

# Minneapolis Staple Foods Ordinance

## Frequently Asked Questions



### Why are stores required to stock 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.

### What foods are stores required to stock?

In general, stores are required to stock items in **six** staple food categories including:

1. Dairy/dairy alternatives
2. Meat and vegetable proteins
3. Fruits and vegetables
4. 100% juice
5. Whole grains
6. Legumes (beans, peas, and lentils)

Foods should not be expired or spoiled and should be maintained according to established industry standards for food safety. To count toward the staple food requirements, 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.

For a list of the required staple foods items, [please see this handout](#).

### Is my business required to offer staple foods?

Licensed grocery stores must comply with the staple food requirements. This includes traditional supermarkets, co-ops, and corner stores, as well as most gas stations, dollar/discount stores, pharmacies, and general retailers selling grocery items. The following types of stores may be exempt from the staple food requirements:

- **Accessory use grocery stores:** 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 unless the commissioner of health makes a finding, upon application by the store or proposed

store, that the store's inventory and business plan and practices will be sufficient to meet or exceed established public health goals with regard to providing meaningful and local community access to healthy food options.

- **Gas stations with less than 300 square feet of retail sales area**
- **Stores located in the central commercial district**, as defined in Section 360.10 of the Minneapolis code of ordinances

To determine if your store is exempt from the staple food requirements, please contact the Minneapolis Health Department at 612-673-2301 or email [healthyliving@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:healthyliving@minneapolismn.gov).

#### [Does requiring convenience stores to stock healthy foods go against their business model?](#)

The typical corner store model is changing - national trends show increased customer demand and industry movement toward offering healthy convenience foods. The National Association for Convenience Stores recently made a commitment "to help convenience stores provide more visibility to healthier choices inside their stores." Read more [here](#).

#### [How is the staple foods ordinance being implemented and enforced?](#)

The most recent ordinance changes went into effect on December 7, 2018. In early 2019, stores will receive written communications about the requirements and resources available to help with compliance. The Health Department will offer education, training, and technical assistance opportunities to help store owners successfully comply. Health inspectors monitor compliance with the ordinance as part of routine health inspections of licensed grocery stores. If a store is not compliant with the staple foods requirements, inspectors write a violation order and instruct store owners to fix the problem. In instances of ongoing non-compliance, health inspectors may issue a formal citation and monetary fine of \$200, up to a maximum of \$2,000, after which a business's license may be revoked.

#### [Why were the staple food requirements changed?](#)

Feedback gathered from store owners, shoppers, and City staff from 2015-2018 emphasized concerns related to cultural appropriateness of the staple foods requirements. The ordinance was revised to address those concerns while maintaining nutrition standards that contribute to increased access of affordable, healthy foods for Minneapolis residents. The revisions accomplish this by ensuring that required minimum stocking standards are feasible for stores to meet and align with consumers' cultural dietary preferences. To see a comparison of past to current requirements, click [here](#).

#### [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:

- [BrightSide Produce Distribution](#): fresh produce distribution program delivers directly to stores every Saturday.
- [Farmers Markets of Minneapolis](#): find local farmers markets any time of the year.
- [Good Food Access Program Equipment and Physical Improvement Grant](#): grant program to help grocery stores and small food retailers increase the availability of and access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate foods.
- [Resource Guide for Retail Convenience Stores](#): City of Minneapolis loans and grants for business improvement, purchasing equipment, façade movement, and technical assistance.
- [Green Business Refrigeration Program](#): City of Minneapolis funding for up to 20% of the total project cost to small business owners who implement refrigeration tune-ups and efficiency upgrades after receiving an on-site assessment from Xcel Energy. Businesses located in select Green Zone areas of Minneapolis will receive funding for up to 30% of the total project cost.
- [Healthy Food Merchandising Kits](#): free merchandising kits that include multiple sizes of display baskets, reusable price tag signs, plus small and large stickers for cooler doors/windows. Limit one per store.
- Individual consultations with Health Department staff to troubleshoot specific issues and challenges.

#### Who can I contact with additional questions?

For more information, contact the Minneapolis Health Department:

- Phone: 612-673-2301
- Email: [healthyliving@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:healthyliving@minneapolismn.gov)