



**College of Tropical Agriculture  
and Human Resources**  
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## Some Minimum Physical Requirements\* for a Commercial-Scale Dried Loose Leaf Tea-Processing Facility in Hawai'i

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Are you considering getting into loose tea processing? If so, it is critical to understand Hawai'i law when it comes to food processing (HRS Chapter 11–12, <http://tinyurl.com/3epfq3x>). This publication explains what it takes to get a Food Establishment Permit (FEP) from the Hawaii Department of Health (DOH), which is required for commercial producers of dried loose tea (and most processed products). There are a number of generic steps you need to take, but in reality, each processing operation is unique and is evaluated and guided by the Hawaii Department of Health's Sanitation Branch. Each county might also have a slightly different set of requirements, so it is best to do a lot of up-front reconnaissance before you spend any money.

**Step 1.** Look at the chart on the next page to see what is generally required of a processing facility. This is just an overview, and the DOH might require less or more depending on your specific process. If you feel comfortable with this, move to Step 2.

**Step 2.** If you are just starting out in food processing, it might make sense to get some real-world experience by borrowing or renting space in a currently permitted Food Establishment. This could include a community kitchen, church, or other permitted processing business. You will still need to have your own FEP to operate within that permitted establishment and to document that you have permission to use the facility. You might also need a letter from the

owner acknowledging their permission to use the facility. Furthermore, permission may be denied if size/facilities are inadequate. Using a DOH "Commissary Agreement" form might be helpful to this arrangement (<http://tinyurl.com/3dslxto>).

**Step 3.** If you want to process in your own facility, you will need to start working immediately with the Hawaii Department of Health's Sanitation Branch (a list of contacts is included at the end of this document). It is best to call them for a "coaching" session (as their time allows). If you decide to go forward, you will need to submit building plans primarily to your county building department. Even if your establishment does not require a building permit, DOH still requires plans if you will be building a new structure or extensively renovating an existing one.

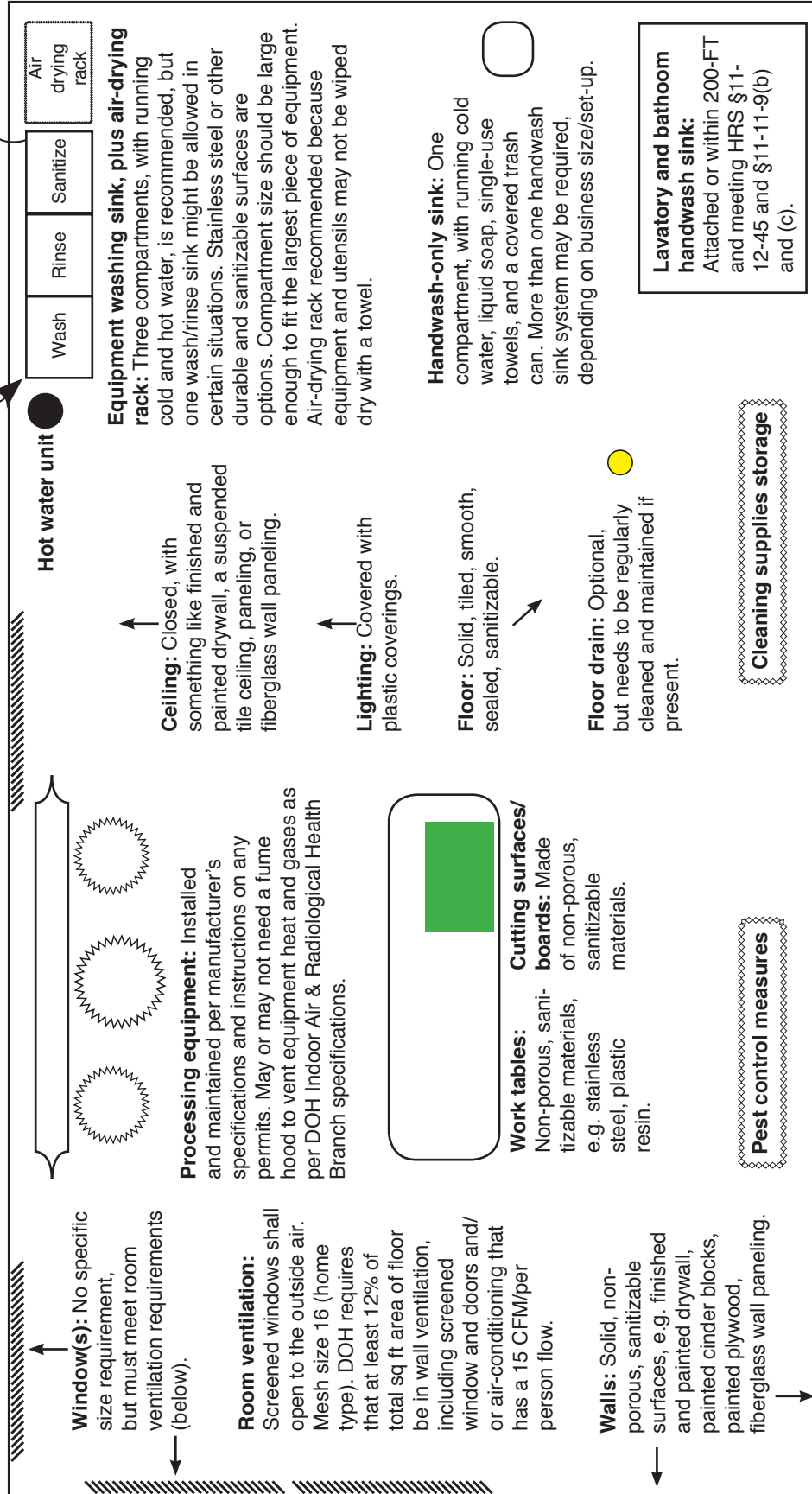
From the building department, your facility plans might be routed to DOH Sanitation Branch, DOH Indoor Air & Radiological Health Branch, the Fire Department, and/or other government agencies as needed. There will be a fee for each application—from \$50 to several hundred dollars. The routing and review process could take a number of months, so be prepared to wait and to answer additional questions. The amount of review time required will be a function of the workload in each department and the complexity of your building and operational plans.

**Step 4.** Once your facility has been built and/or permitted, you'll need to begin to work on and perfect your

\* any requirement subject to change at any time

# Some minimum physical requirements for a tea-processing facility\*

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HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points) plan for processing. Look at the resources below and consider taking a class on the subject.

**Step 5.** Label your tea package as required by the US FDA labeling requirements (<http://tinyurl.com/lmgab3>). For more information on this subject, see the CTAHR publication “Required and Optional Labeling for Loose Tea for Sale” (<http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/oc/freepubs/pdf/FST-47.pdf>).

### Links to Helpful Resources

*Hawaii Department of Health’s Food Establishment Permit application*  
<http://tinyurl.com/43wmrge>

*Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points*  
US Food and Drug Administration  
<http://tinyurl.com/432fjym>

*Some Costs and Considerations for Establishing an Entrepreneurial Community Shared-Use Kitchen for “Test-Kitchen Incubator”*  
<http://tinyurl.com/3wsa3ax>

UHM College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources food processing education programs  
<http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/aurora/HACCP.asp>

### Disclaimer

Reference to a supplemental information source is not intended as an endorsement or recommendation in preference to other sources that may also be suitable.

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### Hawai’i Department of Health Sanitation Branches

#### Hawai’i County

Hawai’i District Health Office/Hilo  
1582 Kamehameha Avenue  
Hilo, HI 96720  
Phone: 808-933-0917  
Fax: 808-933-0400

Sanitation Branch/Kona (Office)  
Keakealani Building  
79-1020 Haukapila Street, Room 115  
Kona, HI 96750  
Phone: 808-322-1507  
Fax: 808-322-1511

#### Honolulu County

Sanitation Branch  
591 Ala Moana Boulevard  
Honolulu, HI 96813  
Phone: 808-586-8000  
Fax: 808-586-8040

#### Maui County

Maui District Health Office  
54 High Street, Room 300  
Wailuku, HI 96793  
Phone: 808-984-8230  
Fax: 808-984-8237

#### Kaua’i County

Kaua’i District Health Office  
3040 Umi Street  
Līhu’e, HI 96766  
Phone: 808-241-3323  
Fax: 808-241-3566