

## General Plumbing Requirements for Food Service Establishments

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### Applicability

The information contained within this document applies only to establishments within the City of Seattle, Beaux Arts Village, Clyde Hill, and Unincorporated King County. For plumbing design guidance in other areas within King County, please contact the applicable local jurisdiction.

- In most cases, field review in lieu of full plumbing plan review is allowed for alterations, additions, and revisions to an existing restaurant at an existing location including instances where the tenant or owner is changing. Review the Plumbing & Gas Piping Program's [Occupancy and Use](#) guidance document for additional information. If plumbing drawings do need to be submitted for plan review, submittal requirements can be found in our [Plan Review Design Guidance](#) document. Food and Facilities plan review (also known as health department plan review) is a completely separate process. More information about that process can be found [here](#).

- Plumbing plan review is required for all **"New"** retail food establishments.

Definition:

**"New"** – A new building constructed specifically to house a new commercial kitchen, commissary kitchen, commercial restaurant, or bar. Or an existing area or space that has never been occupied by a retail food establishment, that is converted to a non-mobile commercial kitchen, commissary kitchen, commercial restaurant, or bar.

### **Exceptions to new retail food establishment plumbing plan review:**

1. New establishments where only one gender neutral restroom is required per SBC Ch 29, the food establishment is primarily for drinking or dining, and the total occupant load including both employees and customers is 30 or less.

**Note:** The above exception does not apply to establishments with more than (1) location.

### **Please be aware of the following requirements related to the installation of plumbing systems in food service establishments:**

1. Plumbing work shall not be covered or concealed prior to rough-in plumbing inspection and approval.
2. The Public Health approved Food & Facilities plans, and approved plumbing plans (if applicable) shall be on site at the time of any plumbing inspection. Both sets of plans must include the same number and type of fixtures and appliances in the same general locations and must be printed in a format large enough for all text to be legible.
3. All fixtures and appliances shall be installed and operable at the time of final plumbing inspection.

4. Hot water shall be provided to all kitchen hand wash sinks and restroom lavatories at a minimum temperature of 100°F. Hot water provided to restroom lavatories shall be limited to a maximum temperature of 120°F by means of a temperature mixing valve conforming to ASSE 1070. The water heater thermostat shall not be considered an adequate means for limiting the temperature.
5. Water closet seats for public use shall be of the elongated type, either of the open front type or equipped with an automatic seat cover dispenser.
6. Where carbonated beverage dispensers are installed, the connection to the potable water system shall be protected by means of an approved reduced pressure backflow assembly (RPBA). The backflow assembly shall be installed in accordance with the applicable Plumbing Code and the manufacturer's installation instructions, including, but not limited to, the minimum clearance requirements necessary to perform regular inspection, maintenance and testing of the assembly. No copper or brass material shall be installed downstream of the RPBA. The beverage dispenser shall be installed at the time of final plumbing inspection. If such dispensers are to be installed at a future time, they shall require a plumbing permit and inspection prior to operation of the unit(s). A backflow assembly permit shall be required prior to installation of the assembly.
7. Sinks (including 3-compartment sinks, hand wash sinks, and 'dump' sinks) shall be *directly* connected to the drainage system. The only fixtures permitted to be *indirectly* connected are those used for the preparation or storage of food or unpackaged ice used for human consumption (prep sinks), sinks with an integral pitcher rinser, the sanitation bay of a 3-compartment sink, or bar sinks and hand sinks meeting the provisions of Section 801.4 of the Plumbing Code. Appliances shall be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's installation instructions and the applicable Plumbing Code. Note that most plumbing-connected kitchen appliances including espresso machines, dishwashers, glass washers, and combi-ovens are required to drain *indirectly* to the drainage system through an approved indirect receptor.
8. Where soap/chemical dispensers are connected to the potable water system, they shall be connected by means of an approved air gap or listed air gap fitting. Where such dispensers are connected to a sink faucet by means of a hose-threaded connection, there shall not be any type of shutoff downstream of the sink faucet. This can be accomplished by installing a water wasting tee at the point of connection with the sink faucet. Soap/chemical dispensers shall be installed at the time of final plumbing inspection. If such dispensers are to be installed at a future time, they shall require a plumbing permit and inspection prior to operation of the units(s).
9. Plumbing fixtures or other receptors receiving the discharge of indirect waste pipes shall be approved for the use proposed and shall be of such shape and capacity as to prevent splashing or flooding and shall be located where they are readily accessible for inspection and cleaning. With the exception of those serving refrigeration coils and ice machines, no indirect waste pipe shall exceed 15' in length.
10. A grease interceptor is required where food or drink containing fats, oils or grease (F.O.G.) are to be cooked, prepared, or served. Grease interceptors shall be sized and installed in accordance with applicable plumbing code and the manufacturer's instructions. Total gallon capacity of fixtures discharging to a hydromechanical grease interceptor shall not exceed 2-1/2 times the rated gpm flow rate of the interceptor. The manufacturer's installation instructions shall be on site at the time of inspection. Except as noted in item #7 above, fixtures discharging to the grease interceptor shall be directly connected and shall be served by an individual trap and vent. The grease interceptor shall be directly connected to the drainage system. The type and location of the flow control device shall be in accordance with the manufacturer's installation instructions. A vent to atmosphere is required to serve all grease interceptors and any fixture directly connected to a grease interceptor. Air Admittance Valves are not permitted to be used in grease waste systems. The downstream vent serving a hydromechanical grease interceptor may only connect with other sanitary vents a minimum of 6" above the flood level of the lowest fixture served by the interceptor. If a grease interceptor outlet is below the next upstream manhole rim elevation, the grease interceptor must be protected by a backwater valve. All grease waste piping regardless of size must slope at 1/4" per foot minimum unless prior approval is granted by Public Health and documented with an approved Alternate Means and Methods Request Form ([AMMRF](#)).

11. Unless specifically prohibited by the Plumbing Code or otherwise approved by Public Health, all 3-compartment sinks, prep sinks, 'dump' sinks, floor drains and mop sinks (within the kitchen area), dipper wells, espresso machine drains, and floor sinks must discharge to the sanitary drainage system through an approved grease interceptor. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of Public Health for existing fixtures in operation prior to a commercial kitchen space remodel. Hand sinks and indirect receptors receiving the discharge from icemakers, condensate drains, RPBA relief, or other clear water waste are not required to discharge through a grease interceptor but may do so at the discretion of the designer or engineer.

Exceptions and Notes:

- a) Floor sinks serving exclusively ice machines, condensate drains, or similar clear water waste are not required to discharge through a grease interceptor but may do so at the discretion of the designer or engineer.
  - b) Dishwashers (including warewashers & glasswashers) are not permitted to discharge to a hydromechanical grease interceptor. Indirect receptors serving those devices must connect directly to the sanitary waste system.
  - c) Food waste disposers and scrappers are not permitted to discharge directly to a hydromechanical grease interceptor not listed for solids handling without first being routed through a listed solids interceptor. Such appliances must connect directly to the sanitary waste system through a dedicated p-trap. Treating the drainage from a commercial scrapper through the installation of a solids interceptor and grease interceptor is highly recommended to avoid exceeding the F.O.G. waste discharge limits set by the local utility. If these limits are exceeded, a Notice of Violation may be issued, and the facility may be required to modify the plumbing system to come into compliance with published discharge limits.
  - d) A single floor sink or other indirect receptor may not serve both a drain that needs to discharge through a grease interceptor and a drain that is prohibited from discharging through a grease interceptor – separate receptors must be provided.
  - e) Public Health will allow glasswashers, dishwashers, food waste disposers, and scrappers to discharge to a gravity type grease interceptor with an approved AMMRF.
  - f) Certain food service facility types with no onsite cooking that do not regularly serve or prepare F.O.G. containing products for public sale may be permitted to route floor drains and mop sinks directly to the sanitary system at the discretion of PHSKC. Such facility types may include warming kitchens, catering kitchens, concession stands, community centers, daycares, etc..
12. Suspended hydromechanical grease interceptors must comply with Section 1009.5 of the Plumbing Code. Ladders are not an acceptable means of providing service access. All suspended grease interceptor installations within the City of Seattle shall obtain approval from Seattle's Fats, Oil and Grease (F.O.G.) Program prior to installation by contacting: [greasefreepipes@seattle.gov](mailto:greasefreepipes@seattle.gov).

**Note: When installing a hydromechanical grease interceptor in a suspended configuration within the City of Seattle, verification of approval from Seattle's F.O.G. Program is required to be on site during all plumbing field inspections. For projects that require a plumbing plan review, this documentation must be submitted to the plan reviewer prior to obtaining plan approval.**

For questions regarding plumbing plan submittal for food establishments, please email: [planreviewinfo@kingcounty.gov](mailto:planreviewinfo@kingcounty.gov)

The Seattle Plumbing Code and Seattle Building Code may be accessed for free at: [https://www.seattle.gov/sdci/codes/codes-we-enforce-\(a-z\)](https://www.seattle.gov/sdci/codes/codes-we-enforce-(a-z))