

Commissary Kitchen Requirements

You need a permit to operate a commissary kitchen. Vendors need a commissary kitchen to store and prepare foods served elsewhere, such as a mobile unit or catering. A commissary kitchen must have equipment for each user to prepare foods safely. A commissary permit allows you to rent space to other users. You need a separate permit if you will make food. Each business must have a permit.

The number of vendors that can use a commissary kitchen depends on the equipment available. This includes refrigeration space and food prep sinks.

Commissary Kitchen Food Establishment Permit—General Requirements

1. A commissary kitchen is an approved place where you store, prepare, portion or package food. Your commissary kitchen must provide:
 - Potable water
 - Handwash sink
 - Mop sink
 - Restrooms
 - Garbage service
 - 3-compartment dishwashing sink
 - Cooking equipment
 - Refrigeration
 - Food preparation sinks
2. The water source at your kitchen must be from an approved public water system. In some cases, smaller water systems will require additional approval. You may need to submit a water use application.
3. You must have a handwash sink located in each area where food is prepared. The handwash sink must be able to provide water at 100°F.
4. You must have a mop sink, also called a utility sink or service sink, with hot and cold water. The faucet must have an anti-backflow device, or vacuum breaker, installed.
5. You must have plumbed restrooms in your facility. The restrooms must have handwash sinks that can provide water at 100°F.
6. Your commissary kitchen must have a garbage container large enough to accommodate kitchen use. Empty frequently to prevent hazards and nuisances.
7. Your kitchen must have a 3-compartment sink with drainboards attached at each end. The basins of the sinks must have rounded corners to allow for proper cleaning. You may install a dishwasher. A dishwasher may not replace a 3-compartment sink. The dishwasher must not hinder use of the 3-compartment sink.
8. You must have the correct type and amount of cooking equipment to support each business.
9. You must have food prep sinks when you use raw meat or produce. Food prep sinks need an attached drainboard that is the same size as the sink compartment. You must have one food prep sink for use with raw meat and one for produce. You cannot use one sink for both. A single 2-compartment sink is not allowed.
10. You must provide refrigeration to support the menu and processes of everyone that will use your kitchen. A commissary kitchen should have a walk-in cooler. A vendor must have refrigeration space to store foods, and additional space in the walk-in cooler to cool foods.
11. Each vendor must have assigned refrigeration space. No other vendor may use space assigned to someone else.

12. Identify each vendor assigned space, including in the walk-in cooler, with their business name. Multiple users may use a speed rack.
13. The amount of refrigeration required for each vendor will depend on their specific menu and processes.
14. The plumbing system, including grease removal systems, must meet all other jurisdictional requirements. Be sure to check with your city or county to determine their requirements.
15. You must have enough hot water. The hot water heater should be large enough to meet all uses at the busiest times.
16. Each business using your kitchen must submit a signed Commissary Agreement form with their Health Department Plan Review application.
17. You must submit a list of every food business that will use your kitchen. The list must include those permitted by other agencies, such as the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA), or mobile food units that operate in another county.
18. You must notify us immediately if a vendor discontinues use of your kitchen.
19. You must post a copy of your Food Establishment Permit in your commissary kitchen.
20. Each business that uses your kitchen must have a permit. You must keep a valid copy of each businesses permit on site.

Other Agencies' Requirements

Other agencies may have additional requirements for your commissary kitchen. For example:

- Building departments may have specific plumbing requirements based on the number of businesses you support, such as grease removal systems.
- Fire departments may require you to have a permit for oil frying equipment.
- Local government may require your cooking equipment to have a ventilation hood or tight-fitting cover.
- State or local government may require you to have business license(s).

Check out the Agency Resource List in your Plan Review Application packet for many useful contacts.