

STUDENT COURSEBOOK

Chapter 6: Physical Facilities

Floors • Walls • Ceilings • Lighting • Ventilation • Handwashing Areas • Cleaning • Pest Control •
Animals

Training note: This coursebook summarizes Chapter 6 of the 2026 FDA Food Code for instruction. Jurisdictional adoption and requirements may vary.

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How to Use This Coursebook

Chapter 6 focuses on the physical environment of a food establishment. It establishes requirements for facility surfaces, openings, lighting, ventilation, employee facilities, cleaning, maintenance, pest control, and animals so the building itself does not become a source of food contamination.

Learning Objectives

- Identify acceptable characteristics for floors, walls, ceilings, and outdoor surfaces.
- Explain requirements for coving, carpeting, light protection, ventilation, and pest-resistant outer openings.
- State the required lighting intensities for major food-establishment areas.
- Describe required handwashing-sink supplies, signage, toilet supplies, lockers, and service sinks.
- Explain proper cleaning and maintenance of the physical facility.
- Describe pest-prevention and pest-control responsibilities.
- Explain the Chapter 6 rules for service animals and approved pet dogs in outdoor dining areas.

Chapter 6 at a Glance

Part	Topic
6-1	Materials for Construction and Repair
6-2	Design, Construction, and Installation
6-3	Numbers and Capacities
6-4	Location and Placement
6-5	Maintenance and Operation

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1. Floors, Walls, Ceilings, and Facility Surfaces

1 Floors, Walls, and Ceilings



- Smooth, durable, nonabsorbent, and easily cleanable surfaces.
- In good repair.
- Wall and ceiling surfaces in food preparation, food storage, utensil washing, and toilet rooms must be nonabsorbent and easily cleanable.
- Carpeting is not allowed in food preparation areas, food storage areas, utensil washing areas, or toilet rooms.

Physical facilities: smooth, durable, nonabsorbent where required, and easily cleanable.

Indoor floor, wall, and ceiling materials in food-establishment operating areas must generally be smooth, durable, and easily cleanable. Areas subject to moisture - including food-preparation areas, walk-in refrigerators, warewashing areas, toilet rooms, and areas subject to flushing or spray cleaning - require nonabsorbent surfaces.

- Floors, walls, floor coverings, wall coverings, and ceilings must generally be designed and installed to be smooth and easily cleanable.
- Exposed utility lines and pipes may not obstruct cleaning; exposed horizontal utility lines may not be installed on the floor.
- Where floors are cleaned by methods other than water flushing, floor/wall junctures must be coved and closed to no larger than 1/32 inch.
- Where water-flush floor cleaning is used, floors must be graded to drain and floor/wall junctures must be coved and sealed.

- Mats and duckboards must be removable and easily cleanable.
- Porous indoor wall materials such as concrete, porous block, or brick must generally be finished and sealed in areas other than dry storage.

Facility design should make routine cleaning easier, not create hidden soil or pest harborage.

2. Carpeting and Moisture Areas

Carpeting and similar floor coverings are not permitted in areas where moisture, flushing, or spray cleaning is expected.

- No carpeting in food-preparation areas.
- No carpeting in walk-in refrigerators.
- No carpeting in warewashing areas.
- No carpeting in toilet-room areas containing handwashing sinks, toilets, or urinals.
- No carpeting in refuse-storage rooms or other wet-cleaning areas.
- Where carpeting is permitted, it must be securely installed and finished at the wall to facilitate cleaning.

3. Lighting Protection and Facility Functionality

Protecting Food from Broken Glass

Light bulbs must generally be shielded, coated, or otherwise shatter-resistant where there is exposed food; clean equipment, utensils, or linens; or unwrapped single-service or single-use articles. Heat lamps require protection against breakage.

Ventilation and Insect-Control Devices

- Heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning systems must be designed so intake and exhaust vents do not contaminate food or food-contact items.
- Flying-insect control devices that electrocute or stun insects must retain the insects within the device.
- Insect-control devices may not be located over food-preparation areas and must not allow insects or fragments to fall or be propelled onto exposed food or clean items.

4. Toilet Rooms and Outer Openings



Outer openings: tight-fitting doors, maintained screens, sealed penetrations, and pest prevention.

Toilet Rooms

A toilet room located on the premises must generally be completely enclosed and have a tight-fitting, self-closing door. Toilet-room doors must be kept closed except during cleaning and maintenance.

Doors, Windows, and Other Openings

- Close or fill holes and gaps along floors, walls, and ceilings.
- Use closed, tight-fitting windows.
- Use solid, self-closing, tight-fitting exterior doors, subject to the Code's exceptions.
- When doors or windows are kept open, use effective pest protection such as 16-mesh-per-inch screening, properly designed air curtains, or another effective method.

- Exterior walls and roofs must protect the establishment from weather and entry of insects, rodents, and other animals.

Outdoor walking and driving surfaces must be graded to drain. Outdoor refuse areas must be curbed and graded to drain as required by law.

5. Private Homes and Living/Sleeping Quarters

A private home, a room used as living or sleeping quarters, or an area directly opening into living or sleeping quarters may not be used for food-establishment operations. Where living or sleeping quarters are located on the premises, they must be separated from food-establishment operations by complete partitioning and solid self-closing doors.

6. Handwashing Facilities and Toilet Supplies



Handwashing facilities: properly supplied, accessible, and identified for handwashing.

Facility requirement	Chapter 6 rule - student summary
Hand cleanser	Each handwashing sink or qualifying adjacent pair must have hand-cleaning liquid, powder, or bar soap.
Hand drying	Provide disposable towels, a continuous clean-towel system, heated-air dryer, or approved air-knife system.
Handwashing sign	A clearly visible sign/poster reminding food employees to wash hands is required at all employee handwashing sinks.
Waste receptacle	Where disposable towels are provided, a waste receptacle must be available.
Toilet tissue	A supply must be available at each toilet.
Sink use	Food-prep sinks, utensil-washing sinks, service sinks, and mop-water facilities may not be set up with the handwashing aids intended for a handwashing sink.

A handwashing sink must be properly supplied and clearly identified for handwashing.

7. Lighting Requirements

4 Lighting

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10
FOOT-CANDLES

Walk-in refrigeration units, dry storage areas, and cleaning equipment areas.



20
FOOT-CANDLES

Inside reach-in equipment, handwashing and warewashing areas, storage areas, and toilet rooms.



50
FOOT-CANDLES

Food preparation areas or areas where knives, slicers, or grinders are used and where safety is a factor.

Lighting: 10, 20, and 50 foot-candle requirements vary by area and task.

Chapter 6 sets minimum light intensity based on the task and area. These values are important inspection and facility-design standards.

Minimum light intensity	Where required
10 foot-candles (108 lux)	At 30 inches above the floor in walk-in refrigeration units and dry-food storage areas, and in other rooms/areas during cleaning.
20 foot-candles (215 lux)	At consumer self-service food surfaces such as buffets/salad bars; where fresh produce or packaged foods are sold; inside reach-in/undercounter refrigerators; and at 30 inches above the floor in handwashing, warewashing, equipment/utensil storage, and toilet-room areas.
50 foot-candles (540 lux)	At surfaces where employees work with food or with equipment/utensils such as knives, slicers, grinders, or saws where employee safety is a factor.

Memory aid: 10 - storage/cleaning; 20 - self-service, inside refrigeration, sinks/storage/toilets; 50 - food prep and safety-sensitive work.

8. Ventilation, Lockers, and Service Sinks

- Mechanical ventilation of sufficient capacity is required when necessary to keep rooms free of excessive heat, steam, condensation, vapors, odors, smoke, and fumes.
- Dressing rooms or areas are required when employees routinely change clothes in the establishment.
- Lockers or other suitable facilities must be provided for orderly storage of employee clothing and possessions.
- A service sink or curbed cleaning facility must be available as required by Chapter 5.

9. Location of Employee and Facility Areas

- Handwashing sinks must be conveniently located as required by Chapter 5.
- Toilet rooms must be conveniently located and accessible to employees during all hours of operation.
- Employee eating, drinking, and tobacco-use areas must be located so food and protected items are not contaminated.
- Employee lockers must be located where employee possessions cannot contaminate food, equipment, utensils, linens, or single-service/single-use articles.
- Damaged, spoiled, recalled, or other distressed merchandise held for return/credit must be segregated in a designated area away from food and protected items.

10. Cleaning and Maintaining the Physical Facility

5 **Cleaning and Maintenance**



Clean regularly using wet cleaning or other dustless methods.



Store cleaning tools to air dry.



Keep ventilation systems clean and in good repair.



Keep physical facilities in good repair.

Cleaning and maintenance: use proper cleaning methods, maintain ventilation, and air-dry cleaning tools.

- Physical facilities must be maintained in good repair.
- Clean the physical facility as often as necessary to keep it clean.
- Except for spills or accidents, schedule cleaning when the least amount of food is exposed, such as after closing.
- Use dustless floor-cleaning methods such as wet cleaning, vacuuming, treated dust mops, or sweeping with dust-arresting compounds.
- Clean intake and exhaust air ducts and change filters so they do not become a source of contamination.
- Do not clean maintenance tools or dispose of mop water in food-preparation sinks, handwashing sinks, or warewashing equipment.
- After use, position mops so they air-dry without soiling walls, equipment, or supplies.
- Clean plumbing fixtures as often as necessary to keep them clean.

Sawdust, wood shavings, granular salt, baked clay, diatomaceous earth, and similar absorbent materials generally may not be used on floors, except for the limited immediate spot-cleaning provision for liquid spills.

11. Pest Control

The premises must be maintained free of insects, rodents, and other pests. Chapter 6 describes an ongoing prevention-and-control approach rather than relying only on treatment after an infestation.

- Routinely inspect incoming food and supply shipments.
- Routinely inspect the premises for evidence of pests.
- Use appropriate pest-control methods when pests are found.
- Eliminate harborage conditions.
- Remove dead or trapped pests frequently enough to prevent accumulation, decomposition, or attraction of additional pests.
- Store brooms, mops, vacuums, and other maintenance tools so they do not contaminate food or protected items and so the storage area can be cleaned.
- Remove unnecessary items and litter that can interfere with cleaning or provide pest harborage.

12. Animals in a Food Establishment

6 **Pest and Animal Controls**



Remove harborage and eliminate pest access.



Use approved pest control methods.



Service animals are allowed in customer areas. Keep them away from food preparation areas.



Pet dogs are allowed in approved outdoor dining areas when requirements are met.

Pest and animal controls: prevent pest harborage and follow the Code's specific animal exceptions.

Live animals are generally prohibited on the premises of a food establishment, but Chapter 6 lists specific exceptions when contamination cannot result.

- Edible or decorative fish in aquariums and certain shellfish/crustacea displays are allowed under the Code.
- Patrol dogs accompanying police or security officers may be allowed in specified areas.
- Service animals may be allowed in customer areas not used for food preparation when controlled by the person with a disability and no health or safety hazard results.
- Specified institutional-care facilities may allow pets in common dining areas at times other than meals when the Code's separation, storage, and cleaning conditions are met.
- Caged or similarly confined animals may be allowed in areas not used for food preparation, storage, sales, display, or dining.

- If approved by the regulatory authority, food establishments may allow pet dogs in outdoor dining areas.

Pet dogs in outdoor dining areas are not automatically allowed by the Food Code; regulatory-authority approval is required.

Chapter 6 Quick Review

Remember	Core rule
Facility surfaces	Smooth, durable, easily cleanable; nonabsorbent where moisture is expected.
Outer openings	Protect against insects and rodents with tight-fitting closures or effective screening/air barriers.
Handwashing stations	Soap, approved drying method, visible handwashing sign, and waste receptacle when disposable towels are used.
Lighting	10 / 20 / 50 foot-candles depending on area and task.
Cleaning	Clean as often as necessary; minimize exposed food during routine cleaning.
Maintenance tools	Do not clean them or dump mop water in food-prep, handwashing, or warewashing sinks/equipment.
Pests	Inspect, control, remove harborage, and keep premises pest-free.
Animals	Generally prohibited; only specified exceptions apply.

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End-of-Chapter Multiple-Choice Review

1. Indoor floors, walls, and ceilings in food-establishment operating areas should generally be:

- A. Rough and absorbent
- B. Smooth, durable, and easily cleanable
- C. Carpeted
- D. Unfinished

2. Surfaces in areas subject to moisture should generally be:

- A. Absorbent
- B. Nonabsorbent
- C. Fabric-covered
- D. Unsealed wood

3. Carpeting is prohibited in which area?

- A. Office
- B. Dining room
- C. Walk-in refrigerator
- D. Waiting area

4. Where water-flush floor cleaning is used, floors must be:

- A. Carpeted
- B. Graded to drain
- C. Covered with cardboard
- D. Waxed daily

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5. Mats and duckboards must be:

- A. Permanently fastened
- B. Removable and easily cleanable
- C. Made only of wood
- D. Used in all prep areas

6. Light bulbs over exposed food generally must be:

- A. Uncovered
- B. Shielded, coated, or otherwise shatter-resistant
- C. Colored blue
- D. Fluorescent only

7. An insect-control device that electrocutes insects may be installed:

- A. Directly over a prep table
- B. So insect fragments can fall on food
- C. Where it will not contaminate food or clean items
- D. Inside a food container

8. A toilet room on the premises generally requires a door that is:

- A. Open at all times
- B. Tight-fitting and self-closing
- C. Screened only
- D. Removed during operation

9. Outer openings are protected from pests by measures such as:

- A. Open windows
- B. Holes along walls
- C. Tight-fitting doors and protected openings
- D. Removing door sweeps

10. When windows or doors are kept open, one approved pest-control option is:

- A. 16-mesh-per-inch screening
- B. Cheesecloth
- C. Paper towels
- D. Open curtains

11. A private home may be used for food-establishment operations under Chapter 6:

- A. Yes, always
- B. Only for baking
- C. No
- D. Only after midnight

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12. A handwashing sink must have:

- A. Dish detergent only
- B. Hand-cleaning soap
- C. Sanitizer only
- D. No cleanser

13. Which is an approved hand-drying provision?

- A. Employee apron
- B. Reusable shared towel
- C. Disposable towels
- D. Cardboard

14. Employee handwashing sinks require:

- A. A visible handwashing sign/poster
- B. A menu
- C. A pest-control log above the sink
- D. A cooking chart

15. Toilet tissue must be available:

- A. At each toilet
- B. Only in employee toilets
- C. Only on request
- D. In the manager's office

16. Walk-in refrigeration and dry-food storage areas require at least:

- A. 5 foot-candles
- B. 10 foot-candles
- C. 20 foot-candles
- D. 50 foot-candles

17. Consumer self-service food surfaces such as buffets require at least:

- A. 10 foot-candles
- B. 15 foot-candles
- C. 20 foot-candles
- D. 50 foot-candles

18. Food-preparation surfaces where employee safety is a factor require at least:

- A. 10 foot-candles
- B. 20 foot-candles
- C. 30 foot-candles
- D. 50 foot-candles

19. Mechanical ventilation is required when necessary to control:

- A. Only cold air
- B. Heat, steam, condensation, vapors, odors, smoke, and fumes
- C. Employee schedules
- D. Food prices

20. Employee lockers should be located so they:

- A. Can contaminate food
- B. Protect food and equipment from contamination
- C. Block hand sinks
- D. Are inside food containers

21. Routine facility cleaning should generally occur:

- A. When the most food is exposed
- B. When the least food is exposed

- C. Only during inspections
- D. Once per year

22. Which is a dustless floor-cleaning method?

- A. Dry sweeping that creates dust
- B. Wet cleaning
- C. Blowing debris with compressed air
- D. Shaking floor mats over food

23. Mop water may be disposed of in:

- A. A food-preparation sink
- B. A handwashing sink
- C. Warewashing equipment
- D. The designated service sink/curbed cleaning facility

24. After use, mops should be:

- A. Left in a bucket
- B. Placed to air-dry without soiling walls or supplies
- C. Stored on a prep table
- D. Hung over clean utensils

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25. The premises must be maintained free of:

- A. Menus
- B. Insects, rodents, and other pests
- C. Refrigeration
- D. Lighting

26. A good pest-prevention practice is:

- A. Ignore incoming shipments
- B. Eliminate harborage conditions
- C. Store unused equipment indefinitely
- D. Leave doors open

27. Maintenance tools should be stored:

- A. On food-prep tables
- B. So they do not contaminate food or protected items
- C. In clean utensil drawers
- D. In ice machines

28. Live animals in food establishments are:

- A. Always allowed
- B. Generally prohibited with specified exceptions
- C. Required in dining rooms
- D. Allowed in prep areas

29. Service animals may be allowed in customer areas when:

- A. They prepare food
- B. They are controlled and no health or safety hazard results
- C. They are placed on tables
- D. They enter food-preparation areas

30. Pet dogs may be allowed in outdoor dining areas when:

- A. Any customer requests it
- B. Approved by the regulatory authority
- C. Food is prepared outdoors
- D. No tables are present

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Answer Key

1-10	11-20	21-30
1. B	11. C	21. B
2. B	12. B	22. B
3. C	13. C	23. D
4. B	14. A	24. B
5. B	15. A	25. B
6. B	16. B	26. B
7. C	17. C	27. B
8. B	18. D	28. B
9. C	19. B	29. B
10. A	20. B	30. B

Source and Training Use

Primary source: U.S. Food and Drug Administration, 2026 Food Code, Chapter 6 - Physical Facilities, pp. 133-144. This coursebook paraphrases and organizes Chapter 6 for student instruction. The FDA's 2026 Summary of Changes states that Chapter 6 has no changes from the prior edition. Consult the official Food Code and the applicable regulatory authority for exact regulatory language and jurisdiction-specific requirements.

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