of potentially hazardous foods allowed if served to the public within four (4) hours (e.g., hot meat sandwiches, pizza, soups, seafood, etc.). The four-hour maximum holding time before service includes the cumulative holding, cooling, storage, reheating times, after heat treatment.

Examples of Establishment Types

- Delicatessens with hot food preparation less than four (4) hours holding before service.
- Cafeteria (including schools with hot food prepared less than four (4) hours before service).
- Itinerant food vendors
- Day Care Centers
- Fast food establishments with no preparation of hot potentially hazardous foods more than four (4) hours before service.
- Cook/serve operations – some diners and short order establishments.

CLASS IV ESTABLISHMENTS

Description of Food Handling

- Hot preparation of potentially hazardous foods (e.g., meats, poultry, eggs, fish, dairy, etc.) served more than a cumulative (including hot holding, cooling, cold storage, reheating, etc.) four (4) hours after heat treatment.

Examples of Establishment Types

- Most restaurants
- Convalescent homes
- Hospitals
- Caterers
- Institutional food service
- Industrial food service
- Any food service establishment that serves potentially hazardous foods left over from the day before