



Harris County
Public Health
Building a Healthy Community

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Temporary Events

Event Registration and Vendor Permits: www.hcphtx.org/Services-Programs/Services/FoodPermit

SANITATION GUIDELINES FOR TEMPORARY EVENTS

Food Supply

- Food should be in sound condition, free from spoilage, filth or any other type of contamination and shall be safe for human consumption.
- Foods shall not be prepared in the home and must be from an approved and permitted commercial source.

Storage of Potentially Hazardous Foods

- Food shall be stored in covered containers that have been cleaned and sanitized.
- Product temperatures shall be maintained at 41°F or below or at 135°F or above.
- A metal stem thermometer shall be provided to check food temperatures.

Waste Disposal

- Facilities or containers shall be provided to retain all liquid and solid waste.

Construction of Booth

- Booth or stand shall be constructed in such a manner as to minimize the entrance of flies, dust, dirt and other foreign matter. This includes a wing or dining canopy to cover food preparation areas.
- The interior surfaces shall be in good repair and readily cleanable.
- The surface under the booth must be graded to drain and should be of a non-absorbent, hard surface (concrete or asphalt) unless covered by mats, removable platforms or duckboards to minimize the amount of dust and mud.
- The booth shall be protected on 3 sides from the public (Create a partition using string, rope, tables, chairs or soda canisters.)

Equipment and Utensil Storage

- Food equipment and single service items shall be at least 6 inches above the flooring.

Equipment and Utensil Cleaning and Sanitizing

- A clean 3-compartment sink or 3 containers shall be provided for the purpose of washing, rinsing, and sanitizing the food contact surfaces of all equipment and utensils.
- Liquid chlorine bleach shall be provided for use in sanitizing work surfaces (1/3 cup per 5 gallons of water.)

Hygienic Practices

- An insulated container with a spigot shall be provided with warm water from an approved source for hand washing only. The hand wash facility shall include a wastewater “catch” container, soap, disposable towels and a waste receptacle.
- Disposable plastic gloves shall be provided and used for preparing and serving ready-to-eat food. (Gloves should be disposed of and new ones used after every absence from the work station.)
- Food service workers shall wear effective hair restraints (hair nets, caps or scarves.)
- No one shall eat, drink, or smoke while preparing food.

Toilet Facilities

- Toilet facilities must be available nearby.

Employee Health Condition Reporting Sign/Agreement - The state approved health condition reporting sign or the state approved health condition reporting agreement signed by each food employee must be available at the food booth for inspection by the food program investigator from HCPH.

Temporary food establishments, festivals, events, farmers’ markets, and theatrical performances may be inspected by the Harris County Fire Marshal's Office, subject to Harris County Fire Code inspection requirements. For more information, please contact the Fire Marshall’s Office at (281) 436-8030 (inspections.)

TEMPORARY FOOD PERMITS

What are temporary food service establishments?

Temporary food service establishments are food booths which are associated with a particular event for no longer than 14 days. Temporary food establishments include any food booth in which food and/or drink is prepared and/or served.

What is the purpose of permitting and inspecting temporary food establishments?

The permitting and inspection program's primary goal is to protect the public's health. To accomplish this, Harris County Public Health (HCPH) wants to ensure that all temporary food service establishments:

- are properly constructed and equipped; and
- prepare, store and serve food and/or drink in a manner that minimizes opportunities for contamination.

Will my temporary food booth be inspected?

Yes. Both non-profit and profit temporary food establishments will be inspected by a Harris County Environmental Public Health Investigator at least once during the event. Of major concern to the inspector will be cleanliness, food storage arrangements, personal hygienic practices and proper food temperatures. Violations concerning these areas will be expected to be corrected immediately. Feel free to ask the investigator questions. The investigator is there to assist you in providing safe, sanitary food to the public. Refer to the handout: "Sanitation Guidelines for Temporary Food Vendors."

Must temporary food service establishment purchase a permit to operate?

Yes. Temporary food service establishments that are located in areas under HCPH's jurisdiction must obtain a temporary food permit to operate.

- All establishments that serve food and/or drinks and/or scoop ice must purchase a permit.
- A permit issued to a permanent establishment will only cover a temporary booth at that same address if the booth is owned by that same person.
- A separate temporary food permit is required for every food booth at any given event.
- Operation of a temporary food booth without a temporary food establishment permit could result in a citation issued to the person in charge of the food booth.

If a food vendor is operating more than one food booth, how many permits must he/she purchase?

- A permit must be purchased for each food booth.

What are the exemptions to the temporary food establishment permit?

- Booths that sell only pre-packaged, non-potentially hazardous food (candy, chips, frozen novelties) or unopened canned or bottle drinks are exempted from the temporary permit requirement.
- Non-profit temporary establishments that provide proof of their non-profit status (Tax Form 501C3) are also exempt. A non-profit, temporary food service establishment is defined as a booth which is operated directly by members of the charity organization; **all** proceeds go to the charity. A food booth, which donates a portion of its proceeds to a charity, would **not** be considered a non-profit temporary establishment.

How much does a temporary food permit cost?

The cost of a temporary food permit is \$80.00, provided that it is purchased **no later than two full business days prior to the beginning of the event.** Failure to purchase a temporary permit within these guidelines will result in a fee of \$160.00

How do I obtain a temporary food permit?

Anyone who plans to operate a temporary food establishment should contact the Environmental Public Health Division of HCPH and obtain a temporary event packet prior to the event. Read the packet thoroughly and complete the operational statement found within the packet and return it to Environmental Public Health office along with your payment. You will save money if you purchase your permit at least two business days prior to the event.

You may purchase a permit in several ways:

- **IN PERSON** – You may purchase the permit at the Environmental Public Health Office **no later than two full business days prior to the beginning of the event.**

Harris County Public Health
101 South Richey, Suite G
Pasadena, Texas 77506
Monday -Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

- **BY MAIL** – Requests for a permit application to be mailed to you must be made **at least five weeks prior to the event.** The permit application, permit fee and operations questionnaire must be returned to the Environmental Public Health office, **no later than four weeks prior to the event.** Permits purchased **later** than four weeks prior to the event must be obtained from the Environmental Public Health office, and must be paid for with cash, money order, or cashier's check. You may request to purchase a permit through the mail by calling our office at (713) 274-6300.
- **ONLINE** – www.hcphtx.org. Fill out the operational statement and send it back to the Environmental website for approval within three weeks of the event. Upon approval to operate the temporary food booth, you may purchase the permit online by credit card **at least 14 days before the start of the event OR you** may send a money order or business check to the Environmental Public Health office no later than four weeks prior to the beginning of the event. Payment made within four weeks of the event may be made in person by cash, cashier's check or money order at the Environmental Public Health office.
- **ONSITE** – The permit should be purchased prior to the event. Late temporary permits cost \$160.00 each and may be purchased at the event with a money order or cashier's check if the booth is in compliance with health code standards. Payment must be available when the booth begins any preparation or sale of food and/or drink. Food booths operating without a valid and current permit may be asked to close if the operation poses a health hazard or if payment for the permit is not available at the time of the health inspection.. Only money orders and cashier's checks will be accepted at the event site. **Investigators will not collect cash at the temporary event site.**

What happens if my food booth does not comply with the requirements for temporary food establishments or if I refuse to buy a temporary permit?

You will be asked to cease all food operations immediately. Refusal to cease operations when requested is likely to result in a citation being issued to the person in charge or criminal and/or civil charges being filed. Additionally, continuation of operations may result in an appeal to the Harris County Sherriff's Department for assistance.

NOTE: The Fire Marshall's Office conducts safety inspections of temporary events. See attached handout for fire safety guidelines.

WHERE can I purchase a temporary food permit?

You can purchase a temporary food permit for \$80 in person, by mail or online.

Please note: the \$80 fee is for the timely application of temporary permits. Late applications will be charged a higher fee.

In person | At least two full business days in advance, you may purchase the permit at the Environmental Public Health Office:

HCPH
101 S. Richey, Suite G
Pasadena, Texas 77506
Monday - Friday,
8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

By mail | At least five weeks in advance, call (713) 274-6300 to request to purchase a permit through the mail. Once you receive the forms, send the completed application, permit fee (money order or cashier's check only) and operations questionnaire to the Environmental Public Health Office no later than four weeks prior to the event.

Online | To pay online, you must begin the application process at least three weeks prior to the event. Refer to www.hcphtx.org/Services-Programs/Services/FoodPermit to begin the process.

Onsite | If you weren't able to purchase a permit beforehand but your booth meets all health code standards, you can purchase a late temporary permit for \$160 at the event. Payment should be made with a cashier's check or money order — no cash will be accepted.

WHAT forms will I need to fill out?

- Operational statement
- An approved Event Coordinator's Form must be on file for the event at which the temporary food establishment will be located
- Permit application and fee

For more information and to obtain the forms, please visit our website or call:

HCPH
Environmental Public Health
John Phelps Courthouse
101 S. Richey, Suite G
Pasadena, TX 77506

Office: (713) 274-6300
Fax: (713) 274-6375

Monday - Friday
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

www.hcphtx.org/About/Organization/EPH



Temporary Food Vendors

Permits and guidelines:
What you need to know



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WHO needs a temporary food permit?

If you're operating a food booth associated with a particular event for no more than 14 consecutive days, you need a temporary food permit.

Exemptions:

Booths that sell only pre-packaged, non-potentially hazardous food (candy, chips, frozen novelties) or unopened canned or bottle drinks.

Non-profit temporary establishments that provide proof of their non-profit status (Tax Form 501C3), and where the booth is directly operated by members of the non-profit and where all proceeds go to the charity. *Note: Non-profit temporary food establishments must still meet food safety and sanitation regulations.*

WHY require permits or inspections?

Harris County Public Health (HCPH) wants to ensure that all temporary food service establishments are properly constructed and equipped, and that they prepare, store and serve food and drinks in a manner that minimizes opportunities for contamination.

WHEN will my booth be inspected?

Both non-profit and profit temporary food establishments will be inspected by a Harris County Environmental Public Health Investigator at least once during the event. During the inspection, investigators will look at the cleanliness of the area, food storage, personal hygienic practices and proper food temperatures. Violations concerning these areas will be expected to be corrected immediately.

Feel free to ask the investigators questions! They are there to assist you in providing safe, sanitary food to the public.

Sanitation Guidelines for Temporary Food Vendors

Food Supply

Food should be in sound condition, free from spoilage, filth or any other type of contamination and should be safe for human consumption.

Foods should not be prepared in the home and must be from an approved commercial source.

Equipment and Utensils

Food equipment and single service items should be at least six inches above the flooring.



A clean three-compartment sink or three containers should be available to wash, rinse and sanitize food contact surfaces of all equipment and utensils.

Liquid chlorine bleach should be available to sanitize work surfaces (1/3 cup for every 5 gallons of water).

Booth Construction

Booth or stand should be constructed in such a manner as to prevent entrance of flies, dust, dirt and other foreign matter. This includes a wing or dining canopy to cover food preparation areas.

The interior surfaces should be in good shape and easy to clean.

The surface under the booth must be graded to drain and should be of a hard surface (concrete or asphalt) unless covered by mats, removable platforms or duckboards to minimize the amount of dust and mud.

The booth should be protected on three sides from the public. You can use string, rope, chairs, etc.

Waste Disposal

Facilities or containers should be available to retain liquid and solid waste.

Storage

Food should be kept covered in clean containers.

Product temperatures should be maintained at 41 °F or below, or at 135 °F or above.

A metal stem thermometer should be available to check food temperatures.

Hygienic Practices

An insulated container with a spigot should be available with warm water from an approved source to use for hand-washing only. The hand wash facility should include a wastewater "catch" container, soap, disposable towels and a waste receptacle.

Disposable gloves should be available to use for serving line personnel. These should be disposed of and new ones used after every absence from the work station.

Food service workers should wear effective hair restraints, such as hair nets, caps or scarves.

No one should drink or smoke while preparing food.

Toilet Facilities

Toilet facilities must be available nearby.

