



**DENVER**  
THE MILE HIGH CITY

Department of Environmental Health  
Public Health Inspection

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## Hand Sink Requirements

The Denver Retail Food Regulations and the FDA Food Code require that a plumbed hand sink<sup>†</sup> be readily accessible in all areas where open food\* is handled or wares are washed. Facilities with food handling (e.g. ice scooping, or chip/soup dispensing areas, etc.) or ware washing areas not equipped with a hand sink must come into compliance in one of the ways described below.

Options for compliance at food handling areas not equipped with a hand sink include:

- **A hand sink can be installed.** All hand sinks must have hot and cold water under pressure.
- In areas where the food handling is limited to scooping of ice for drinks, **a hands-free ice dispenser may be installed.**
- **Pre-dispense food in an area where a hand sink is accessible.** For example, tortilla chip dispensing or bread slicing operations can be relocated to an area that has a hand sink accessible. Ice machines can be relocated to areas with a hand sink in close proximity.
- **Propose an alternate plan to address the public health concerns presented by the absence of an accessible hand sink.** You can submit a proposed written plan that includes:
  - a description of the proposed food handling procedure
  - staff involved in the procedure
  - location of hand washing
  - training of staff on this procedure
  - any associated logs/ongoing record keeping
  - any other related information

After you have submitted your proposed plan, the Department will review it and either approve or disapprove it. If approved, the plan must be continuously available at the food facility. If a facility does not adhere to its approved plan, the plan may be disallowed.

\***Food** shall mean any raw, cooked, or processed edible substance, ice, beverage, or ingredient used or intended for use or for sale in whole or in part for human consumption.

<sup>†</sup>**Hand sink** means a sink that is continuously equipped with soap and paper towels and is used exclusively for hand washing. Hand sinks are not considered “readily accessible” to a food handling area if access requires passage through a doorway.

