

**PUBLIC HEALTH**  
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**Guidelines for Operation of Temporary Food Serving Facilities**

So, you want to operate a temporary food booth? Here are some basic guidelines and information that will help you prepare and sell food in the safest manner possible. We are here to help you operate a safe and successful food booth!

**1. YOUR FACILITY**

A temporary food serving facility is one that operates for a limited time. Whether it's a sporting event, craft bazaar, bake sale or open house; you just want to set up shop, make some money, get money and get out of business. You are not required to meet all of the requirements of a full service food serving facility, but you **must** maintain food safety standards in order to protect the health of your customers.

**2. SELECTING, PURCHASING, AND STORING FOOD**

When planning your temporary food serving operation, keep the menu simple. Select only a few food items to prepare and serve. Try to select items that do not require much handling or preparation. **Save the fancy stuff for the experts.**

We need to discuss types of food briefly because it will help you to appreciate some of the food safety requirements that will be discussed later. Food products are generally classified according to their ability to allow micro-organisms to grow and reproduce. Foods such as hamburgers, chili, mayonnaise, seafood, chicken, chicken products, pork, pork products, and custard are classified as potentially hazardous because they allow micro-organisms to reproduce rapidly; therefore, they require special handling. Potentially hazardous food must be handled carefully to prevent foodborne illness, this occurs when micro-organisms reach dangerously high levels and the food is consumed. There are also many foods which do not allow micro-organisms to reproduce rapidly. Such foods include bread, crackers, cookies, and fruit; they do not require special handling except what is needed to prevent contamination. For example, baked goods sold at bake sales should be individually wrapped or covered to prevent such contamination.

Purchasing food for your facility should be fairly simple. You must purchase food from an approved source, such as, the Commissary and/or Sam's so we can ensure you use wholesome products. Contact Public Health if you find you must use another source. We will evaluate such requests on a case by case basis.

Once you have decided what and where to purchase your food, you must ensure the food is properly stored before and during the operation. Use common sense in storing food that is not potentially hazardous; protect your food from contamination. You must store potentially hazardous food very carefully. Frozen food **must** be kept frozen at 0 degrees Fahrenheit or below; fresh food **must** be stored at less than 40 degrees Fahrenheit. If you need to defrost frozen food, put it in the refrigerator for several days before the event. **Do Not** thaw frozen food at room temperature. This practice allows micro-organisms to grow and multiply.

**3. PREPARING, AND SERVING FOOD**

**DO NOT** prepare food at home unless you are selling bakery products. Food should be prepared at the food booth immediately before serving.

Cook food thoroughly and keep it hot or cold until served. Hamburgers must be cooked to at least 150 degrees Fahrenheit. Once cooked, keeping hot foods at 140 degrees Fahrenheit or higher to prevent micro-

organisms from multiplying. Cold food must be kept below 40 degrees Fahrenheit until served to prevent micro-organisms from multiplying. It's always best to cook food to order-- **DO NOT prepare large amounts ahead of time and then leave the food at room temperature until served.**

When handling or serving food, use tongs, spoons or forks to minimize contact with your hands. Be sure to clean and sanitize the utensils and counter tops thoroughly, especially after handling raw products.

If you plan carefully you will not have many leftovers. You **must** discard all leftovers--**Do Not** rework leftovers and **Do Not** reheat them for serving later. All leftovers must be thrown out at the end of each day.

#### 4. CLEANLINESS

Because you're trying to reduce the number of micro-organisms which can contaminate food, it is essential to keep your facility as clean as possible. This ensures the people who prepare and serve the food, maintain high standards of cleanliness.

First, ensure that the people working in your facility are free of communicable diseases, such as sore throat, cough, runny nose, or cuts/sores on hands. Ensure all workers wear clean clothing and shirts that have sleeves. Workers may want to bring an extra clean shirt in case their shirt gets dirty. They also need to wear hats or caps to keep hair from falling into food. People handling food should not wear jewelry except for wedding/engagement rings (not grooved that are smooth in appearance). There should be no eating or smoking in the booth area. You must ensure workers wash their hands frequently, especially after using the restroom. Be sure to keep soap, water, and paper towels readily available for handwashing.

Facility cleanliness is equally important and keeping an open food booth clean can represent a challenge. Clean and sanitize food contact surfaces, counter-tops, etc; regularly using a solution of two capfuls of liquid bleach per gallon of lukewarm water. Keep trash and garbage contained in sturdy containers and empty them when they get full.

#### 5. OTHER

The individual in charge of the food booth is responsible for ensuring that the food safety and sanitation standards described in this handout are maintained. It's usually helpful to brief all of the workers to ensure they fully understand how important these rules are in preventing foodborne illness from your operation.