

Frequently Asked Questions Related to 5A Slaughterhouse Operations

QUESTION: How long does it take to get the license in the mail?

ANSWER: *It varies depending on several factors. We recommend that you apply for your license at least 8 weeks prior to your planned opening date. Additionally, the establishment must have an inspection with no critical deficiencies on file before the license can be issued.*

QUESTION: If I move, is the license transferrable to the new location?

ANSWER: *No, the license is associated with your physical location. If you move the business, you need to apply for a new license and be inspected at the new location. Similarly, if you sell your business, the new owners must apply for the 5A Slaughterhouse License in their company name.*

QUESTION: If I've applied for the license, when can I start to operate?

ANSWER: *To begin conducting 5A processing operations, you must be inspected, in substantial compliance (have a passing inspection) and be properly licensed.*

QUESTION: What do I need to open a live poultry (aka "chicken") market in any of the five NYC boroughs?

ANSWER: *It will depend on whether you are planning to take over ownership of an existing market, or if you plan on opening a new operation/ new construction.*

For new construction, the location must be outside of a 1,500 ft. radius from a residential dwelling (Required for slaughter facilities in a city with a population of one million or more). Official documentation from a licensed surveyor or contractor is required to verify compliance.

If you will be taking over ownership of an existing market, the 1,500 ft. verification is not required provided there is no significant time between the change of ownership when the firm is closed.

In both instances, the location must be zoned for slaughterhouse operations by the NYC Department of Buildings. Written documentation is required, stating the building use is approved for live animal slaughter.

QUESTION: What do I need to do to open a 5A slaughter facility that is located outside of NYC?

ANSWER: *You will have to provide the Department with written city/town approval to operate a poultry/small animal slaughterhouse; written approval of waste disposal (including composting if permitted by town municipality); copies of well water test for nitrites (one time), nitrates (annually) and coliform (quarterly).*

It is recommended that the operators gain approval from local code enforcement regarding any construction.

QUESTION: How do I acquire a 5A license application?

ANSWER: To obtain a copy of the 5A License application packet, the applicant should contact the regional office to obtain a 5A New Applicant Information which includes the 5A slaughterhouse regulations (circular 925) and a checklist of items required as per regulation. Required items also include the submission of a floor plan or blueprints depicting the layout of the facility equipment, room separation, sinks, etc.

The 5A license application will be provided to an applicant only after the submitted applicant checklist (including applicable supporting documentation) has been reviewed and approved by Department supervision. 5A license applications are not accessible on the Department website.

QUESTION: I'm planning on processing deer. What is required to slaughter deer and sell the venison to customers/businesses?

ANSWER: Only captive raised deer, slaughtered and processed under a 5A license may be placed into commerce. This is outlined in more detail in Circular 925, section 245.8- Exotic Animals- for requirements on field slaughtering captive raised exotic animals.

QUESTION: What if I'm planning on processing wild game (deer) for customers?

ANSWER: Individuals, and some licensed food businesses, will offer custom butchering of game animals. This is done as a service for the owner of the animal, for personal consumption. For firms that hold a license with the Department, a variance form must be on file with the Department to ensure the proper handling of meat products. Custom butchered product in any form cannot be placed into commerce (offered for sale).