

RETAIL FOOD ESTABLISHMENT

DEFINITIONS

A Retail Food Establishment License is required any time perishable food is served, stored, sold, or distributed from a building, or other fixed establishment. A Retail Food Establishment license can only be issued at a properly zoned, non-residential location. The complete “doing business as” name (“DBA”) must be reflected on the business’s City of Chicago business license. A business licensee may market itself under multiple concepts so long as the additional concept names are noted as part of the business’s DBA as indicated on its license.

Retail Food Establishments include but are not limited to:

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

SELLING LIQUOR

Selling liquor in your retail food business requires a liquor license. There are several different types of liquor license for different business activities. Applying for a liquor license includes additional facility inspections, criminal history checks, a notice requirement, and potential restrictions based on your business location.

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 in a sidewalk café.

INSPECTIONS

Sanitation: 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

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.

Recurring: Food establishments with seating are subject to a scheduled “Restaurant Inspection” from the Department of Buildings at the time of renewal. The Department of Public Health will also conduct unscheduled routine inspections and respond to complaints to ensure continued compliance.

READY TO APPLY?

You may apply for a license online by visiting ChicagoBusinessDirect.org, or in person at the Small Business Center in City Hall, 121 N. LaSalle Street, Room 800. For general licensing inquiries, call (312) 74-GOBIZ/(312) 744-6249. Check Code requirements on the Zoning Guide before proceeding with your business plan at Chicago.gov/BusinessLicensing.

FEES

0-1,000 sq.ft. = \$660

1,001-2,500 sq.ft. = \$940

2,501-4,500 sq.ft. = \$1,110

4,501-10,000 sq.ft. = \$1,320

Over 10,000 sq.ft. = \$1,650

License renewals are based on a 2 year term.