



**Public Health
Environmental Health Division**

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**Guidelines for Operating a Temporary Food Booth
Updated April 2023**

NOTE: Each Food Booth is Required to have its own temporary food permit for the event, regardless of whether the vendor is selling food, or giving away food to sample, to the public.



This information has been developed to help food vendors set up and run food operations in a sanitary and healthy manner and to minimize the possibility of a foodborne illness.

To avoid inconvenience, food vendors are strongly encouraged to contact the Mendocino County Environmental Health Division as early as possible when planning a food booth.

An Environmental Health Specialist will be happy to answer any questions that you may have. He/She will point out the steps that must be taken to help ensure a sanitary operation that will protect the public from foodborne illness.

DEFINITION

A "TEMPORARY FOOD FACILITY" or "TEMPORARY FOOD BOOTH"

Is a food facility that operates at a fixed location for the duration of a community event, such as...

- ✓ a festival
- ✓ a carnival
- ✓ a fair
- ✓ a circus

WHO NEEDS TO GET A PERMIT?

1. The event organizer(s) of events which are open to the public and provide food.
2. Each food vendor planning on operating a food booth during a community event. (The Mendocino County Temporary Food Facility Permit must be conspicuously posted in the booth).

BOOTH CONSTRUCTION:

CLEAR PLASTIC OR LIGHT COLORED SCREENING IS RECOMMENDED FOR VISIBILITY

Construction materials such as plywood, canvas, plastic and fine-mesh fly screening may be used. All booth seams must be tight and secure to exclude insect intrusion and minimize airborne contamination.

Name: _____ (three (3) inches high)

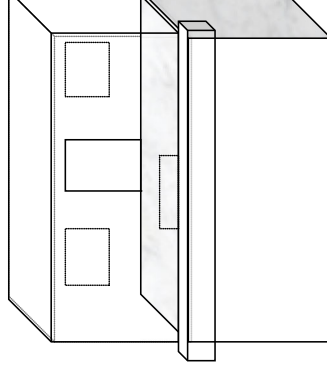
Address: _____ (one (1) inch high)

The booth shall be fully enclosed with four complete sides, a top, and a cleanable floor. (Smooth pavement is acceptable.)

Booths operating on grass or dirt must use plywood, tarp, or other similar material for floor surfaces.

Doors and food service openings (and all tent seams), shall be equipped with tight-fitting closures and remain in the closed position when not actively in use to minimize the entrance of insects.

Operations not requiring enclosed booths include those which sell beverages from approved dispensers and prepackaged food items from an approved source. These items must be sold in the original packaging and labeled accordingly.



Condiments:

Condiment containers shall be the pump type, squeeze containers, or have self-closing covers or lids for content protection. Single service packets are recommended.

Storage / Service:

All food, beverage, utensils and equipment shall be stored, displayed and served so as to be protected from contamination, and shall be stored off the floor on shelving or pallets.

Toilet Facilities:

- a. Approved toilet facilities must be located within 200 feet of all temporary food facilities.
- b. Handwashing units equipped with soap and towel dispensers must be located within or adjacent to toilet facilities.

Garbage and Refuse:



Garbage and refuse must be stored in leak proof and fly-proof containers and serviced as needed.

Arrangements for clean-up and final disposal of all solid wastes must be approved of by the health department.

Smoking:

Smoking is prohibited in food booths.



Animals:

Live animals, birds or fowl are not permitted in temporary food facilities.

Q: Why is it necessary to apply for a permit?

Many outbreaks of foodborne illness have been traced back to food which was handled improperly at temporary events.



A: Temporary Food Permits Are Required by Law

The California Retail Food Code, Section 114381 states that, "A food facility shall not be open for business without a valid permit."

The permit shall be posted in a conspicuous place in every food service establishment, mobile food preparation unit, mobile food facility, and temporary food booth.

This law is necessary to help ensure that food handled in temporary food establishments will be as safe as possible.

Improper cooling, reheating, hot holding and excessive food handling are major causes of foodborne illness outbreaks.

How does a food vendor go about obtaining a permit?

An application is provided in the center of this booklet. If you need more than one application, please contact Environmental Health at (707) 463-4466.

Be advised that restaurant food facility permits are not applicable for Temporary Food Booths at Community Events.

Food Vendors who anticipate operating at three (3) or more events in Mendocino County in one year can apply for a special permit which will cover all of the events in which you would like to operate a food booth, in Mendocino County.

Are there permit exemptions?

While all food vendors are required to obtain permits, some may be 'fee exempt'. Be prepared to provide proper paperwork verifying non-profit status of Veteran's Exempt status. Contact Environmental Health for more information.

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When should the permit application be returned?

All applications must be submitted by U.S. mail, e-mail, or fax, a minimum of (5) business days prior to the event. Fees must be paid when application is submitted.

Applications may now be faxed, e-mailed or sent by regular mail.

No money will be collected for permits in the field at the event; vendors will be required to appear in the office in Ukiah or Fort Bragg to pay the permit fee, pay by money order, or pay online immediately through the GovPay system if they have not submitted their application and fee prior to the event start.

If the event is to begin on Saturday, the application and fee must be received on or before Monday of that week. This allows a reasonable period of time for the health inspector to review the application and follow up with the food vendor if necessary before the event.

It is strongly recommended that food vendors apply for temporary permits as early as possible.

Provide containers for the cleaning of equipment and for general cleaning purposes. Provide bleach and water solution (use 1 tablespoon of household bleach per 1 gallon of warm water).

Handwashing Facilities:

Provide a (5) gallon insulated warm water container with a dispensing valve to leave hands free for washing; a waste water container, soap dispenser and paper towels for hand washing within the booth.

Remember: Disposable gloves do not replace washing hands. Hands must be washed prior to putting gloves on and after removing gloves.



NOTE: Where all food and beverage is prepackaged, handwashing and utensil washing facilities within the booth may not be required.

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Waste Water:

- Waste water (including waste from ice bins and beverage dispensing units, must be contained in or drained into a leak proof container.
- Liquid waste must be disposed of into an approved sewage system or holding tank and must not be discharged onto the ground.

Food Handlers:

- Food handlers must be in good health.
- Food handlers shall wash their hands with soap and water prior to the start of food preparation activities and especially after visiting the restroom and after smoking.
- Clean aprons or outer garments must be worn and hair must be restrained.
- Sanitary food handling techniques must be used at all times.
- Whenever practical, food handlers shall use tongs or disposable plastic gloves or single-use tissues when handling food.

Holding of Potentially Hazardous Foods:

1. Cold Food temperatures must be maintained at **45° F or below**.
2. Hot Food temperatures must be maintained at **135° F or above**.
3. Food in transit must be protected from contamination and must meet the temperature requirements noted above.

Room temperature storage of potentially hazardous food is not allowed. Products not found at the correct temperatures listed above are subject to embargo / destruction.

NOTE: Maintaining correct temperatures of potentially hazardous foods will require sufficient equipment necessary to cook and hold required temperatures, or to keep these foods cold (e.g., steam tables, chafing dishes, refrigerators, ice chests).



Remember:

- ✓ Ice used for refrigeration **cannot** be used for consumption.
- ✓ Avoid cooling and reheating food.
- ✓ Use batch processing: work with only small batches at a time and cook to order.
- ✓ Minimize food handling and simplify recipes and ingredients.

Utensil Washing:

Booths with food preparation shall wash dishes, equipment, and utensils using the following method:

Compartment 1: Hot soapy water

Compartment 2: Hot rinse water

Compartment 3: Warm water containing a sanitizing solution of a capful of unscented household bleach per gallon of warm water (should provide 100 ppm chlorine concentration).

Allow utensils to air dry.

The use of (3) buckets (instead of compartments) is allowed provided each bucket is large enough to hold the largest utensil to be cleaned.

Permit Fees are based on (2) categories:

1. **Booths serving potentially hazardous foods.** Potentially hazardous foods are foods which consist in whole or in part of the following:

- Tofu or Soy Protein foods
- Meat; Beef, Pork, Lamb...
- Milk and Milk Products
- Cooked Rice, Beans, or other heat-treated plant foods

- Synthetic ingredients such as Textured Soy Protein in Meat Alternatives

- Fish

- Poultry

- Sliced Melons

- Baked or Boiled Potatoes

- Garlic-in-Oil Mixtures

- Sprouts and Raw Seeds

- Shell Eggs

- Shellfish and Crustacea

These foods are typically high in protein content, contain moisture, have neutral or slightly acidic pH levels, and have a history of foodborne illness outbreaks and a natural potential for contamination due to production and processing methods.

2. **Booths serving non-potentially hazardous foods.**

Non-potentially hazardous foods are foods such as the following:

- Cookies
- Breads
- Cakes
- Potato Chips
- Popcorn
- Cotton Candy
- Candy Bars

These foods are typically low in protein content, contain little or no moisture, tend to have alkaline pH levels, and do not typically become involved in foodborne illness outbreaks.

Non-potentially hazardous foods are frequently prepackaged. All prepackaged Food must be properly labeled as follows:

1. Name and Address of the manufacturer
2. List of ingredients in order of content
3. Net Weight

Food Handling-Sanitary Requirements:

1. Food Preparation:

- a) All food that is sold, given away, or dispensed from a temporary food booth shall be from an approved source (under Federal, State, or local inspection) and be processed and packaged at a food facility which is also under inspection.
- b) All food handling and preparation shall take place within a food booth unless prior approval of a different preparation site (e.g., restaurants, delicatessens, or school kitchens) has been obtained from the Environmental Health Division.
- c) **Food prepared or stored at home is prohibited.**
- d) Open-air BBQs (cooking only) adjacent to the booth may be allowed.
- e) Deep fat fryers, grills, etc. may require separate screened areas in accordance with local fire codes.

- f) Food preparation surfaces must be smooth, easily cleanable, and non-absorbent (commercial cutting boards are recommended).

2. Prevent cross-contamination:

Cross contamination happens when germs from raw foods get into foods that will not be cooked before serving, such as salads or sandwich meats, and cheeses.

- ✓ In the refrigerator or ice chest: **Do Not** store raw meat above ready-to-eat foods.
- ✓ Wash your hands after handling raw foods.
- ✓ Place meats and poultry from the barbeque on a clean plate.
- ✓ Wash, rinse and sanitize the cutting surface and all utensils and knives every time you finish cutting raw meat, fish, or poultry.



Reheating of potentially hazardous food:

All potentially hazardous foods that have been cooked and then refrigerated shall be rapidly reheated to 165° F or more throughout, within 30 minutes, before being served or placed in a hot food holding unit such as a steam table.

Thawing of potentially hazardous food:

Foods are to be thawed by one of the following methods:

1. In refrigerated units
2. Under potable running water colder than 70° F, for no longer than (2) hours.
3. In a microwave oven, immediately prior to cooking.
4. As part of the cooking process.

3. Temperature Control:

Adequate temperature control shall be provided for all perishable (potentially hazardous) foods. Provide metal probe thermometer to check temperatures, which is accurate to within 2° F.

Heating Potentially Hazardous Foods:

All parts of potentially hazardous foods shall be cooked (with no interruption in the cooking process) to the minimum internal temperature as shown below:

- ✓ Poultry, poultry stuffing containing meat, and stuffed meats and casseroles: **165° F or above** for 15 seconds.
- ✓ Ground or comminuted meat products (i.e., hamburger): **155° F** for 15 seconds.
- ✓ Pork, Beef, Lamb: **145° F** for 15 seconds
- ✓ Micro-waved foods: **165° F** in all parts of the food. Rotate and stir to assure even heat distribution. Let stand for a minimum of (2) minutes to assure temperature equilibrium.
- ✓ Eggs and foods containing raw eggs: **145° F** for 15 seconds.