

Frequently Asked Questions



Why are stores required to offer staple foods?

Good nutrition is critical for individual and community health. Knowing what to eat is important, but having access to healthy food options matters too. While it's easy to find healthy foods at a supermarket or co-op, residents in some communities must shop for groceries at corner stores, gas stations, and other general retailers. At these stores, soda, chips, and candy are cheap and easy to find, but nutritious choices are often very limited. The staple foods ordinance helps ensure that everyone has access to healthy foods no matter where they shop. The ordinance is one piece of a broader approach to improving healthy food access and supporting healthy lifestyles in Minneapolis.



Is my business required to offer staple foods?

Licensed grocery stores must meet the staple food requirements. This includes supermarkets, co-ops, and corner stores, as well as many gas stations, dollar stores, and pharmacies. The following types of stores may be exempt from the staple food requirements:



Accessory use grocery stores (An accessory use grocery is defined as a retail establishment that sells staple foods as an accessory use to its primary business, or sells only specialized types or classes of staple foods and accessory foods, including, but not limited to, such establishments as imported food stores and gift shops. The definition of accessory use grocery does not include stores that accept government supplemental nutrition programs.)



Gas stations with less than 300 square feet of retail sales area



Stores located in the central commercial district (downtown Minneapolis)



What foods are stores required to offer?

In general, stores are required to stock items in 10 staple food categories including: milk, cheese, eggs, meat and vegetable proteins, fruits and vegetables, 100% juice, whole grains and cereals, canned beans, and dried peas/beans/lentils. Foods should be non-expired or spoiled and maintained according to established industry standards for food safety. To count towards the staple food standards, perishable items, including fresh fruits and vegetables, should be in good condition, not overripe or seriously deformed, and free from decay, discoloration, bruising and surface damage.

[Summary of required food categories and quantities](#)



How is the new staple foods ordinance being implemented?

Ordinance changes went into effect on April 1, 2015. In March 2015, all licensed stores received a mailing from the Minneapolis Health Department containing information about the staple foods

ordinance. In April 2016, the Health Department staff conducted visits to affected stores to provide education to store owners and staff, monitored compliance with the food requirements, and connected stores to training and technical assistance opportunities. In 2017, the Health Department will continue to monitor compliance and provide assistance to the store owners.



How will the new staple foods ordinance be enforced?

The health inspectors conduct compliance checks as part of their normal health inspections. If a store is not compliant with the staple foods requirements, the inspector writes a violation order and instructs them to fix the problem. After a re-inspection, if a store is not compliant with the staple foods requirements, the health inspector may issue a monetary fine of \$200.



What support is available to help stores comply with the staple food requirements?

A variety of trainings and resources are available to ensure that stores can comply with the requirements including:

-  In-store promotional supplies (a \$100 value; free to stores that attend a training)
-  One-on-one consultations with retail and marketing experts
-  Connections to affordable healthy food procurement options
-  Low-interest loans for coolers and freezers