



TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

A guide for opening and operating a food establishment.

*Your lifetime partner in healthy living.
Votre partenaire à vie pour vivre en santé.*

myhealthunit.ca

📍 345 Oak Street West,
North Bay, ON P1B 2T2

☎ 1-800-563-2808
705-474-1400

📠 705-474-8252

📍 90 Bowes Street, Suite 201,
Parry Sound, ON P2A 2L7

☎ 1-800-563-2808
705-746-5801

📠 705-746-2711

Contents

Ontario Regulation 493/17 – Food Premises	2
Location	2
Designing a Commercial Kitchen	2
Food Supply	3
Water Supply	3
Water Tanks.....	3
Washroom	3
Food Storage Areas.....	3
Keeping it Clean	3
Performance Criteria for Equipment	4
Be in the Know!	4
How the Smoke Free Ontario Act Affects You.....	4
Sample Design of a Commercial Kitchen	5
Street Food Vending Carts.....	6
Mobile Preparation Premises	6
Home Based Food Premises	6
Health Guidelines for Disinfecting a Water Tank	7
Getting it Done! Check List.....	8
Additional Sources of Information	9

Taking Care of Business

If you are planning to operate a food premises, there are several things you need to do while in the planning stages. The purpose of this guide is to assist you as you plan, to be compliant with applicable legislation, understand your role and responsibilities in operating a food premises, and to provide current food safety resources. A food premises is defined by the Health Protection and Promotion Act as a premises where food or milk is manufactured, processed, prepared, stored, handled, displayed, distributed, transported, sold or offered for sale.

In general, all food premises have the same basic requirements: potable water, smooth non-absorbent surfaces, proper storage and temperature control for food products, adequate lighting, and food handlers with good personal hygiene. Specific additional requirements for mobile units and street food vending carts are identified in the Regulation and information is provided with this guide.

This guide also includes resources that are relevant to the planning and operation of your food premises. They include:

- Guideline for Disinfecting a Water Tank
- Notice of Intent to Operate a Food Premises
- Getting it Done- checklist
- Additional Sources of Information

Ontario Regulation 493/17 – Food Premises

Every operator of a food premises in Ontario must comply with Ontario Regulation 493/17 - Food Premises Regulation under the Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA). This regulation provides for the minimum requirements that an operator must meet specific to the type of food premises. Before purchasing, leasing, or renovating an establishment contact your local public health unit to speak to a public health inspector, so that your plans and menu can be reviewed. A meeting with the public health inspector will determine if your proposal meets the minimum requirements. This measure will ensure plans are reviewed in advance, will streamline your inspection process, and will likely be more cost effective.

Also, under HPPA Section 16(2), it is the responsibility of any person who intends to operate a food premises to notify the local health unit. This can be achieved by completing our 'Notice of Intent to Operate' form.

Location

Consult with your local municipal/ township office, or local service board to ensure your proposed location meets any local requirements. This can include things like building permits, construction approvals, zoning by-laws, insurance, and fire safety requirements. It is possible that a business license is required and might need to be signed by other agencies for approval, including the Public Health Unit.

Designing a Commercial Kitchen

When designing your kitchen, consider the type of service that the kitchen will provide. For example: do you provide take-out, self-serve, or plated service? Some types of food production and service will require extensive food holding equipment. Another will require more floor and preparation space. Is there adequate refrigeration storage for prepared foods? Consider the amount of floor and wall space available. Is there sufficient room for all the equipment, while allowing for the flow of food? In most cases you will require food preparation sinks, dishwashing sinks and a separate hand wash basin.

Have a realistic budget. Never underestimate the benefits that good quality commercial grade equipment can provide in terms of cost control, durability, energy, and labor savings. When considering the layout, plan for a kitchen that accommodates the safe preparation and storage of food and allows for easy clean up.

Food Supply

Only foods that originate from an inspected source are permitted to be used in a food premises. Eggs must be graded, meats must be federally/provincially inspected, dairy products are pasteurized, and all other foods are from inspected sources. Remember, a private home is not permitted to distribute food to an inspected food premises. An operator may open a business in a residential building; however, approval should be sought from your local municipality (if applicable) (and it must also be approved and inspected by the local health unit. Both you and the public health inspector share the same goal; to provide safe, quality food for the public.

Water Supply

Your food premises must have a supply of hot and cold running water under pressure, and it must be potable. For many establishments this means being connected to the municipal water distribution system. For rural food premises, the water source could be a well or surface water. In these situations, the water system may fall under Ontario Regulation 319 – Small Drinking Water Systems or Regulation 493/17 – Food Premises. These regulations require operators to provide consistently safe water to their users. A public health inspector will determine what requirements, if any, apply to your water system.

Water Tanks

An adequate supply of potable water is required for the operation of mobile food premises and street food vending carts. The Guidelines for Disinfecting a Water Tank have been included in this document to assist you in chemically disinfecting your holding tank and plumbing connections. When filling the tank for opening, be sure to use a potable water source. A water test demonstrating potability must be completed prior to operation, and a copy of the test results provided to the public health inspector prior to opening. After opening, you are required to sample and test water from the tank on a monthly basis during continuous operation of the unit. The laboratory test results will confirm if the water complies with the microbiological parameters for total coliform and E. coli. Contact a licensed private laboratory prior to collecting the sample to set up an account. A list of licensed laboratories that test drinking water is available on the Additional Sources of Information page for your assistance. Remember to keep a copy of the laboratory test results for your records.

Washroom

The number of washrooms and fixtures are prescribed in the Ontario Building Code. Contact your local building department for guidance.

Food Storage Areas

Plan for adequate storage areas for food; it is easy to underestimate the amount of space and equipment you will require. Protect food from contamination and adulteration using easily cleanable, food grade equipment, and use shelving that will keep items off the floor.

Cold/Frozen Storage

Ensure there is enough storage for hazardous foods. When stored, refrigerated food must be maintained at 4°C (40°F) or colder. Each unit used for storing hazardous food is required to be equipped with an accurate indicating thermometer.

Dry Storage

Store food in its original packaging or in food grade containers that close tightly to prevent the entrance of rodents and insects.

Keeping it Clean

Operators are required to maintain the establishment in a clean and sanitary manner. When cleaning and sanitizing, be sure to use chemicals intended for use in a food premises and follow applicable safe handling requirements and the manufacturer's instructions on chemical products.

In general, detergent is used to wash surfaces that need to be cleaned. A sanitizing solution is used to kill living organisms and reduce their numbers to an acceptable level. Cleaning and sanitizing are two distinct steps and are used on all food contact surfaces. As an operator, you will need to verify the strength of the sanitizing solution to ensure it is being used as directed. Choosing a test reagent to verify sanitizer strength can be confusing, so discuss your options with the public health inspector.

General purpose cleaners are used for non-food contact surfaces such as floors, walls and in washrooms.

Degreasers are used on non-food contact surfaces such as commercial vent hoods, walls, and in areas where there is a build-up of grease. The purpose of the degreaser is to breakdown grease for easy removal. After that, cleaning with a detergent is more effective.

Cleaning and sanitizing utensils and multi-use articles (dishware, pots, etc.) can be accomplished using mechanical or manual dishwashing. There are several commercial dishwashers available, but they all clean through the application of clean water and a detergent. To sanitize, warm water and sanitizer can be used, or very hot water 82°C (180°F). In this last case, the high temperature acts as the sanitizer.

For chemical and temperature requirements, as well as standards for mechanical and manual dish washing, refer to your copy of Regulation 493/17 – Food Premises. Discuss these requirements when you consult with the public health inspector.

Performance Criteria for Equipment

In general, equipment used for the preparation and storage of food is needed to meet performance criteria of Regulation 493/17– Food Premises. Equipment is required to be of a smooth, non-absorbent, non-corrosive, non-toxic material that can be easily cleaned and sanitized. The equipment should be able to withstand high temperatures or chemical sanitizers. It must be maintained in good repair and free of cracks, crevices, or open seams.

Criteria for non-food contact surfaces such as floors, walls, as well as lighting, air exchange units can be found under the Ontario Building Code.

Be in the Know!

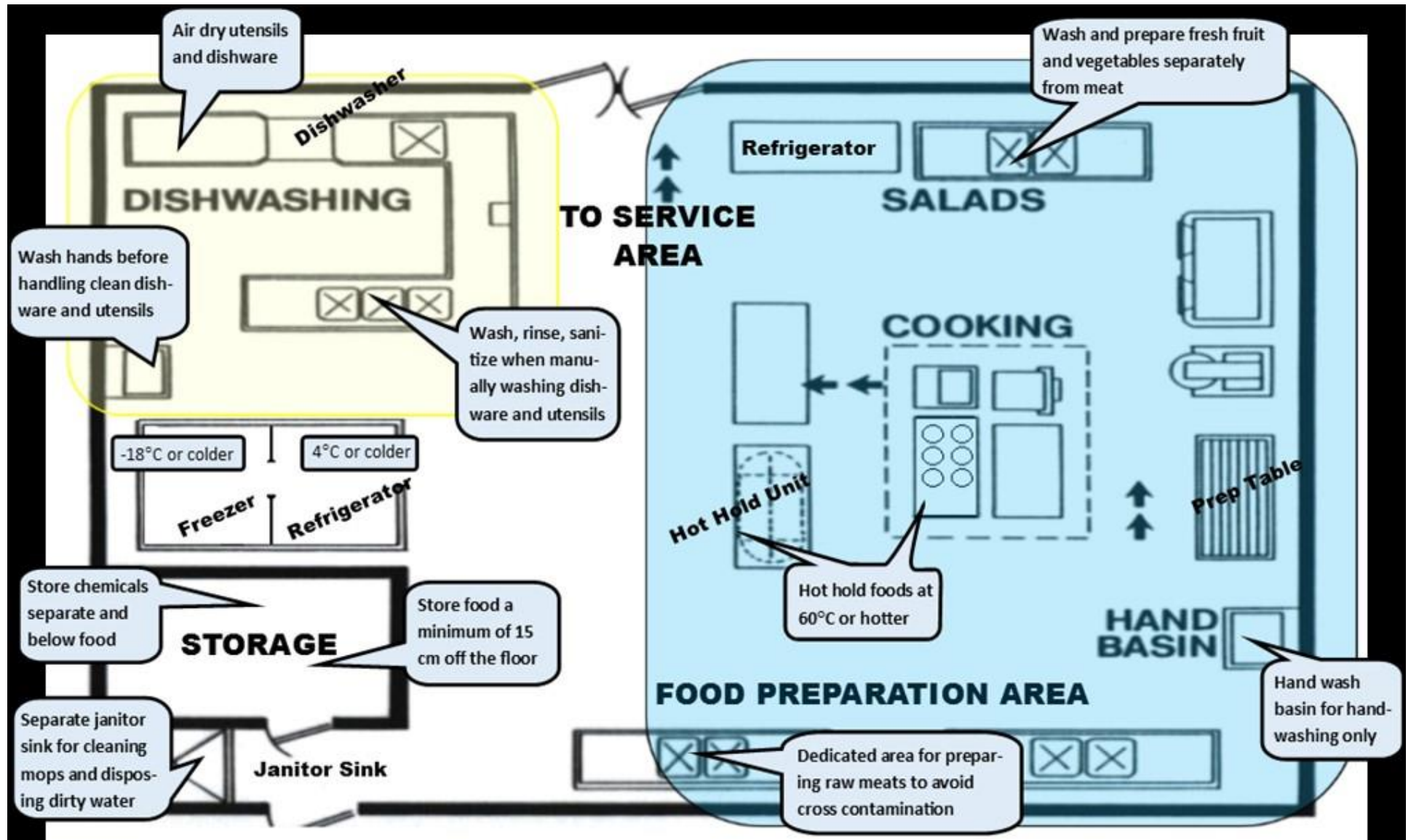
Did you know that it is a legal requirement that there be at least one certified food handler working when the premises is in operation? Having staff trained to the best standards is an asset for any operator! The Food Handler Certification Course is designed to teach food handlers the general principles of safe food handling. Participants will have a basic understanding of risk factors associated with foodborne illness and increase their skills that are necessary to handle food in a manner that will prevent illness from occurring. Topics of discussion include public health legislation, food microbiology, food protection and preparation, introduction to HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) procedures, cleaning/sanitizing and personal hygiene.

For information on how to register for food handler training with the North Bay Parry Sound Health Unit and various other providers, visit our website at <https://www.myhealthunit.ca/en/public-health-services/food-safety-certification-training.aspx>. Upon successful completion of the examination, a Food Safety Certificate will be issued. This certificate meets the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care mandatory food safety training requirements and is recognized throughout the food safety industry and by other health units in Ontario. If you have any questions, contact us at 705-474-1400 ext. 5400 or at environmental.health@healthunit.ca.

How the Smoke Free Ontario Act Affects You

Familiarize yourself with *Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017* (SFOA, 2017) and Regulation 268/18. If you are selling tobacco products or have any questions, contact a Tobacco Enforcement Officer at 705-474-1400.

Sample Design of a Commercial Kitchen



Street Food Vending Carts

As an operator of a street food vending cart, you can offer a wide variety of foods to the public. As with all other food premises, you must meet the requirements of Reg. 493 – Food Premises. Familiarize yourself with the specific legislation for carts and contact a public health inspector to discuss the requirements for opening and operating a street food vending cart.

In general, all food offered or sold to the public must originate from approved and inspected sources, and the cart be maintained in a clean and sanitary manner. All carts must be supplied with two water tanks: one with a supply of potable water and one for grey water. Potable water is required for food preparation, handwashing, and cleaning/sanitizing equipment.

Ensure your food handler follows good personal hygiene practices by washing their hands, not smoking, and wearing clean clothing with hair confined. Remember, the public will be watching their food being prepared and they will expect high standards in terms of sanitation and food handling. As always, obtain approval from the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit prior to opening for business.

In addition to Reg. 493 – Food Premises, the following resources specific to street food vending carts have been included with this guide: Health Guidelines for Disinfecting a Water Tank and Street Food Vending Cart Operators Guide.

Mobile Preparation Premises

As an operator of a mobile food premises, you can prepare all the same types of food as prepared in a traditional restaurant, provided the mobile premises is adequately equipped according to Regulation 493- Food Premises. However, there are several requirements specific to this type of premise. Some of these specific requirements include use of single service articles only, and structural standards for service doors and windows. All mobile units need a source of potable water, which is usually supplied using a water tank. Potable water is used for food preparation, cleaning equipment, handwashing, and, in fact, used for all the same purposes as in a traditional restaurant. The used water (grey water) is pumped into a wastewater tank where it is stored. Both the potable water tank and the grey water tank are required to be equipped with gauges for determining water levels. Monthly water samples must be collected and sent to a private lab for testing to ensure the potability of the water used continues to meet standards while in operation.

In order to be considered “mobile” the unit needs to meet the definition of Regulation 493- Food Premises of a vehicle or itinerant food premises. Familiarize yourself with Regulation 493, Food Premises and contact a public health inspector for information on opening and operating this type of establishment. As always, obtain approval from the North Bay Parry Sound Health Unit prior to opening for business.

In addition to Regulation 493 - Food premises the following resources specific to a mobile food preparation premises have been included with this guide: Health Guidelines for Disinfecting a Water Tank.

Home Based Food Premises

Allowances have been made to permit home-based food premises to operate, as long as they meet the Reg. 493 – Food Premises, which subjects these operations to inspections and approval by local Health Units.

As an operator of a home-based food premises, you can offer a wide variety of foods to the public. Once you decide you want to sell food to the public, consult with your local municipal/ township office, or local service board to ensure your proposed location meets any local requirements, such as zoning restrictions. If there are no restrictions, familiarize yourself with Regulation 493 and contact a public health inspector about the requirements for opening and operating a home-based Food Premise.

Some areas to consider that might be unique to home-based food premises are discussed below. Before beginning a home-based food premise consider all the following closely as they could all impact your business.

Ensure you are separating personal and business items in storage areas. Consider having a separate fridge, freezer, and cupboards for business purposes. This ensures that food intended for public consumption does not become contaminated with food intended for personal use. Storage space could also be a factor depending on the

volume of food made for the business. Some items that are not from an inspected source cannot be stored with items used for the business.

Source of water, as discussed in a previous section is another consideration. If you are on a private water supply, there may be requirements for water treatment in order to use the home for a home-based food premise. This could be an added expense that would need to be discussed and considered prior to any food preparation and sales. Monthly samples of the water would also be needed to ensure the water continues to be a potable source.

Animals are not permitted in Food Premises. If you have household pets, considerations for keeping them separate during times of food preparation for your business will need to be addressed. The food preparation area would also require cleaning and disinfecting prior to use to ensure that animal hair and other potential contaminants are not present to impact the food items.

The location of your home would be listed on the Health Unit disclosure website. If there are reasons that you are not able to disclose your location to the public, then your home would not be acceptable for a home business, and you might need to consider alternative locations. Once you open a home-based business, you are essentially opening your home to the public and disclosure of inspections are required to be posted and displayed.

Health Guidelines for Disinfecting a Water Tank

Every person who intends to commence operation of a food premises shall give notice of his intention to the local Medical Officer of Health. Section 16(2) of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, requires that inspections are made of all food premises and any food or drink and equipment.

Guidelines for Owners and Operators

1. All water used in the operation of a food premises must originate from a regulated drinking water system.
2. Appropriate measures must be taken to protect the water, the water tank, and any equipment and connections, from contamination during filling, storage, transportation, and use.
3. The water tank and any equipment used to supply water shall not have been previously used to transport a noxious, hazardous, or toxic substance or liquid.
4. Water tank interiors shall be constructed with a food-grade material that is non-corrosive (i.e., stainless steel, fiberglass, plastic, approved epoxy liner) and shall not be used for any other purpose. All equipment must be maintained in good repair.
5. The inlet or opening of any container used for water haulage shall be constructed and maintained in a manner that will prevent the entry of insects, rodents, dust, or any foreign material that may contaminate the water supply. Apart from cleaning, emptying, or filling the tank, the inlet or opening must be covered and sealed at all times.
6. Hoses and nozzles used for water intake or discharge must be maintained clean and protected from possible contamination. They must be covered when not in use and disinfected before each use. (See **Section B**)
7. The water tank shall be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the Guidelines for Disinfecting Water Tanks (see **Section A**) and shall not be used for any other purpose, unless written approval has been obtained from North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit.

A. Guidelines for Disinfecting a Water Tank

1. Disinfection of the water tank must occur prior to use (i.e., new tank, after repairs, after a period of non-use). It is also good practice to disinfect the tank after every three months of continues use.
2. The following procedure requires the use of unscented household bleach (5.25% sodium hypochlorite, i.e., Javex).
 - a) Shut off valve to water tank distribution lines. Drain all water from the bulk tank.
 - b) Wash and remove dirt from the inside surfaces of the tank by using a high-pressure hose.
 - c) Remove wash water and sediments from bottom of tank. These can be vacuumed out.
 - d) Rinse inside surfaces of tank with clean potable water. Remove wash water.

- e) Disinfect the inside surfaces of the tank and distribution lines as follows:
 - i. Use 40 millilitres of household bleach for every 10 litres of water. This provides a 200-ppm chlorine solution.
 - ii. Add bleach while refilling the tank with water from the regulated drinking water system. This will ensure thorough mixing of the bleach solution.
 - iii. Ensure the tank is completely filled to allow interior surfaces to come in contact with the bleach solution.
3. Run water out of water taps in the distribution lines (to the sinks) until the smell of bleach is detected.
4. Shut off water faucets and valves to distribution lines. Ensure the tank is kept completely filled to allow a contact time of at least 12 hours.
5. After 12 hours, drain all the water from the bulk tank into a municipal sanitary sewer or, if not available, a storm sewer. The tank can now be filled with fresh potable water.
6. Flush water tank by opening valves of distribution lines and running water until no smell of bleach is detected.

B. Disinfection of hose-end prior to each use

Hose end connections must be disinfected before each use.

A bleach solution for dipping hose ends can be made with unscented household bleach (5.25% sodium hypochlorite, i.e., Javex) as follows:

- 40 millilitres of bleach per 10 litres of water

Getting it Done! Check List

- Contact the local municipal/township office or local service board regarding your proposed location and any building, zoning, fire, or licensing by-law requirements.
- Contact the Health Unit to consult with a Public Health Inspector regarding your proposed business.
- Be prepared to provide building plans, fees, menus, or other documents requested by licensing officials.
- Be familiar with the Food Premises Regulation 493 and any related information.
- Register to attend a Food Handler Certification Course.
- Meet with your public health inspector to review your business plan.
- Arrange an appointment with your public health inspector at least 3 weeks prior to opening your business to the public.
- Research your food supplier(s).

Additional Sources of Information

- North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit
 - General Webpage: www.myhealthunit.ca
 - Food Safety Certification Course Dates: <https://www.myhealthunit.ca/en/public-health-services/food-safety-certification-training.asp>
- Ontario ELaws – Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA): <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90h07>
- Ontario ELaws – Food Premises Regulation 493: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/170493?search=493>
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency (for labeling information, food product safety): www.inspection.gc.ca
 - Food Recall Warnings and Allergy Alerts: <http://recalls-rappels.canada.ca/en>
- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs (for farming practices): www.omafra.gov.on.ca
- Alcohol and Gaming Commission Webpage: www.agco.on.ca
- Ontario ELaws – Small Drinking Water Systems Regulation 319: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/080319>
- Private Labs (around our district) for Water Testing:
 - Near North Labs – (705) 497-0550. Unit 11, 191 Booth St., North Bay, ON, P1A 4K3. <http://www.nearnorthlabs.ca/site/>
 - Testmark Labs – (705) 693-1121. 7 Margaret St. N, Garson ON, P3L 1E1. <http://www.testmark.ca/>
 - COAL (Central Ontario Analytical Labs) – (705) 326-8285. 4260 Burnside Line, Orillia, ON, L3V 6H4. <http://www.coalab.ca/>
 - Maxxam Analytics – (705) 674-5700. Unit 7, 1060 Lorne St., Sudbury, ON, P3C 1A5. <http://maxxam.ca/>
- To get a water well record in Ontario: <https://www.ontario.ca/environment-and-energy/map-well-records>
- Licensed well contractor: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/find-licenced-well-contractors>
- Ontario Ground Water Association: <http://www.ogwa.ca>
- Mattawa Conservation Authority (for information on septic systems): <https://nbmca.ca/planning-permits/on-site-sewage-system-septic-permits/>
- Smoke Free Ontario
 - FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) Page: <http://www.ontario.ca/page/where-you-cant-smoke-or-vape>
 - O. Reg. 268/18: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/180268?search=Smoke+free>