



Environmental Health Department

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Memorandum

TO: All Food Service Plan Review Applicants
FROM: Environmental Health Services, Flathead City-County Health Department
DATE: January 1, 2013
SUBJECT: Plan Review Process

ATTENTION APPLICANT

A plan review by Environmental Health is an essential initial step in the licensing process. A plan review must be conducted prior to licensure for new and remodeled facilities as well as those facilities undergoing a significant change in menu or operational processes.

Due to the growth in Flathead County and the comprehensive nature of the plan review process, **it can take up to 4 weeks to review plans once they are submitted.** The Department often sees an increase in the number of plan reviews in the spring and summer of each year. Plan reviews are assigned to the sanitarian responsible for inspections at the proposed establishment and are reviewed in the order they are received. Therefore, **it is necessary to submit plans at least 30 days prior to a planned opening date**, especially in the spring.

The plan review process involves an in-depth review of the physical facility and all food handling processes. The plan review process provides an opportunity for proprietors to coordinate their physical and operational plans with FCCHD to ensure they will meet health codes. It can include, but is not limited to: an evaluation of proposed non-municipal water supply system(s) and on-site waste-water disposal system(s), an assessment of the proposed menu to identify complex processes, a review of storage methods and capacity, and a review of proposed sanitation tools and methods including solid waste disposal.

The plan review should identify areas where increased risk may be encountered and identify potential health issues before they surface as a costly food-borne illness. The process should reveal where plans fail to adequately address prevention of health and safety issues early enough for changes to be made. **The plan review should be completed prior to construction being conducted on the site.**
