

## Chapter 17-10.2

### (s) Variances.

(1) A food establishment may apply to the director for a variance modifying or waiving the requirements of the Texas Food Establishment Rules or the requirements of this chapter. The food establishment shall apply for the variance on a form provided by the director and shall include in the application all of the information required by Subsection 229.171(c)(2) of the Texas Food Establishment Rules. The application must be accompanied by a nonrefundable application fee of:

(A) \$127 for a variance to allow dogs to be present in the outdoor patio area of a food establishment under Subsection (s)(7);

(B) \$95 for a variance to allow the preparation, cooking, and service of raw poultry, raw seafood, and non-fast-cooked food items on a mobile food preparation vehicle under Subsection (s)(8); and

(C) \$100 for all other variances applied for under this subsection.

(2) The director may grant a variance by modifying or waiving the requirements of Subchapter I, Subsections 228.243(a) through (c), of the Texas Food Establishment Rules or the requirements of this chapter if, in the opinion of the director, a health hazard or nuisance will not result from the variance.

(3) If a variance is granted, the director shall retain in its records for the food establishment the information provided by the applicant under Subchapter I, Subsection 228.243(b), of the Texas Food Establishment Rules. A food establishment granted a variance shall comply with Subchapter I, Subsection 228.243(c), of the Texas Food Establishment Rules and any conditions or standards for the variance established by the director or this chapter.

(4) A variance granted under this section is nontransferable. The variance expires two years after the date it is granted by the director, unless it is sooner revoked by the director or terminated by the food establishment. A variance may be renewed through the application process set forth in Paragraph (1) of this subsection.

(5) The director shall deny or revoke a variance under this section if:

(A) the food establishment made a false statement as to a material matter on or in connection with the request for the variance or on or in connection with the permit application for the food establishment;

(B) the food establishment does not hold a valid permit issued under this chapter;

(C) the director determines that a health hazard or nuisance will result or has resulted from the variance;

(D) the food establishment failed to pay a fee required under this chapter at the time it was due; or

(E) the food establishment is in violation of any term or condition of the variance as established by the director, this chapter, or state law.

(6) If the director denies or revokes a variance, the director shall notify the applicant in writing by personal service or regular United States mail. The notice must include the reasons for the denial or revocation and a statement informing the applicant of the right to appeal the decision in accordance with Subsection (q) of this section.

(7) If, pursuant to this section, the director grants a variance to Subchapter F, Subsection 228.186(o), of the Texas Food Establishment Rules (which prohibits animals on the premises of a food establishment) to allow dogs to be present in the outdoor patio area of a food establishment, then the food establishment shall comply with the following conditions and standards in addition to any other conditions and standards established by the director for the variance:

(A) Except as allowed under Subchapter F, Subsection 228.186(o), of the Texas Food Establishment Rules, no dog may be present inside the food establishment or on any playground area of the food establishment.

(B) A separate entrance must be provided from the outside of the food establishment to the outdoor patio so that a dog will have direct access to the patio without entering the interior of the food establishment or any playground area of the food establishment. A dog on an outdoor patio may not be allowed within seven feet of any entrance to the interior of the food establishment, except when necessary to enter or exit the patio.

(C) [eff. 9-1-16] A sign must be posted at the front entrance of the food establishment and on the outdoor patio so that it is easily visible to the public. The sign must state: "DOG FRIENDLY PATIO - DOG ACCESS ONLY THROUGH OUTDOOR PATIO. FOR COMPLAINTS RELATED TO THE DOG FRIENDLY PATIO, CALL 311." Signs must be:

- (i) no smaller than 9-1/2 inches long by 12 inches wide;
- (ii) printed in English and Spanish with bolded lettering at least 36 inches high in contrasting colors; and
- (iii) displayed in a landscape orientation.

(D) Doors equipped with self-closing devices must be provided at all entrances to the outdoor patio from the interior of the food establishment.

(E) No food preparation, including mixing drinks or serving ice, may be performed in the outdoor patio area, except that a beverage glass may be filled on the patio from a pitcher or other container that has been filled or otherwise prepared inside the food establishment.

(F) The outdoor patio must be continuously maintained free of visible dog hair, dog dander, and other dog-related waste or debris. The outdoor patio must be hosed down or mopped with animal friendly chemicals at the beginning of each shift during which food or beverages will be served (breakfast, lunch, dinner, or late-hours), or, if a food establishment has continuous food or beverage service without designated shifts, then every six hours that the establishment is open for business, except that cleaning under this subparagraph is not required if no dog has been

present on the outdoor patio since the last cleaning. Waste created from a dog's bodily functions must be cleaned up with animal friendly chemicals within five minutes after each occurrence. All dog waste must be disposed of outside of the food establishment in an appropriate waste receptacle. Equipment used to clean the outdoor patio must be kept outside of the food establishment. A food establishment must maintain a log of the cleaning schedule of the dog friendly patio and make the log available to the director for inspection upon request.

(G) While on duty, wait staff or other food handlers at the food establishment may not pet or have contact with any dog.

(H) A dog must be kept on a leash and remain in the control of the customer while in the outdoor patio area. The dog must be wearing a collar or harness with a current rabies tag attached to it.

(I) A dog is not allowed on a seat, table, countertop, or similar surface in the outdoor patio area.

(J) A dog is not allowed to have contact with any dishes or utensils used for food service or preparation at the food establishment.

(K) A dog may not be given any food (including, but not limited to, dog kibble, biscuits, and edible treats) while in the outdoor patio area, but may be given water in a disposable container.

(8) If, pursuant to this section, the director grants a variance to Section 17-8.2(h)(2)(C) of this chapter (which allows only fast-cooked food items to be prepared on a mobile food preparation vehicle and prohibits raw poultry or raw seafood from being prepared or cooked on the vehicle) to allow raw poultry, raw seafood, and non-fast-cooked food items to be prepared, cooked, and served from a mobile food preparation vehicle, then the food establishment shall comply with the following conditions and standards in addition to any other conditions and standards established by the director for the variance:

(A) The applicant must submit to the director detailed plans regarding the preparation, cooking, and service of the raw poultry, raw seafood, and non-fast-cooked food items on the mobile food preparation vehicle. The plans must include all of the following information:

(i) A description of the raw poultry, raw seafood, and non-fast-cooked food items and how they will be prepared, cooked, and served.

(ii) Details of how the raw poultry, raw seafood, and non-fast-cooked food items will be stored on the vehicle.

(iii) Any other information or documentation the director deems necessary to determine whether or not a health hazard or nuisance will result from granting the variance.

(B) The food establishment must not have committed more than a total of three violations of this chapter or the Texas Food Establishment Rules within the preceding 12-month period that involved any mobile food preparation vehicle or fixed food facility operated by the food establishment, regardless of whether such violations were committed by an owner, officer, operator, manager, other person in charge, or employee of the food establishment.

(C) The food establishment must not have had any confirmed foodborne illnesses at any of its locations within the preceding 24 months.

(D) The food establishment must not have scored less than 80 on two separate graded food inspections within the preceding 24 months.

(E) Cutting of raw poultry or raw seafood is prohibited on a mobile food preparation vehicle, except for seafood intended to be consumed raw.

(9) An owner, officer, manager, or other person in charge of a food establishment commits an offense if he, either personally or through an employee or agent, violates, allows a violation of, or fails to comply with a term or condition of a variance granted under this section. (Ord. Nos. 26023; 26134; 26556; 26598; 27190; 27353; 27695; 28046; 28488; 29177; [30134](#), eff. 7-1-16)