

Facility Requirements for Retail Food Service

May 2026

This checklist is meant as a reference guide only. See the [Health Regulations for Food Service Establishments](#) for the full requirements for operating a retail food service establishment.

Make sure all the following requirements are satisfied before scheduling an inspection.

If you need help accessing or understanding this information, contact FoodLodging@vermont.gov.

Water System

- Must be a water source (public or private) approved by the [Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation](#) (DEC), Drinking Water and Groundwater Protection Division.
- Provide enough hot and cold water under pressure to meet the peak demand.
- A private water source test must show absence of bacteria (Total Coliform and *E. coli*). Use a [State-certified lab](#) to analyze the sample. You must show acceptable sample results that are less than twelve months old.
- For private water sources:
 - New establishments must meet DEC's construction standards.
 - Existing facilities are exempt from DEC's construction standards, unless the water quality is no longer acceptable.

Wastewater (Sewage) Disposal System

- Must be a properly functioning system (public or private) approved by DEC.
- Check with a [Regional Engineer](#) for wastewater permitting and other permitting requirements (anr.vermont.gov).

Toilet and Handwashing Facilities

- Make sure they are conveniently located and accessible.
- Handsinks must be designed for handwashing only and provided in food prep areas and toilet rooms.
- Hot and cold water must be provided under pressure. Hot water must reach 100°F.

- Provide hand soap, paper towels or hand-drying device, and a [handwashing sign](#).
- Provide self-closing toilet room door(s).
- Number of toilet rooms required is based on seating capacity.
 - 25 or fewer seats, at least one toilet room
 - More than 25 seats, at least two toilet rooms
 - No seating, one toilet room for employees

Dishwashing Facilities & Sanitization

- **Required:** stainless steel three-bay sink that allows immersion of at least half of the largest piece of equipment and/or utensil. The three-bay sink must have an adequate air gap, and there must be self-draining metal or stainless steel drainboards, utensil racks, or other alternative large enough to accommodate all soiled and clean items.
- **Optional:** automatic, commercial unit with temperature gauge(s) accurate to +/- 2 °F.
- Wash temperatures must be 110 °F or hotter for manual washing and as specified on data plate for automatic washing.
- Sanitizing (final rinse) minimum requirements that apply to automatic AND manual dishwashing facilities:
 - Hot water sanitizing: Sanitizing temperatures must be 160 °F or hotter at the dish level and pressure gauge(s) accurate to +/- 2 psi to maintain 15 to 25 psi during final rinse.
 - Chemical sanitizing (use litmus paper test kit to check concentration):
 - Chlorine: 50 to 100 ppm
 - Quaternary ammonium: 200 to 400 ppm
 - Iodine: 12.5 to 25 ppm
- Sanitizer used on food contact surfaces must be specifically approved as “food grade” or “food safe.” Check the label to make sure it is approved for food contact surfaces.

Plumbing

Must comply with the Vermont Plumbing Rules, including:

- No cross connection between the potable water supply and other water sources that have unsatisfactory or questionable quality.

- Backflow prevention devices installed on hose bibs, soda machines, dishwashing spray hoses, and mop sink faucets.
- Ice machines and storage bins, equipment washing/food-prep sinks, and dish machines must drain into an indirect (air gap) drain.
- Mop sink for cleaning wet floor cleaning tools and disposal of mop water.
- Check with the [Vermont Department of Public Safety](#) (DPS) Plumbing Program for grease trap requirements.

Hot and Cold Holding

Must have adequate facilities to hold all Time/Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) foods, including:

- Capacity to store all TCS foods during maximum stock level.
 - Ambient temperatures: refrigerators 41° F or colder, hot holding units 135° F or hotter.
 - Accurate (+/- 2° F) thermometers for hot and cold food storage units and for monitoring food temperatures.

Food-Contact Equipment

- Made of proper materials with smooth, easily cleanable surfaces, and in good condition.
- Installed to allow access for cleaning or fitted with castors.

Non-Food Contact Equipment

- Made of proper materials with smooth, easily cleanable surfaces, and in good condition.
- Designed and installed to allow access for cleaning, fitted with castors or sealed in place.

Floors

- Made of proper materials that comply with the [Vermont Fire & Building Safety Code](#).
- Smooth, easily cleanable, and in good condition.
- Cove baseboards are needed in areas for food preparation, storage, dishwashing, and toilet rooms.

Walls and Ceilings

- Made of proper materials that comply with the Vermont Fire & Building Safety Code.
- Smooth, easily cleanable, and free of cracks, crevices, and other openings.

Lighting

- Adequate intensity in all areas.
- Protect with covers or sleeves with end caps, or use shatter-resistant bulbs. Smooth, easily cleanable, and in good condition.

Ventilation Systems

Must comply with DPS standards and be:

- Cleaned and maintained to prevent contamination.
- Provided in toilet rooms, dressing/locker rooms, and areas where food is prepared and equipment is washed.
- Check with DPS Fire Safety and Electrical Program for hood requirements.

Insect and Rodent Control

- Make sure all openings to the outside are tightfitting or screened with fine-mesh screen (not less than 16-mesh to the inch).
- No insects, rodents, vermin, reptiles, birds or other animals are allowed. Cleaned and maintained to prevent contamination.
- Consider contracting with a professional pest control company for monthly inspections and treatments, if needed.

Garbage, Refuse and Compost

- Enclosures must be properly constructed to prevent the presence of insects, rodents and other animals.

Toxic and Poisonous Materials and First Aid Supplies

- Must have proper labels and storage locations.

Laundry Facilities and Living/Sleeping Quarters

- Must not be located in any areas where food is prepared.