

TEMPORARY FOOD EVENT CHECKLIST

**Otero County Health Department
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Special events call for food service outlets to be set up outdoors or in locations where keeping foods safe and sanitary become a real challenge. This checklist will help you reduce the risk of food poisoning at the temporary food event. It is the responsibility of the temporary food vendor to review, understand, and abide by the “Temporary Food Event Checklist” and the Retail Food Establishment laws of Colorado. Non-profit and charitable organizations that do not meet the definition of “Retail Food Establishment” are strongly encouraged to follow safe food practices.

✓ **General**

- ✓ **Permits**: Check with local government about permits and code requirements;
- ✓ **Booth**: Design your booth with food safety in mind. The ideal booth will have an overhead covering, be entirely enclosed except for the serving window and have only one door or flap for entry;
- ✓ **Menu**: Keep your menu simple, and keep potentially hazardous foods (meats, eggs, dairy products, potato salad, cut fruits and vegetables, etc.) to a minimum. Avoid using pre-cooked foods or leftovers. Cook to order, so as to avoid the potential for bacterial contamination. Complete control over your food, from source to service, is the key to safe, sanitary food service;
- ✓ **Training**: Train all on-site staff;
- ✓ **Inspection**: Be prepared for inspection;
- ✓ **Food Preparation**: No extensive food preparation is allowed on site. Slicing, dicing, chopping, processing, proportioning, or mixing of foods is prohibited on site;
- ✓ **Food Source**: All foods must come from an approved source and be prepared and stored in a licensed local commissary. No home prepared foods may be used;
- ✓ **Retail Food License**: You must have your food license visible in your booth/unit. Without a license on site you can be shutdown;
- ✓ **Cooking Location**: All cooking must be done towards the back of the booth (4 feet from public) to prevent burns, splashes, or cross contamination;
- ✓ **Electricity**: Make certain that adequate power sources are available for your needs;
- ✓ **Burgers**: If burgers are sold, frozen burger patties are recommended;
- ✓ **Turkey legs**: Turkey legs must be pre-cooked;

✓ **Hygiene**

- ✓ **Hand Washing**: Each booth must have an approved hand-washing station with soap and paper towels. The hand-washing station must have a hands-free spigot, dispense warm, potable water, be set up facing the inside of the booth, and must be easily accessible. It must be used during all periods of food preparation and service. It must be set up before any food is handled. Gloves and/or hand-sanitizers or wipes are not a substitute for hand-washing. Catch any and all wastewater and dispose of it in a proper manner;
- ✓ **Sanitizer**: An approved sanitizer solution such as chlorine or quaternary ammonia must be set up and used for rinsing, storing, or wiping equipment. You must also have sanitizer test strips to determine that the sanitizer is at the proper concentration;
- ✓ **Smoking/Eating**: No smoking or eating in the booth. Drinks are allowed if they are properly covered and are not stored on or near food contact surfaces;
- ✓ **Food Protection**: Vendors must provide overhead protection (canopy) and all food (including ice) and single service items must be stored off the ground. Depending on date of event, screens may be needed;
- ✓ **Counters/Tables**: Counters and tables must have washable surfaces;

- ✓ Grease: If cooking on site, it is recommended that carpet scraps be placed under all grease producing equipment and an absorbent material (kitty litter or additional carpet scraps) be used to cleanup grease spills;
- ✓ Wastewater: Catch wastewater and dispose of it in an appropriate barrels manner. No wastewater or other liquids except melted ice may be discharged to storm sewers or onto greenery/lawns;
- ✓ Trash: Trashcans with plastic liners and tight-fitting covers are recommended for trash;
- ✓ Healthy Workers: Only healthy workers should prepare and serve food. Anyone who shows symptoms of a disease – cramps, nausea, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, jaundice, etc. – or who have open sores or infected cuts on the hands should not be allowed in the food booth;
- ✓ Hand Contact: Avoid hand contact with raw, ready-to-serve foods and food contact surfaces. Use disposable gloves, tongs, napkins or other tools to handle food. Touching food with bare hands can transfer germs to the food;
- ✓ Utensils: Use disposable utensils for food service. Keep your hands away from food contact surfaces, and never reuse disposable ware. Wash equipment and utensils in a 4-step sanitizing process: Washing in hot, soapy water; rinsing in hot water; chemical sanitizing; and air-drying. Clean utensils provide protection against the transfer of harmful germs;
- ✓ **Food Temperatures**
 - ✓ Food Thermometer: You must have a food thermometer at the temporary food event which reads from 0°F to 220°F. Most illnesses from temporary food events can be traced back to lapses in temperature control;
 - ✓ Hot-Holding: Hot food must be held at 140°F or greater and maintained at that temperature in order to kill or limit the growth of disease causing bacteria;
 - ✓ Sterno: Sterno is NOT an acceptable heat source for outdoor events;
 - ✓ Re-Heating: Heat foods to above 165° F within 30 minutes. Do not attempt to heat foods in crock-pots, steam tables, or other hot holding devices, or over steam. Slow cooking mechanisms may activate bacteria and never reach killing temperatures;
 - ✓ Cooling and Cold Storage: Foods that require refrigeration must be cooled to 40° F as quickly as possible and held at that temperature until ready to serve. To cool foods down quickly, use an ice water bath (60% ice to 40% water), stirring the product frequently, or place the food in shallow pans no more than 4 inches deep and refrigerate. Pans should not be stored one atop the other and lids should be off or ajar until the food is completely cooled. Check the temperature periodically to see if the food is cooling properly. Allowing hazardous foods to remain un-refrigerated for too long has been the cause of many episodes of food poisoning.
- ✓ **Top Six Causes of Food Poisoning**
 - ✓ Inadequate Cooling and Cold Holding: More than half of all food poisonings are due to keeping foods out at room temperature for more than 2-4 hours;
 - ✓ Preparing Food Too Far Ahead of Temporary Food Event: Food prepared 12 or more hours before service increases the risk food poisoning;
 - ✓ Poor Personal Hygiene and Infected Personnel: Poor hand washing habits and food handlers working while ill are implicated in 1 out of every 4 food poisonings;
 - ✓ Inadequate Re-heating: Food must be re-heated to at least 165°F;
 - ✓ Inadequate Hot Holding: Cooked foods not held at above 140° F until served can become highly contaminated;
 - ✓ Contaminated Raw Foods and Ingredients: Serving raw shellfish or raw milk that is contaminated, or using contaminated raw eggs in sauces and dressings, has often led to outbreaks of food-borne disease. It is always safer to use pasteurized products.