



## Restaurant Tax

Restaurants in the City of Chicago that sell food and beverages will automatically be registered to file and pay the Chicago Restaurant Tax. The 0.25% tax should

be filed with and paid to the Chicago Department of Revenue. Visit [www.cityofchicago.org/revenue](http://www.cityofchicago.org/revenue) for more information.

## Business Workshops

BACP offers entrepreneurs a place to learn about starting and growing a business by offering free business educational classes, such as writing a business plan, financing, marketing and much more. Visit [www.cityofchicago.org/bacp](http://www.cityofchicago.org/bacp) for the monthly workshop calendar.

## Top 10 Inspection Tips:

### Health requirements to prepare for your facility inspection:

1. At least one City of Chicago Food Service Sanitation Certificate must be posted on site and in easy view of the public and city inspection personnel. At least one certified food manager must be present during operations.
2. A stainless steel, 3 compartment sink with an attached metal drain board, a grease trap and a preventative back flow device. Commercial dishwashers are acceptable and can be either a high temperature 180 degrees Fahrenheit or a low temp chemical sanitizing, using either chlorine or iodine.
3. A separate hand washing sink in the food prep area, equipped with soap and towels.
4. A utility or slop sink for cleaning purposes.
5. A refrigerator that is capable of maintain a temp of 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below and a freezer capable of maintain a temp of 0 degrees Fahrenheit. All coolers and refrigerator must have thermometers.
6. An operating exhaust hood over cooking equipment. Exhaust must ventilate over the roof of any adjacent building.
7. At least one employee restroom. Where both men and woman are employed and there are more than two employees of a gender, separate restrooms shall be identified and provided for each. Restrooms must be ventilated and the doors must be self closing.
8. A pest control service contract with a licensed provider and a log book to document service dates.
9. A contract for garbage removal service and a grease dumpster if necessary.
10. A well maintained, clean and sanitary establishment.

## How to Pass Your Facility Inspection:

1. **Attend a free inspection workshop offered** every month at the BACP. The workshop will allow you to learn first hand how to prepare for inspections from sanitarians, building inspectors and ask questions.
2. **Download a complete list of inspection requirements** from the Department of Public Health at [www.cityofchicago.org/health](http://www.cityofchicago.org/health) under "Food Protection."
3. **Visit the Restaurant Resource Center** at [www.cityofchicago.org/restaurants](http://www.cityofchicago.org/restaurants) for helpful tips and information on opening a food establishment.
4. **New Construction**—If you are planning to build or rehab a new or existing restaurant, grocery store or other food establishment, a City Health Sanitarian will review your building plans to make sure they are adequate for the type and size of business you want to operate. The plan review will help you save time and avoid potential costly mistakes before you begin your construction. Lastly, it will help you be on your way to a speedy opening by passing your facility inspection when you apply for your Retail Food Establishment License. The Plan Review is coordinated between the Department of Public Health and the Department of Buildings during the building permit application process.

## CONTACT INFORMATION:

**Department of Business Affairs & Consumer Protection  
Business Assistance Center**  
121 N. LaSalle St. Room 800 • Chicago, IL 60602  
(312) 74-GOBIZ/(312) 744-6249  
[www.cityofchicago.org/bacp](http://www.cityofchicago.org/bacp)

**Department of Public Health  
Food Protection Division**  
(312) 746-8030 • [www.cityofchicago.org/health](http://www.cityofchicago.org/health)

**Department of Buildings**  
(312) 743-3600 • [www.cityofchicago.org/buildings](http://www.cityofchicago.org/buildings)

**Department of Revenue**  
(312) 747-IRIS • [www.cityofchicago.org/revenue](http://www.cityofchicago.org/revenue)



# Chicago's Guide to Restaurants and Retail Food Establishments



## Retail Food Establishment License (4-8, 7-40)



City of Chicago  
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Chicago Department of  
Business Affairs &  
Consumer Protection





Chicago has a long history of culinary excellence and is home to many of the greatest restaurants, bars and cafés in the world. Opening a food establishment in Chicago requires attention to detail to ensure you provide the public with a safe and sanitary dining experience.

### What is a Retail Food Establishment License?

A Retail Food Establishment License is required any time perishable food is prepared, served or sold to the public. A Retail Food License will only be issued to a commercial location.

#### Retail Food Establishments include:

- Restaurants
- Cafés
- Banquet Halls
- Taverns/Nightclubs
- Caterers
- Candy manufacturers
- Take out/delivery restaurants
- Grocery stores
- Convenience stores
- Fruit and vegetable markets
- Meat/Fish markets
- Automatic food vending machines
- Cafeterias, delis, bakeries
- Concession stands

A retail food license is NOT required to sell pre-packaged, nonperishable food such as gum, candy, soda, etc.

**APPLICATION FEE:** 0-4,500 sq.ft. = \$660  
 4,501-10,000 sq.ft. = \$880  
 10,001+sq.ft. = \$1,100

License renewals are based on a 2 year term.



### SELLING LIQUOR

Selling liquor in your retail food business requires a liquor license. There are several different types depending upon the type of business you operate. Applying for a liquor license includes neighborhood sentiment, additional facility inspections, criminal background checks and there may be restrictions based on your business location. Plan ahead and speak with a BACP business consultant or visit BACP online for more information.

### BYOB

BYOB (Bring Your Own Bottle) is permitted inside a restaurant; however the City encourages business owners to obtain liability insurance to protect against potential lawsuits. There should not be any direct or indirect fees charged for the allowance of BYOB unless the business location has a liquor license. BYOB is not permitted on a sidewalk café.

## OTHER RELATED FOOD LICENSES

### Dog Friendly Dining Areas

This license is a supplemental license to the Retail Food Establishment License and is required for restaurants or other retail food establishments who wish to allow dogs onto their outdoor dining areas that are accessible from the street.  
 FEE: \$450.00

### Wholesale Food

A Wholesale Food License is required for businesses engaged in preparation, manufacturing, canning, baking, bottling, packing, distribution, storage, selling or offering for sale at wholesale any product used for human consumption. Businesses engaged in both retail and wholesale food sales are only required to obtain a Retail Food Establishment License.  
 FEE: \$660

### Food Peddler

A Food Peddler is a person who moves from place to place selling fruits or vegetables that are whole and uncut from a wagon, pushcart, handcart, pack or basket. Food Peddlers are permitted to sell whole, uncut fruits and vegetables and no other food items. Peddlers are not allowed to handle or prepare food.  
 FEE: \$165 and \$88.00 for seniors, veterans and the disabled

### Mobile Food Dispenser

A Mobile Food Dispenser License is required to sell food items directly from a vehicle, catering or ice cream truck. All food must be prepared and pre-packaged from a facility with a Wholesale or Retail Food Establishment License. Mobile food vehicles are required to undergo a health inspection and are prohibited in some wards of the City.  
 FEE: \$275

### Outdoor Cafés

Businesses with a Retail Food Establishment License that wish to serve food on the public sidewalk require a Sidewalk Café Permit. The permit allows businesses to operate a sidewalk café from March to December. More information about Sidewalk Cafes is available at [www.cityofchicago.org/bacp](http://www.cityofchicago.org/bacp).  
 FEE: Based on square footage and location.

Businesses that wish to serve food on an outdoor patio that is on private property may do so as long as the area has been inspected by the health department and has been disclosed on your Retail Food Establishment License application.

Selling liquor on an outdoor patio on private property requires an outdoor patio liquor license.

### Visit the Restaurant Resource Center [www.cityofchicago.org/restaurants](http://www.cityofchicago.org/restaurants)

- ✓ Find information about opening and operating a restaurant
- ✓ Download easy to understand checklists
- ✓ Link to restaurant resources
- ✓ Get inspection tips
- ✓ Check the status of your inspection
- ✓ Link to the Restaurant License Wizard, and get customized information about licensing requirements

The first step in applying for a Retail Food Establishment License is to meet with a BACP business consultant who will guide you through the process. Before seeking a license, you should consider the following requirements. You can make an appointment with a business consultant online at [www.cityofchicago.org/bacp](http://www.cityofchicago.org/bacp) or by calling 312-74-GOBIZ/312-744-6249

License applications are accepted online at [www.cityofchicag.org/bacp](http://www.cityofchicag.org/bacp), in person or by mail.

#### THE APPLICATION:

The following documentation and information is required when applying for a Retail Food Establishment License: The name of your business, business address, square footage, lease or proof of ownership of the property, Illinois Business Tax (IBT) number, Federal Employers Identification (FEIN) number, ownership information, and a photo I.D.

#### ZONING REQUIREMENTS:

Before signing a lease make sure the location you have selected allows retail food service by checking the zoning classification at [www.cityofchicago.org/zoning](http://www.cityofchicago.org/zoning) or ask a BACP business consultant.

If you plan to sell liquor or offer entertainment in your food establishment, additional licensing and zoning requirements may apply.

#### SANITATION CERTIFICATE:

All retail food businesses are required to have at least one employed person on the premises at all times who has a valid City of Chicago Food Service Sanitation Certificate. The food course offers a basic food science background and information on the proper handling of food and maintaining a sanitary food establishment. Courses are available at Harold Washington College, <http://hwc.ccc.edu> or the Illinois Restaurant Association, [www.illinoisrestaurants.org](http://www.illinoisrestaurants.org).

#### FACILITY INSPECTIONS:

Prior to receiving a license the premises must first pass a public health inspection that focuses on food handling practices, product temperature, personal hygiene, facility maintenance and pest control. See the back page for tips on inspection requirements. See the back of this brochure for tips on passing your facility inspection.

#### RECURRING INSPECTIONS:

Food establishments with seating are subject to a scheduled "Restaurant Inspection" from the Department of Buildings at the time of renewal and will be billed based on square footage (\$100-\$550). The Department of Public Health will also conduct unscheduled routine inspections and respond to complaints to ensure continued compliance.