

THE ARCHITECT'S ANGLE

John W. Baumgarten Architect, P.C.

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Do You Know That...?

- New D.E.P. regulations require that virtually every plumbing fixture in a commercial kitchen be connected to a grease trap. During gut kitchen renovations, this usually translates into the addition of a second grease trap to handle the required flow.
- The cost of stainless steel has been escalating at such a rapid rate that it is usually more cost effective to pre-purchase kitchen equipment and pay to warehouse it until it is ready for installation in your new kitchen.

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If You Can't Stand the Heat...Renovate Your Kitchen

Undertaking a substantial renovation of a health facility's central kitchen can be a daunting task. But with the right approach, based on a thorough understanding of timing & logistics, a kitchen renovation can be done in a relatively efficient and cost effective manner.

The first consideration in any major kitchen alteration is the potential impact it will have on the daily life of the facility. Health Departments are equally concerned that quality food service be maintained for the duration of the project and that the health, safety and welfare of facility residents and staff is in no way compromised.

An equally important factor is of course the project's budget. As with all construction projects, "time is money". This is especially the case with kitchen alterations which have a high percentage of rapidly escalating construction materials such as sheet metal.

Through our experience with major kitchen renovations, we have been able to develop a project management approach which is focused on minimizing both the time it takes to complete the work and the impact of the project on the facility.

The key to this approach is the establishment of a temporary food service space completely outside the alteration work zone. This allows the existing kitchen to be completely shut-down and gut renovated in a single phase. Our experience has been that this approach can shave up to four months off the construction schedule and can have a significantly positive effect on the overall budget.

There are several options for configuring a temporary food service area. Which one is "right" for a given facility depends on the flexibility of their floor plan. Where space is tight, a facility should rely on outside catering for at least two meals a day. In this scenario, the temporary space is more of a pantry for staging meals and for serving soups & cold plates.

Other facilities have opted for a temporary kitchen complete with cooking appliances, a hood and related fire suppression system. This approach gives a facility more quality control, but involves more up-front renovation.

In either option, disposable dinnerware is used to minimize dishwashing and the temporary equipment specified is re-installed as part of the central kitchen to avoid duplication.

Both approaches require careful input from a facility's dietary staff since "the menu" must have more cold dishes and pre-prepared items. Health Departments favor the temporary pantry/kitchen approach since it is "lower impact" from a construction phasing perspective. However they do look carefully at the "temporary menu" to verify that facility residents have adequate choice and are still getting proper nutrition.

John W. Baumgarten Architect, P.C.: Recent Kitchen Projects:

