



# FOOD ESTABLISHMENT STARTER GUIDE

A guide to opening your Restaurant in Nova Scotia

Let us navigate you toward success! For personalized assistance contact a [Business Navigator at 1-844-628-7347](#)



## CREATE YOUR BUSINESS

- **Create a business plan** that includes items such as: Market research, your organizational structure, a description of your restaurant, include your menu, a floor plan, revenue forecast and budgetary requirements.

There are various government agencies and other organizations that offer free help for planning, and start-up financial assistance (at various interest rates). Call a Business Navigator to find out more at 1-844-628-7347.

- **Request and secure a Business Name through the Registry of Joint Stocks** at [www.rjsc.ca](http://www.rjsc.ca) or contact 1-800-225-8227.
- **Register your Business** within 90 days to ensure your business name is secured and to receive your unique Business Number.

Types of Businesses include sole proprietorships, partnerships and corporations. Legal advice is recommended for preparation of incorporated documents.

- **Activate your Business Number** with CRA at 1-800-959-5525. Activation is mandatory if you have employees, you import or export, and/or your gross revenue exceeds \$30,000.
- **Workers Compensation Insurance** may be mandatory for your staff or an option you may want to consider. Contact WCB at 1-800-870-3331 or [www.wcb.ns.ca](http://www.wcb.ns.ca) to discuss your specific requirements. **Research any additional insurance** requirements such as liability and disability.

## CHOOSE YOUR LOCATION

- **If you are planning on serving alcohol**, it is important to contact a provincial licensing officer before you select your location. Contact Alcohol and Gaming at 1-877-565-0556.
  - **Next contact your municipality** to confirm your preferred location is zoned for your restaurant type and discuss signage requirements. For Halifax, contact 311
- Now that you have chosen a location, you must create a site plan.



## CREATE YOUR SITE PLAN

Submitting your plan drawings before construction starts will minimize the risk of costly changes. **Create a diagram or layout** of all rooms and patios, showing their sizes and use, include food storage areas, and fire safety plan.

**Source of water** - if a well water supply is to be used, show the location of the well on your plan; if connected to a municipal or community supply. Provide a water test and register with NS Environment.

**Sewage** - if an on-site sewage disposal system is to be used, show the location of the system; if connected to a municipal or private collection, and was assessed for suitable use by an engineer.

**Waste storage** - show location of waste storage area (dumpster, shed, etc.), grease interceptors, composters and recyclables.

**Parking** - show parking areas and driveways.

Allow your Public Health Officer to review your layout before starting to build or renovate.

Your plan needs to be approved by multiple inspectors on different requirements – an approval from one does not approve another.

## APPLY FOR PERMITS

**Begin the permit process 3-6 months before opening.**

**Start by contacting a Business Navigator** at 1-844-628-7347 to determine which permits and licenses you require and to connect with your inspectors.

For a **Food Establishment Permit** contact Business Navigation or your regional Nova Scotia Environment Office. A pre-opening inspection will be required.

For an **Alcohol License** contact Alcohol and Gaming 1-877-565-0556.

For **'pre-opening' permits** related to zoning, building, developing or renovating including patios, contact your municipality. In Halifax, contact 311

For **'opening' permits** such as occupancy, as well as fire prevention inspections and signage for your restaurant, contact your municipality. In Halifax, contact 311

It is important to note that your occupancy permit is required before fire prevention.

**If you intend to use** Natural Gas, Propane, Furnaces, Elevators or Broilers contact Technical Safety for requirements at 902-424-8496.

**The owner and/or at least one person per work shift must be Food Hygiene certified.** Courses are available from a variety of sources including Nova Scotia Environment, Private Trainers/Companies, or online. **For a full list of available courses for individuals and groups, contact Business Navigation. Proof of certification is required upon inspection.**



## BE READY FOR FOOD INSPECTION

**Keep Hot Food Hot** - above 60°C/140°F. Cook all hazardous food to a minimum internal temperature of 74°C/165°F. Use a chef's (probe) thermometer to monitor temperatures.

**Keep Cold Food Cold** - below 4°C/40°F. Keep frozen below -18°C/0°F. Use fridge thermometers to monitor temperatures.

**Protect Food from Contamination** - Store ready-to-eat items above raw and cover all food. Store food 15 cm/6 inches off the floor. Use water that is safe to drink. Label chemicals and store them away from food and the food preparation area.

**Practice Good Handwashing** - Provide hot and cold running water, as well as liquid soap and paper towels from dispensers. Designate handwashing stations with signage and do not use for any other purpose. Wash hands thoroughly before and after handling food.

**Practice Good Personal Hygiene** - Wear clean outer garments and hair restraints. Change out of street clothes before you start your shift. Do not work when you are sick.

**Maintain Food Contact Surfaces** - Cleaning and sanitizing should be completed in two separate steps. Use soap and water followed by a solution of ½ to 1 tsp of household bleach per 1L of water, or any approved sanitizer. Keep all food contact surfaces clean and in good condition. Wash all utensils, dishes, and small equipment either manually, using the three-basin sink method (wash-rinse-sanitize) or in a mechanical dishwasher. Ensure your dishwasher is reaching appropriate temperatures for sanitizing, or if using a chemical sanitizing machine, have test strips on hand to test the sanitizer concentration.

**Maintain Non-Food Contact Surfaces** - Keep surfaces clean, sanitary and in good repair. Fix construction issues as they arise. All surfaces must be smooth, non-absorbent and easy to clean. Ensure proper operation and maintenance of equipment. Unused equipment should be repaired, or removed from the premises.

**Keep Washrooms Clean and Properly Equipped** - Keep washrooms clean at all times. Provide toilet paper in a dispenser, a garbage can, a sink with a constant supply of hot and cold running water, liquid soap and paper towel in dispensers and working mechanical ventilation.

**Store and Remove Waste Correctly** - Remove waste from the food preparation area on a daily basis, or more often if necessary. Waste receptacles must be leak-proof, have tight-fitting lids, and be pest proof. Your outdoor garbage area should be maintained in such a way that pests are not attracted to it.

**Keep Pests Under Control** - Cover outside openings to prevent pests from entering and eliminate food or water sources. Consider obtaining a contract with a licensed pest control operator.



## PREPARE FOR EXCELLENCE

Please ensure any changes to your site plan, menu or layout are communicated to your assigned Public Health Officer before you build or renovate.

Post all required signs, and permits as outlined by inspectors.

Mark your calendar. Schedule equipment maintenance and set reminders to renew your permits and licenses.

Be ready for inspections. Some happen quarterly, twice a year and once a year. You will not be notified of your inspection date.

**For payroll and tax assistance** contact CRA at 1-800-959-5525.

**For road access** (new/upgrades to roads and driveways) **and highway signage** for your business contact Transportation, Infrastructure and Renewal at 1-844-696-7737.

In most municipalities **grease Interceptors** are required for your business. In Halifax, contact Halifax Regional Water Commission at 902-490-4820 for more information.

For Occupational Health and Safety requirements such as **WHMIS Training, First Aid and Workplace Health and Safety** contact OHS at 1-800-952-2687. Access the Small Business Safety Toolkit at [www.Workplace-Safety-Toolkit.ca](http://www.Workplace-Safety-Toolkit.ca).

For Employer/Employee obligations and rights including minimum wage, hours of work, terminations, vacation/holiday pay (etc.), contact the **Nova Scotia Labour Standards Division** at 1-888-315-0110.

Contact **Nova Scotia Power** regarding electricity connection at 1-800-428-6230.

Restaurants are required to hire private companies for **garbage and recycling collection**. Contact your municipality to determine who in your area is an authorized collector.