



COUNTY OF NEVADA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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Platform Kitchen Operations

What is a Platform Kitchen? COVID-19 and the PG&E safety power shutoffs (PSPS) launched our Food Community into a realm of uncertainty, fear, and in some cases heartbreaking ends to years of dedicated service running a Retail Food Facility or Brick and Mortar Restaurant. This has launched us into a new way of thinking for both businesses, entrepreneurs and for regulators like the Nevada County Environmental Health Department (NCDEH).

NCDEH has been researching and watching the trends of Platform Kitchen Operations throughout California and specifically the innovative efforts of Chefs in the Sacramento area. In review of the various ways that Platform Kitchen Operations can be accomplished, NCDEH created this Platform Kitchen Operational Questionnaire which is the first step in the process of obtaining a Platform Kitchen Operational permit.

Why a Platform Kitchen Operation (PKO)? Many of our existing permitted food entrepreneurs that currently operate via a Temporary Food Facility (TFF) or as a Caterer are struggling to find a way to stay in the Retail Food Industry. And many new entrepreneurs are also struggling to find a way to enter the Retail Food Industry. There are also operators of Brick and Mortar facilities that have suffered significant losses and financial impacts that have led to the unfortunate closure of their food facilities. All of these types of owners/operators can benefit from a Platform Kitchen type of operation.

What does a Platform Kitchen Operation look like? A Platform Kitchen Operation or PKO is a delivery or to-go food service. The PKO operates out of a permitted Commissary Kitchen in Nevada County and would **not** have any dine-in or seating capability for customers/patrons. The operation would strictly be delivery or to-go. The food entrepreneur would have a delivery and/or take-out service where orders are completed on-line or by phone by the patrons/customers, which will allow the PKO to set specific days and times which orders can be placed. The PKO and the Commissary Owner(s)/other food operations cannot operate at the same time (meaning the brick and mortar restaurant commissary/other commissary users would not be preparing any food during the time the PKO is operating). The commissary permit holder will be required to submit an operational schedule to EH, signed by both the operator of the PKO and the permit holder of the Brick and Mortar/commissary facility showing the agreed upon operation times for the PKO, Brick and Mortar, and any additional commissary operations. In addition, the PKO (As well as all other users of the commissary), will be required to sign in and sign out on a commissary usage log each time they use the facility. Each commissary user will have their own sign in sheet and the commissary owner will submit said sign in sheets to NCDEH quarterly.

The commissary facility will also allow for long term storage of its users' food, utensils and food equipment and provide designated, segregated and labeled shelving space for said items.

To allow for retail food sales directly to the public, the PKO would be permitted by NCDEH as a Food Facility-0 Seats. This means that the public may enter to pick up and pay for the to-go food product, or the PKO will deliver the food product ordered. Dine in operations would not be permitted for a PKO operation. The Questionnaire lists

the particular requirements that the NCDEH would require for delivery operations as well as other food safety criteria.

If you wish to start a PKO operation, and already have an approved commissary picked out, please fill out the questionnaire and contact NCDEH to start your permitting process. If you are just starting out, and want to operate as a PKO, please review the questionnaire and call NCDEH with any questions that you may have. A site visit/inspection of your commissary will need to be conducted to verify suitability of the facility for your proposed operation. Each commissary/PKO relationship is approved by NCDEH on a case by case basis. NCDEH needs to ensure that the proposed commissary has the space and amenities to fit your operational needs.

The fee for the review of this application and commissary inspection, is \$192.20 and covers two hours of staff administrative/inspection time. Once your application questionnaire is approved and a satisfactory inspection of your proposed commissary is completed, the next step in the process is to apply for a permit to operate a "PKO Food Facility-0-Seats". The annual (November 1st to October 31st) fee for a PKO Food Facility-0-Seats is \$288.30.

Please be as detailed and thorough with your answers as possible and include additional sheets as necessary. This will assist staff in getting your application approved as quickly as possible.

We are pleased to offer this opportunity to our Community, and look forward to working with you and enhancing the culinary opportunities for our Community.

Thank you,
NCDEH

Platform Kitchen Operational Questionnaire

Administrative Questions:

Name of proposed food operation: _____

Name of food operator: _____

Mailing address of food operator: _____

Phone #: _____ Email: _____

Name of proposed commissary kitchen: _____

Address of commissary: _____

Name of commissary owner: _____ Phone #: _____

Nevada County Environmental Health permit # of commissary: _____

What types of food do you plan to offer? (circle all that apply): Packaged Meals, Hot Meals, Cold Meals, Sandwiches, Soups, Salads, Juices, Fermented Foods, Jarred Foods, Foods Which Require Special Processes

Other, explain: _____

Note: If you are performing fermentation of any sort, a detailed separate procedure is required to be submitted with this application. The procedure shall describe in detail your recipe, formulation, equipment, storage location of fermentation vessel and methods for preventing cross contamination and ensuring food safety. Special processes, such as smoking, curing, or vacuum packing which require a HACCP plan per California Retail Food Code are not allowed to be conducted at a commissary kitchen in Nevada County.

Facility Questions:

1.) Is there any equipment not already existing within the commissary that you plan to bring? If so, explain: _____

Note: Any equipment that you plan to bring to the commissary must be NSF or equivalent and manufacturer specification sheets must be submitted to NCDEH for approval before use

2.) Specify how your food, utensils, and equipment is labeled and segregated at the commissary, specifically, what facilities are used for food and equipment storage and where are they located within the commissary (Example:

Designated and labeled shelf within walk in cooler, designated and labeled metal racks within dry storage room etc):_____

Note: No commingling of food or utensils with other users of the commissary is allowed.

Note: A labeled site plan of the commissary indicating where your food and equipment storage areas will be is required to be attached to this questionnaire. It needs to be either produced by the commissary permit holder, or signed by the commissary permit holder.

Delivery Transport Questions:

1.) Do you plan to deliver food? If so, describe how you will maintain temperature control and keep food protected:_____

Note: If you plan to deliver food to customers, you are required to keep a time and temperature log demonstrating temperature control upon leaving the commissary and upon arrival to customer's location. Attach a copy of your temperature delivery log template to this questionnaire.

2.) Is your delivery vehicle also used for personal use? If so, how will you keep the vehicle clean between uses? (Example: pets, children, etc.)_____

Food Safety Questions:

1.) Where do you purchase your food? (All food must be from an approved source)_____

2.) What equipment will you use to maintain temperature control of foods (both hot and cold holding equipment)?

3.) Is there a dedicated handwashing sink available at the commissary?_____

4.) When do you and/or your staff wash your/their hands?_____

5.) What equipment and utensils are used to prepare raw meats, raw produce, and ready-to-eat foods?: _____

6.) When, where, and how are such equipment and utensils cleaned and sanitized? (Please provide exact **DETAILS**)

7.) What steps do you take to prevent cross contamination?: _____

8.) To what internal temperatures do you cook foods and how do you verify said temperature? _____

9.) What types of thermometers do you use?: _____

10.) If potentially hazardous foods (PHF) are cooked and then cooled for later use, describe in **DETAIL** your cooling process to ensure food safety and where the food is cooled: _____

11.) What is the maximum amount of foods that will be cooled?: _____

12.) If foods are cooked or reheated at the commissary, what equipment is used? _____

13.) Do you hot hold foods? If so, what equipment do you use and at what temperature do you hot hold? _____

14.) If food is reheated after previously being cooked and cooled, to what temperature is it reheated? _____

15.) If fish is being served raw, has it previously been commercially frozen to ensure parasite destruction? _____

Explain: _____

If no, do you freeze the fish? If so, explain: _____

16.) Indicate source of previously frozen fish: _____

17.) Are any items served raw or undercooked? (Example: hollandaise sauce, caesar dressing, poke, steaks rare or medium rare etc.) _____

If yes, a consumer advisory is required.

18.) Is there a dedicated food preparation (washing produce, thawing chicken, etc.) sink at your commissary? _____

19.) How and where are potentially hazardous frozen foods thawed? _____

Packaging and Labeling:

1.) Describe the types of packaging or containers distributed to your customers: (Example: disposable plastic, disposable paper, reusable mason jars etc): _____

2.) If reusable, how do you verify integrity of package before reusing? _____

3.) How do you wash, rinse, and sanitize reusable containers or multiuse utensils? Provide exact **DETAILS:** _____

Note: Labels for your packaged food items are also required and a copy of your label template is required to be submitted with this questionnaire. Labels shall conform to the Sherman Food and Cosmetic Act. Labels are required to have at minimum: 1.) Common Name of product 2.) Ingredients in descending order 3.) Allergens 4.) Date made or use by date 5.) Net weight 6.) phrase "Perishable, keep refrigerated" if applicable. Also, if food is to be reheated by customer, it is recommended that instructions be provided on the label indicating how that is to be accomplished.

Managerial Control:

1.) Will you have employees at your operation? _____

Note: ALL employees are required to have at minimum, a current ANSI accredited Food Handlers' Certification (good for three years). These certifications are required to be present at the commissary when food prep is being conducted and are required to be readily available and provided to the health inspector upon request.

2.) Who is the Person In Charge (PIC) of the food operation: _____

Note: This person is required to have a current Food Manager's Safety Certificate and a copy of the certificate is required to be included with this questionnaire and a copy is required to be kept on site at the location when food prep is being conducted.

Summary list of documents needed to accompany this questionnaire:

- 1.) An accurate menu of foods that you plan to offer
- 2.) Copy of Food Manager Safety Certificate
- 3.) Copy of label template
- 4.) Specification sheets for any equipment not already present in commissary kitchen that you plan to bring in
- 5.) Commissary verification form (attached to this questionnaire) signed by commissary owner
- 6.) Labeled master site plan of commissary kitchen showing where your food and utensil items, and other users items are stored and segregated from eachother*
- 7.) Schedule of when commissary will be utilized by all users (no over lap with other users is allowed)*
- 8.) Temperature and time log template if planning to do delivery
- 9.) Detailed procedure if offering fermented foods
- 10.) Any additional details that pertain to your operation that have not been detailed in this application

* Ideally, these items (#6 and #7) should be turned in by the commissary permit holder. If instead being turned in by PKO applicant, items should be verified for accuracy and contain signature of commissary permit holder.

Initial the following statements:

_____ I agree to keep my food safe and wholesome for my customers and prevent cross contamination by maintaining temperature control, practicing good hand hygiene and using approved sanitizers.

_____ I agree to sign in and sign out on the commissary sign in sheet which is attached to this questionnaire packet. (Commissary owner shall submit these sheets to NCDEH quarterly.)

_____ I agree to keep open and honest communication with NCDEH in the event that anything changes with my food operation (such as change in operation location, significant menu or process changes, or equipment changes, and commissary usage schedule changes).

_____ I agree to maintain active managerial control over my operation and my employees to ensure food safety.

_____ I agree to follow the most recent addition of California Retail Food Code Regulations.

_____ I agree to follow the rules laid out for this permit, including a.) no on site dining b.) no time overlap in facility usage with other food operations c.) no commingling of food or utensils with other food operations.

_____ I understand that annual routine unannounced health inspections conducted by NCDEH are required to take place at my food operation.

I, the owner of the above food operation, certify that the above information is true and correct. I agree to notify the Nevada County Department of Environmental Health (NCDEH) if anything described above changes and understand that failure to do so may result in suspension and possibly leading up to revocation of my permit to operate a food facility in Nevada County.

Applicant Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

For Office Use Only:

Approved: Denied: Reason: _____

By: _____, REHS

Signature: _____ Date: _____

PKO Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. What is a PKO?

Answer: PKO stands for Platform Kitchen Operation.

2. What kind of activities can be conducted at a PKO?

Answer: A PKO food operation allows for retail sales of packaged meals prepared by a food operator within a commissary kitchen.

3. As a PKO Operator, what types of services can I offer my customers?

Answer: Customer Orders can be placed by phone, online, or customer walk in/walk up to the designated Point of Sale counter of the PKO. Delivery from the PKO location direct to the customer can also occur. The PKO will not have any on-site seating for dine in – orders/meals are strictly to-go, curbside, walk-in (for carry-out) or delivery.

4. What type of Environmental Health Permit will I be required to obtain to be a PKO?

Answer: A PKO is permitted as a "Food facility 0 Seats" by NCDEH.

5. What is a commissary?

Answer: A commissary is a shared commercial kitchen space, usually an existing restaurant in Nevada County, where tenants (such as a PKO) rent storage space and usage of the facility. The facility is required to provide long term food and equipment storage to its lessees. A commissary kitchen must provide (at a minimum but not limited to):

- Commercial Grade, NSF rated or equivalent refrigeration and freezer units for raw food and/or pre-prepared food storage
- NSF racks or approved shelving for dry goods such as spices, baking supplies, paper products
- NSF racks or approved shelving for utensils, pots and pans or other equipment used for food preparation (mixers, blenders, etc.)
- Commercial Grade, NSF rated or equivalent cooking equipment (such as ranges, griddles, deep fryers, ovens, etc.) with approved mechanical ventilation exhaust (Type I or Type II hoods depending on cooking processes)
- Commercial Grade, NSF rated or equivalent 3-compartment ware washing sink(s)
- Commercial Grade, NSF rated or equivalent food preparation sink(s)
- Commercial Grade, NSF rated or equivalent dedicated handwash sink(s).
- Commissary Facility Use Schedule (sign in sheet) that are kept on-site at the commissary for EH Departmental inspection and review.

6. How often will my PKO food operation be inspected by Nevada County Department of Environmental Health (NCDEH)?

Answer: Typically once per year, an unannounced inspection will be conducted of your operation. Exceptions to the 1x/year inspection are in the event of a citizen complaint or foodborne illness outbreak, inspections may become more frequent.

7. As a PKO, why can't I operate my business at the same time as other food operations at the Commissary?

Answer: Keeping food operations separate is crucial to the protection of the food being prepared for customer consumption. If you as the PKO, are sharing cooking surfaces or food preparation surfaces with another PKO at the same time, there is a risk that your food product could be contaminated due to improper handwashing of the other PKO employees or improper utensil sanitation, etc. Preventing any possibility that food being prepared could lead to illness is the ultimate goal both for you as a PKO operator and for the NCDEH. This is why only one food operation can occur at a time in a Commercial Kitchen being used as a Commissary.

8. As a PKO, why can't I share utensils, spices, raw meats and vegetables or other items with other food PKO or Other operators at the Commissary?

Answer: Keeping food operations separate is crucial to the protection of the food being prepared for customer consumption. If you as the PKO, are sharing cooking surfaces or food preparation surfaces with another PKO at the same time, there is a risk that your food product could be contaminated due to improper handwashing of the other PKO employees or improper utensil sanitation, etc. Preventing any possibility that food being prepared could lead to illness is the ultimate goal both for you as a PKO operator and for the NCDEH. This is why only one food operation can occur at a time in a Commercial Kitchen being used as a Commissary.

Also, in the unfortunate event that a customer reports a foodborne illness from a PKO, separate operations and keeping separate storage of all items used in the preparation of the PKO menu is crucial for the investigation.

9. As a PKO, why am I required to operate out of an approved commissary?

Answer: A Commercial Kitchen that is permitted with the NCDEH is the only approved method for the production of "potentially hazardous foods" (these are foods that require certain cooking temperatures, or refrigeration temperatures to keep the food safe) for sale to the public. The only permitted food that can be prepared in a home is regulated by the Cottage Food Program and is food that is defined as "non-potentially hazardous food" (these are foods that DO NOT require certain cooking temperatures, or refrigeration temperatures to keep the food safe).

10. As a PKO, am I required to keep a copy of the Commissary Facility Use Schedule (Sign In Sheet)?

Answer: Yes. The NCDEH would utilize the sign in sheet in the event of a report by a customer of an illness they experienced from consuming Food prepared by a PKO. The Commissary Facility Use Schedule (sign in sheet) assists the NCDEH in identifying the PKO that may have been operating at the Commissary for the time that the customer indicates the Food was purchased and consumed. The Commissary Facility Use Schedule (sign in sheet) provides NCDEH the ability to track down any food products that may have been reported to have caused the illness by the customer. A shared kitchen space poses unique regulatory challenges for NCDEH and this record keeping aids in ensuring the commissary permit holder is maintaining control of the facility and the overall situation.

11. As a PKO, why am I required to label my packaged food?

Answer: If as a PKO, you are offering Food products such as a pre-packaged sandwich that has been prepared in advance and wrapped, the current California Food Code requires the package have a label that details the ingredients. Detailing the ingredients is part of Law (Sherman Food, Drug and Cosmetic Law) and the Law is clear on the details the label should contain. Having a detailed label will protect you as a PKO should the food that you sell to the public causes someone to have an allergic reaction. In general, labeling helps ensure consumer protection by ensuring that food is honestly and accurately presented to your customers.

12. What is a Food Safety Manager's Certification?

Answer: A Food Safety Manager's Certification is a document that confirms an individual attended a course either on-line or in-person that focuses on food preparation and safety and the individual is the "Person In Charge" or "PIC" at a food facility. For any individual operating a commercial food facility (like a restaurant, snack bar, bakery or deli, etc.), the Person In Charge, or PIC, is required to be onsite during all operational hours that the restaurant, deli, bakery, etc. is open. The PIC is required to demonstrate the minimum standards of food preparation and safety knowledge. The demonstration of this knowledge will occur during the food facility's EH Departmental Inspection. Some examples of the knowledge that is needed:

- Has the PIC trained the other food facility workers on food safety and proper food preparation techniques?
- Did the PIC document, in writing, the specific training given to the food facility workers
- What are food allergens and how can a food allergen can cause people to become sick or seriously ill?
- What is food safety and how can an individual who owns or operates a restaurant, bakery, deli, or other be sure to handle food in a manner that will not make their cusotomer sick or seriously ill?

Food Facilities that serve potentially hazardous foods (these are foods that require certain cooking temperatures, or refrigeration temperatures to keep the food safe) are required to have a person in charge (PIC) on site during all hours of operation.

13. What is a Food Handlers' Certification?

Answer: A Food Handler's Certification is a document that confirms an individual attended a course on-line that focuses on food preparation and safety. The Food Handler course does not have the same amount of detail as the Food Safety Manager's training. All employees of the PKO (except for the PIC) need a food handlers' certification from an ANSI (ANSI means American National Standards Institute. ANSI ensures that any teaching courses are consistent in their content and material and cover the required food safety topics as well as providing an exam that is the same across the State).

14. As a PKO, can my customers walk into the Commissary and place a Food order?

Answer: Yes. Please note that your customers are not permitted to walk through any food preparation, food storage or kitchen areas. Ideally, your walk up ordering station should only take place if the Commissary Facility has a customer entrance that can accommodate a Point of Sale or POS area/station.

15. After placing an online or phone order, are customers allowed to park outside for me to provide curbside pickup?

Answer: Yes, but pickup times should be pre-arranged and staggered to avoid parking congestion. In addition, you may want to check with the local City Agency to confirm that you can have traffic stop where your PKO is located.

16. As a PKO, am I required to submit the Commissary Facility Use Schedule (sign in sheet) and the Commissary Master Floor Plan that clearly shows my PKO designated storage areas?

Answer: Ideally, the commissary permit holder should be the one to submit the facility usage schedule (which contains the schedule for all of the facility users) and the master site plan indicating designated and labeled storage areas for all the commissary users. This administrative task helps ensure that the commissary permit holder takes responsibility for their permit and the facility. NCDEH will however, accept these items from the PKO applicant if they are verified and signed by the commissary permit holder.

