Restaurants are constantly evolving and experimenting with different styles of cooking and preparing food for their customers. This may include food preparation techniques that do not meet the Food Sanitation Rules. Because of the hazards associated with certain foods and processes, restaurants must apply for a variance before starting any specialized processing as described in OAR 333-150-0000 Chapter 3-502.11.

These processes present a significant health risk if the facility is not following specific operational procedures for each batch of product. Some examples are:

- Curing with nitrates
- Smoking food for preservation
- Vacuum-packaging cooked foods
- Acidifying foods
- Sprouting seeds or beans on site

We have information available online at: [http://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyEnvironments/FoodSafety/Pages/variance.aspx](http://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyEnvironments/FoodSafety/Pages/variance.aspx) to help operators find more information and get started through the variance process. Keep in mind variances are not intended for facilities that do not meet rules. They are for facilities that can show that the rules present an undue burden to their operation and that their proposed alternative will provide public health protection equal to or greater than the measures provided for in the current rules.