



TEMPORARY FOOD SERVICE EVENT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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What is a temporary food establishment?

A temporary food establishment is a food service facility that operates at a fixed location for not more than 14 consecutive days in conjunction with a single community-wide event or celebration. Temporary food events include: fairs, carnivals, circuses, festivals, cook-offs, or gatherings that are advertised to the public and require ticket sales or cover charges. Temporary food events are not: regularly scheduled series of events (flea markets); private gatherings (weddings or birthday parties); or ongoing commercial activities (grand openings or sales at retail stores).

Why is a temporary food permit needed?

A permit acknowledges that a vendor has met the requirements designed to ensure food is handled safely and is prepared under sanitary conditions.

What are the responsibilities of the organizer?

An event organizer is the individual or group that plans, organizes, and implements a community event. The organizer is required to submit the *Temporary Event Organizer Application* and a site map 30 days prior to the start of the event. Furthermore, the organizer must ensure that all temporary food establishments comply with the state and local regulations, including each vendor providing or obtaining a valid food permit. The organizer is also responsible for shared services such as water, toilet facilities, and disposal of wastewater, grease, and garbage.

How do I apply for a temporary food permit?

Once a vendor has permission from the organizer to participate in the event, the vendor may receive an application from the event organizer or the Jefferson County Department of Health. Applications may be obtained in person or at www.jcdh.org. The non-refundable application fee is \$100 per unit. A \$100 late fee is applied when the application and fee are received less than 14 days prior to the event. Applications submitted less than 7 days prior to the event may not allow sufficient processing time, and therefore *may not* be accepted. Payments may be made in person by cash, credit card, money order, cashier's check, or business check. Payments sent by mail must be in the form of a money order, cashier's check, or business check made payable to Jefferson County Department of Health.

What conditions do I need to meet in order to receive a permit?

All of the basic food safety requirements that apply to a restaurant, also apply to temporary food establishments. The applicant must agree to operate in accordance with all applicable state and local laws and requirements as needed to ensure food safety compliance. Specific requirements include providing adequate facilities for handwashing, electricity, utensil washing, hot and cold holding, and garbage, grease, and wastewater disposal. For additional information, see the *Temporary Food Establishment Requirements*.

How long is the permit valid?

The temporary food permit is only valid for the duration of that specific community event but not more than 14 consecutive days. A new application must be submitted for each event.

What other approvals do I need?

Approval from the local fire, building, plumbing, electrical, and gas inspectors will likely be required. Additional licenses and permits may be mandated by other regulatory authorities. The event organizer should be able to provide additional details.

I have a permitted restaurant in Jefferson County. Does that allow me to participate at a temporary event?

No. The food permit for the restaurant is site-specific and does not transfer to any other location.

I have a food truck. Do I need a temporary food permit?

Possibly. Mobile food units (food trucks or push carts) with annual food permits that were issued in Alabama, do not need to obtain a temporary food permit as long as the event is no more than 100 miles from the permitted commissary, and the mobile food unit is able to return to the permitted commissary every day. If these conditions cannot be met, the vendor will need to apply for a temporary food permit.

When is a temporary food permit not required?

There are a few circumstances when an event may not require a permit:

1. If the event is no more than 24 hours in duration, and service and clean-up can be completed within that 24 hour period, the event organizer may apply for a permit exemption. The application for exemption, vendor information, and \$150.00 fee must be submitted at least 5 days prior to the event. Exemption applications may be obtained in person or at www.jcdh.org.
2. The service or sale of some commercially prepared, pre-packaged, shelf stable foods may not require a food permit. Contact the Jefferson County Department of Health, Food and Lodging Protection Division for additional information.

Do I need a permit to sample food?

All foods served to the public require a permit; however, there is an exemption for vendors providing free samples. Contact the Jefferson County Department of Health, Food and Lodging Protection Division for the *Sampler Questionnaire and Guidelines* form.

Can I prepare or store food products at home?

Home prepared foods are not allowed to be sold or given away to the public. All food must be from approved commercial sources and must be stored and prepared inside a commercial facility. The only exception is foods prepared by a registered cottage food operation. After registration, the cottage food entity may prepare non-potentially hazardous foods (i.e. cookies, brownies, dried herbs, dried coffee) at a private home as long as the foods are properly labeled and only sold directly to the end consumer. Contact the Jefferson County Department of Health, Food and Lodging Protection Division for the *Cottage Food Registration Form*.

Will my unit be inspected?

Yes. The unit will be inspected before the vendor is allowed to prepare or handle any unpackaged food. In general, an inspector will assess that: the booth is set up properly; all food items can be cooked and held at the proper temperatures; food is being stored and served in a sanitary manner; and utensils are cleaned and sanitized. A thermometer, soap, sanitizer (bleach), and sanitizer test strips must be readily available. Furthermore, all hot and cold holding equipment should be at the proper temperature prior to the inspector's arrival. The permit will be issued after a satisfactory inspection. The permit must be posted in a location that is visible to the public. See the *Temporary Food Establishment Requirements* for the additional requirements.

Do I need my own handwashing facilities - even if I am right next to the public restrooms?

Yes. There must be at least one hand washing station inside the unit; however, depending on the unit size and layout, additional hand washing stations may be required. The hand washing station must be adequately stocked with water, soap, and disposable paper towels. Vendors handling raw meats, are required to have a handsink that is plumbed with hot and cold water. Alternatively, if the vendor is not handling any raw meats, a temporary handwashing station may be utilized. A temporary hand washing station consists of at least a 2-gallon container of water with a flip spout, soap, paper towels, and a 5-gallon bucket to catch the waste water.

What kind of equipment is allowed outside of the booth?

Cooking equipment with an exposed open flame (grills, smokers) or a large amount of oil/grease exposure (fryers) must be outside the booth in an area that is inaccessible to the public. All other cooking equipment should be inside the booth. Check with the local Fire Department for further details and requirements.

Does my booth need to be enclosed?

Yes. Booths must have overhead protection and be screened on at least 3 sides. All food preparation, cooking, and service equipment (including the hand washing station and utensil washing sink) must be located inside the protected area, except as required by the local Fire Department.