

CONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATION GUIDANCE FOR INSTITUTIONAL SETTING OPERATORS

Are you planning a construction project at your institution?

Renovations, construction, and alterations in institutional settings can impact food safety, infection prevention and control (IPAC), institutional operations, and the health and well-being of residents, staff, and visitors. Early planning and consultation with York Region Public Health (YRPH) can help ensure that operations within your home remain safe and compliant throughout the renovation process.

This guidance document outlines the responsibilities of institutional setting operators who are planning construction and renovation and applies to institutions such as: long-term care homes, retirement homes, healthcare facilities, and congregate living settings where vulnerable populations are housed.

Before You Start: Notify York Region Public Health

Institutional operators must notify YRPH as early as possible when planning renovations that may affect food preparation, food service, storage, dishwashing, or other food handling activities. It is also recommended that YRPH be notified for other construction and renovation projects that may have an impact on the environment of residents (air quality, construction containment and activities, traffic flow and cleaning and disinfection). Contact *Health Connection* at 1-800-361-5653 extension 4 or email health.inspectors@york.ca.

Examples include:

- Kitchen renovations or construction activities adjacent to food handling areas
- Expansion or redesign of food preparation areas
- Installation or replacement of equipment that would affect operations (e.g., dishwasher, cooling units, sinks, etc.)
- Changes to food service operations, storage or temporary relocation of kitchen operations
- Adding a new wing/unit or renovation to existing wing/units
- External construction

Early consultation allows Public Health to review plans and identify potential food safety and IPAC concerns before construction begins.

YORK REGION PUBLIC HEALTH

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Submit Plans for Public Health Review

Operators should submit renovation plans to YRPH before construction commences. Plans may include:

INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION	• Facility name and address • Operator's contact information • Description of proposed renovation • Anticipated construction timelines
GENERAL FACILITY RENOVATION DRAWINGS/FLOOR PLANS	Plans should clearly identify: • A scaled floor plan • Location and dimensions of renovation planned • Details on sinks (utility and handwashing), washrooms, and plumbing fixtures • Ventilation, heating and air-handling systems • Location and type of well (if applicable) • Location of sewage system (if applicable)
FOOD AREA RENOVATION DRAWINGS/FLOOR PLANS	Plans should clearly identify: • Food preparation areas • Food storage areas • Refrigeration and freezer units • Dishwashing facilities • Handwashing stations • Service areas • Waste and recycling storage areas • Ventilation systems • Description of materials to be used on floors, walls, ceiling, counters, shelves, etc.
IMPACTS ON OTHER AREAS OF THE FACILITY	• Resident care areas - noise impacts, dust migration, construction traffic, service disruptions, access to hand hygiene stations • Medication and clinical areas - dust contamination, air quality impacts, unauthorized access • Staff areas - temporary relocation of staff spaces, changes to staff traffic flow, access to hand hygiene stations • Waste management area - continued access for waste collection, proper waste segregation, measures to prevent pest activity

York Region Public Health may request additional information to support the review process.

Infection Prevention and Control Considerations

Operators are responsible for assessing and mitigating risks associated with construction activities.

An infection prevention and control (IPAC) risk assessment should be completed before construction begins, and an IPAC mitigation plan should be submitted if applicable.

CONSTRUCTION CONTAINMENT	Measures may include: • Physical barriers around construction areas • Sealing openings to prevent dust migration • Controlled access points • Restricted entry to construction zones
AIR QUALITY AND DUST CONTROL	Operators should implement measures to minimize airborne contaminants, including: • Dust suppression practices • Appropriate ventilation management • Negative air pressure within construction areas when required • Air filtration systems where appropriate
TRAFFIC FLOW AND CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES	Consider: • Construction worker access routes • Material delivery routes • Waste removal routes • Separation from food service operations and resident areas
CLEANING AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROLS	Operators should ensure: • Increased cleaning of adjacent areas • Prompt removal of construction debris • Monitoring for dust migration • Cleaning of shared spaces impacted by construction
EXTERNAL CONSTRUCTION CONSIDERATIONS	Operators should: • Call www.OntarioOneCall.ca before you dig • Ensure emergency plans are in place in case of disruption to water, electricity and gas

Please refer to the 'Additional Resources' section at the end of this document for resources that collectively outline how IPAC principles should be incorporated into construction and renovation projects in institutional settings, using risk assessments and evidence-based design standards to prevent infections and protect residents and staff throughout the project lifecycle.

Temporary Food Service Plan

If the renovation impacts normal kitchen or food service operations, operators must develop a temporary food service plan. The temporary food service plan should be submitted to York Region Public Health for review and approval before implementation.

FOOD PREPARATION	Describe: • Where food will be prepared during construction • Whether food preparation will occur onsite or offsite • Any temporary kitchen facilities being used • Arrangements with external food service providers, if applicable • Expected duration of the temporary set up
FOOD STORAGE	Identify how the facility will maintain: • Refrigerated storage • Frozen storage • Dry goods storage • Protection from contamination
FOOD TRANSPORTATION	If food is prepared off-site, describe: • Transportation methods • Temperature control procedures and record keeping • Receiving procedures • Food protection measures
DINING AREAS	Assess: • Continuity of meal service • Access to dining spaces • Temporary dining arrangements
DISHWASHING AND SANITIZING	Describe how dishes, utensils, and equipment will be washed and sanitized, including: • Temporary dishwashing facilities • Alternative dishwashing arrangements • Use of disposable service items, if necessary
HAND HYGIENE	Provide details on locations of: • Designated handwashing sinks with hot and cold running water, soap and paper towels
STAFFING AND FOOD SAFETY PROCEDURES	Outline how staff will: • Follow food safety requirements • Monitor food temperatures • Prevent cross-contamination • Maintain cleaning and sanitizing procedures

Food Safety During Construction

Operators remain responsible for compliance with all food safety requirements under the *Ontario Regulation 493/17: Food Premises* throughout the renovation period.

PROTECT FOOD FROM CONTAMINATION	Food, equipment, and utensils including single-service items must be protected from: • Dust • Debris • Water damage • Construction materials • Chemical contamination
MAINTAIN TEMPERATURE CONTROL	Ensure: • Refrigerators and freezers remain operational • Food temperatures are monitored and recorded • Alternate refrigeration is available if required
MAINTAIN A SAFE WATER SUPPLY	If water service is interrupted: • Assess impacts on food preparation and cleaning activities • Implement contingency measures • Consult with York Region Public Health as necessary • Provide an alternate source of potable water (e.g., bottled water or licensed water hauler)
PEST PREVENTION	Construction activities can increase pest risks. Operators should: • Monitor for pest activity • Seal openings and gaps • Maintain housekeeping practices • Engage pest control services when needed

Before Reopening the Renovated Area

Prior to resuming operations in the renovated area:

- Construction activities should be complete
- All equipment should be installed and functioning properly
- Construction materials and debris should be removed

Additional requirements for kitchen areas:

- Food contact surfaces should be cleaned and sanitized
- Required inspections and approvals should be completed

Operators should contact YRPH [*Health Connection* or the Public Health Inspector (PHI) they dealt with when the plans were first submitted] once renovations are substantially complete.

Operator Checklist

BEFORE CONSTRUCTION

- ☐ Notify York Region Public Health of plans to renovate and submit renovation plans for review
- ☐ Develop and submit a temporary food service plan (if applicable)
- ☐ Complete an IPAC risk assessment and mitigation plan (if applicable)
- ☐ Obtain other required approvals
- ☐ Choose materials for food contact surfaces that are smooth, durable, non-absorbent and easily cleanable
- ☐ Establish contingency plans for utilities (water, electricity, etc.) or food service disruptions

DURING CONSTRUCTION

- ☐ Implement IPAC controls
- ☐ Maintain hand hygiene facilities
- ☐ Monitor for pest activity
- ☐ Ensure cleaning schedules are maintained
- ☐ Maintain food safety practices (if applicable)
- ☐ Protect food and equipment from contamination (if applicable)
- ☐ Monitor refrigeration and freezer temperatures (if applicable)

PRIOR TO REOPENING

- ☐ Complete cleaning and disinfection (sanitizing in food preparation areas)
- ☐ Verify equipment operation
- ☐ Remove construction materials and debris
- ☐ Contact YRPH for final inspection (required for food service areas)
- ☐ Obtain approval from YRPH before offering food service (required for renovated food premises)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Construction, Renovation, Maintenance and Design \(CRMD\) | Public Health Ontario](#)
- [Infection Prevention and Control \(IPAC\) Orientation for IPAC Leads in Long-Term Care: Construction, Renovation, Maintenance and Design \(CRMD\) | Public Health Ontario](#)
- [Infection Control Risk Assessment \(ICRA\) Tool | Public Health Ontario](#)
- [CSA Z8000 Canadian Health Care Facilities – Planning, Design and Construction](#)
- [Healthcare Facility Design & Construction | IPAC Canada](#)
- [Ontario Food Premises Regulation \(O. Reg. 493/17\)](#)
- [Food Premises Reference Document | Ministry of Health](#)
- [Food Premises Operators | York Region Public Health](#)