

# TEMPORARY FOOD SERVICE GUIDE



City of Hartford  
Department of  
Health and Human Services

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This guide provides basic food safety information for temporary food service workers. Sometimes temporary food booths are staffed by volunteers that are not employed in the food industry. The City of Hartford Health and Human Service Department Environmental Health Division (EHS) is here to provide expert guidance regarding the laws that must be followed when offering food or drink to the public. These laws are intended to ensure that consumers are protected from food-borne illness.

## **Temporary Food Service Events**

Any operation that offers food to the public at a fixed location for no more than 14 consecutive days, such as a carnival, public exhibition, festival, celebration, fair, and a transitory gathering, needs to obtain a permit from EHS. The guidelines for temporary events have been developed from the Connecticut Public Health Code 19-13-B42, and the City of Hartford, Section 14 of the Municipal Code.

## The Application Process to Obtain a Permit

- ✓ You must obtain a Temporary Food Event Coordinator's Application from the Environmental Health Division (EHS).
- ✓ Each vendor must complete the Temporary Food Vendor Application & submit it to EHS with the appropriate fee.
- ✓ The EHS will review the application with the person in charge of food over the phone or in the office before approval of the application. An inspection of your food booth by EHS may be required.
- ✓ Your cooking and refrigeration equipment must be approved by EHS.
- ✓ All food and beverage must come from an approved source. This means food must be purchased or donated from an approved wholesale or retail store and prepared in a commercial establishment.
- ✓ All volunteers working at your food booth must read this guide and will be responsible for all the items contained in this manual.

## Some Facts About Food-Borne Illness

Food-borne illness is a serious problem in the United States. Microorganisms found in food can cause diarrhea, vomiting, nausea, fever, and even death! According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated 48 million Americans contract food-borne illness.

Nearly 80% of food-borne illnesses are traced to food prepared in commercial or institutional environments. Many food-borne outbreaks have been traced back to improperly handled food at temporary events.

There are many types of microorganisms that can cause food-borne illness. You cannot see, smell, or taste them. They are invisible to the naked eye. The following are examples of the most common organisms that cause food-borne illness:

- **Campylobacter jejuni**, commonly found in dairy or poultry products.
- **E. Coli: O157H7**, commonly found in undercooked beef, water, and juice.

- **Salmonella**, commonly found in poultry and raw eggs.
- **Shigella**, commonly found in ready-to-eat foods handled by ill food workers.
- **Listeria**, commonly found in raw meat, processed meats, deli meats, seafood and or dairy products.
- **Yersini enterocolitica**, commonly found in undercooked pork, milk, or water.
- **Vibrio parahaemolyticus**, commonly found in seafood and shellfish
- **Hepatitis A virus**, commonly found in foods handled by ill food workers prepared with bare hands.
- **Cyclospora**, commonly found in imported fruit.
- **Cryptosporidium**, commonly found in water.
- **Bacillus cereus**, commonly found in rice.

HELP PREVENT FOODBORNE ILLNESS	
Follow these rules to protect food:	
Source	Purchase only food from sources that comply with laws relating to food and food labeling.
Cooking	Cook raw foods thoroughly. Some foods require a higher cooking temperature-pork and beef, at least 155°F; poultry at least 165°F.
Hot Holding	Hold properly cooked hot foods at 140°F or above.
Cooling	Cool foods rapidly. Foods cool faster in shallow containers or if large amounts are divided into smaller portions.
Cold Holding	Hold refrigerated foods at 45°F or below. Do not keep refrigerated foods outside of refrigerator for more than four hours.
Employee Practices	Wash hands thoroughly before working with food, especially after handling raw foods, visiting the toilet, eating, drinking, or smoking. Avoid hand contact with food (use utensils/paper/gloves) and change utensils and gloves after contact with uncooked meat.
Cleaning and Sanitizing	Thoroughly wash, rinse, and sanitize all food contact surfaces and utensils, equipment, and cutting boards.

## Hand washing

Hand washing is your first line of defense against food-borne illness. Dirty hands are a serious risk that is easily avoidable. If you are outside, or in an area where a sink is not available, temporary hand washing stations can be used. They must have warm water in a jug or other container, soap, and paper towels. A waste bucket is also needed to catch the wastewater.

Remember to wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with warm and lots of soap. Always wash your hands prior to handling food and when working with raw foods. Also wash your hands after:

- ✓ Using the restroom
- ✓ Touching your face or hair
- ✓ Eating, drinking, smoking, coughing
- ✓ Disposing of garbage
- ✓ Touching anything that can contaminate your hands

## Proper Temperatures

All meat and poultry must be cooked thoroughly to their proper cooking temperatures before being served. The proper cooking temperatures are:

- **Beef/Steaks - 145°F**
- **Ground Beef - 155°F**
- **Pork - 155°F**
- **Poultry - 165°F**
- **Fish/Seafood - 145°F**
- **Pre-cooked foods - 165°F**

Hot Foods must be held at 140°F or higher in hot holding units after cooking. **DO NOT SERVE UNDERCOOKED FOODS.** Bacteria multiply rapidly between 45°F and 140°F. This is called the danger zone.

Keep cold food in the refrigerator, in coolers, or on ice at 45°F or less.

During transportation, required food temperatures must be maintained. Hot food must be 140°F or higher and cold foods must be 45°F or colder. Insulated containers will help keep the food protected and at their proper temperatures.

## Cleaning and Sanitizing

If you are serving hazardous foods such as dairy products, eggs, poultry, seafood, beef, pork, rice, pasta, potatoes, cooked vegetables, cut melon, sprouts, gravies, sauces, and stuffing, you are required to clean and sanitize utensils, equipment, and all work stations using the three step process listed below.

1. **Wash** all utensils in the 1<sup>st</sup> basin containing soap and water.
2. **Rinse** the utensils in the 2<sup>nd</sup> basin containing clean water.
3. **Sanitize** the utensils, etc., in the 3<sup>rd</sup> basin containing water and chlorine at 50-100 parts per million (ppm), that's approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon bleach per 1 gallon water.

It is important to test the third basin with chlorine test strips. The test strips should read either 50 or 100 ppm. If the test strips read 0 ppm, the sanitizer is too low and is not effective. If the test strips read 200 ppm, the sanitizer is too high and is considered toxic. Test strips can be purchased from a restaurant supplier.

## Wiping Cloths

Cloths must be used for wiping counters and cutting boards. The cloths must be placed in sanitizing solution of 50-100 ppm when not in use to prevent the growth of microorganisms. Do not use sponges as they hold bacteria.

## Ill Food Service Workers

Ill food service workers should never be allowed to work in a food booth. These workers can easily transmit disease-causing organisms to food, drink and items such as utensils that patrons use. Ill food workers are a significant cause of food-borne illness. Any person recently having diarrhea, vomiting, fever with sore throat, jaundice, cuts or burns on hands should not be allowed to work in a food booth.

## Ground Storage

Food, beverages, or related items such as napkins, cups and ice, cannot be stored on the ground because of possible insect or other contamination. You must provide tables that will elevate these items at least 12 inches off the ground.

# Home Cooking

## Home cooked foods are not allowed at temporary events.

All foods and drinks offered to the public must be prepared in a licensed, commercial kitchen or at the food booth the day of the event. Under no circumstances can food be prepared in a private residence and then offered to the public.

The public assumes that the food they purchase at special events is safe to eat. EHS does not inspect private home kitchens and cannot certify that proper food handling procedures were followed or conditions were sanitary.

Preventing food-borne illness at your event is both yours and our Department's responsibility. You can help to ensure a healthy, safe and successful event for all to enjoy by following the guidelines in this booklet.

# Items Required At A Temporary Event

- ✓ Sanitizer
- ✓ Probe thermometer
- ✓ Alcohol swabs
- ✓ Chemical test strips (for measuring sanitizer concentration)
- ✓ Hair restraints
- ✓ Adequate supply of back up utensils
- ✓ Adequate supply of potable water
- ✓ Soap and single service towels
- ✓ Toilet facilities for employees and the public
- ✓ Fire extinguisher (properly tagged and correct type)
- ✓ Adequate facilities and equipment to maintain food at the proper temperatures
- ✓ Adequate overhead protection (tents if necessary) from flying insects, vermin, dust, and dirt
- ✓ Adequate protection for food displayed, prepared, or stored
- ✓ Garbage service

## Questions?

If there are any parts of this manual that need clarification, please contact any one of the City of Hartford EHS Sanitarians for help or more information at 860-757-4760 or online at [www.hartford.gov](http://www.hartford.gov) .



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