

Construction Requirements for Retail Food Facilities

Overview

This guideline is based on requirements found in the [California Retail Food Code \(Cal Code\), Part 7 of the California Health and Safety Code](#) and the [Los Angeles County Code, Title 8 and Los Angeles County Code, Title 11](#). It is intended to serve as a general overview of the plan and construction requirements and should not be considered all-inclusive. Please refer to the California Retail Food Code for additional requirements and details. The codes are referenced throughout this document to indicate the sections where the requirements can be found in law. The California Retail Food Code may be downloaded [here](#)

Pursuant to the [California Retail Food Code, Section 114380](#), *(a) A person proposing to build or remodel a food facility shall submit complete, easily readable plans drawn to scale, and specifications to the enforcement agency for review, and shall receive plan approval before starting any new construction or remodeling of any facility for use as a retail food facility, (b) Plans and specifications may also be required by the enforcement agency if the agency determines that they are necessary to assure compliance with the requirements of this part, including, but not limited to, a menu change or change in the facility's method of operation.*

All applicable requirements of a retail food facility must be reflected in the plans submitted for review. Recommendations are included to give examples of methods which may be used for meeting the intent of the law, but may not apply in all circumstances. Additionally, this guideline only encompasses the health aspects of construction and should not be construed to include requirements of other agencies involved, such as the local planning and zoning departments, the local building department authority or local fire department, and industrial waste. Contact the appropriate local agencies involved to obtain any permits and/or to clarify other local codes.

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Construction Detail Requirements

The plans shall show and specify in detail the following:

1. Full Enclosure

Each permanent food facility shall be fully enclosed in a building consisting of permanent floors, walls, and an overhead structure that meet the minimum standards as prescribed by this part. Food facilities that are not fully enclosed on all sides and that are in operation on January 1, 1985, shall not be required to meet the requirements of this section until the facility is remodeled or has a significant change in menu or its method of operation. [California Retail Food Code, Section 114266](#)

2. Floors

[The floor surfaces in all areas](#) (except in sales and dining areas) where food is prepared, prepackaged, or stored, employee change rooms, where any utensil is washed, where refuse or garbage is stored, where janitorial facilities are located, and in all toilet and hand washing areas, [shall be smooth and of durable](#)

construction and nonabsorbent material that is easily cleanable (impervious to water, grease and acid) (e.g. quarry tile or troweled epoxy, approved commercial grade sheet vinyl or other approved materials). Painted floor surfaces and Vinyl Composition Tile (VCT) are not acceptable. [California Retail Food Code, Section 114266](#)

These floor surfaces shall be coved at the juncture of the floor and wall with a three-eighths inch (3/8") minimum radius coving and shall extend up the wall at least four inches (4"), except in areas where food is stored only in unopened bottles, cans, cartons, sacks, or other original shipping containers. Vinyl top set cove base is not acceptable.

Approved anti-slip floor finishes or materials are ONLY acceptable in areas where necessary for safety reasons, such as foot traffic areas. However, floors and base coving under all sinks and equipment shall be smooth and washable.

Floor Drains

shall be installed in floors that are water-flushed for cleaning and in areas where pressure spray methods for cleaning equipment are used. Floor surfaces in these areas shall be sloped 1:50, approximately one-quarter inch (1/4") per foot toward the floor drains. When floor drains are added to an existing facility where the floor surface is not sloped, a two (2) foot surrounding depression/slope to the floor drain may be required. [California Retail Food Code, Section 114269\(a\) and \(b\)](#)

3. Wall & Ceilings:

The walls and ceilings of all rooms shall be of a durable, smooth, non-absorbent, easily cleanable surface except in the following areas: (a) bar areas in which only alcoholic beverages are sold or served directly to the consumers, except wall areas adjacent to bar sinks and areas where food is prepared; (b) areas where food is stored only in unopened bottles, cans, cartons, sacks, or other original shipping containers; (c) dining and sales areas; (d) offices; (e) restrooms used exclusively by the consumers, except that the walls and ceilings shall be of a nonabsorbent and washable surface. Acceptable materials are gloss or semi-gloss enamel paint, epoxy paint, FRP (Fiberglass Reinforced Panel), stainless steel, ceramic tile or other approved materials and finishes. Acoustical ceiling tile may be used if it is installed not less than six feet above the floor. Brick, concrete block, rough concrete, rough plaster or textured gypsum boards are not acceptable. A sample may be required for review. [California Retail Food Code, Section 114271](#)

Walls and ceilings of food preparation areas, restrooms, janitorial areas, warewashing areas, and interior surfaces of walk-in refrigeration units are **recommended to be light colored**.

Conduits of all types shall be installed within walls as practicable. When otherwise installed, they shall be mounted or enclosed so as to facilitate cleaning (e.g., at least 1/2 inch from the wall and six (6) inches above the floor surface).