

WARREN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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TEMPORARY FOOD ESTABLISHMENT GUIDELINES

A **temporary food establishment** (TFE) is defined by N.J.A.C. 8:24 (Sanitation in Retail Food Establishments and Food and Beverage Vending Machines) as a food establishment that operates for a period of no more than 14 consecutive days in conjunction with a single event or celebration. TFEs may operate either indoors or outdoors and often have limited physical and sanitary facilities available presenting special challenges in food safety. These limitations, however, do not justify a leniency in health code enforcement. An event that is advertised with fliers, banners, newspaper articles, radio or TV announcements, or by other means, regardless of whether or not a fee is charged, is considered a public event and is subject to the requirements of the Warren County Health Department (WCHD).

No person, firm, or corporation should be allowed to operate or maintain an establishment (permanent or temporary) where food or beverages are served to the public without permits, licenses, or permission from the regulatory authority. Prior to issuing a permit or license to an establishment, either permanent or temporary, the WCHD must perform a pre-operational plan review. To allow for a proper review, the operator of a temporary establishment must submit a completed application to WCHD at least 14 days prior to an event involving 5 or fewer food booths, and a minimum of 30 days prior to an event involving more than 5 food booths. The plans and specifications for a TFE should include all the information necessary to demonstrate conformance with and an understanding of food safety code provisions. A pre-event meeting may be held with the applicant(s) and/or the primary food vendor(s) for the event to discuss the food items to be prepared and served, food sources, food preparation procedures, physical facilities, and equipment design.

The pre-operational review provides the opportunity to discuss areas of concern and should be conducted prior to the issuance of a permit. WCHD may impose restrictions on the types of food to be prepared and served based upon the preparation and/or sanitary facilities available.

FOOD SOURCE AND TEMPERATURE

- **SOURCE:** All food should be obtained from sources that comply with law. All meat and poultry should come from USDA or other acceptable government regulated approved sources. Home canned foods are not allowed nor shall there be any home cooked or prepared foods offered at temporary food service events. Ice for use as a food or a cooling medium shall be made from potable water.

- **PREPARATION:** All potentially hazardous food which is pre-cooked and pre-cooled off site for service at the temporary food service event must be prepared **at an approved, permanently established, food service facility**. Note: Potentially hazardous foods are generally high in protein, have a pH above 4.6 and a water activity above 0.85. Common examples are red meats, poultry and raw shell eggs, fish and shellfish, and dairy products.
- **TEMPERATURES:** Potentially hazardous food must be maintained at 135°F or higher or 41°F or below. Food must be cooked to the minimum temperatures and times specified below:
 - 165°F for 15 seconds--poultry; stuffing containing fish, meat, or poultry; stuffed fish, meat, pasta, or poultry;
 - 155°F for 15 seconds--comminuted fish; comminuted meat (hamburgers); pooled raw eggs;
 - 145°F for 15 seconds--raw shell eggs that are broken and prepared in response to a consumer's order and for immediate service; fish; meat and pork.

**TFE operators should consult with the local health authority if considering cooking roasts (whole beef, pork, cured pork (ham) and corned beef) to ensure compliance with the provisions of the food code.

- **THAWING:** Potentially hazardous food shall be thawed either under refrigeration that maintains the food temperature at 41°F or less; completely submerged under running water at a temperature of 70°F or below; or as part of a cooking process.
- **COOLING:** Cooked potentially hazardous food shall be cooled from 135°F to 70°F within 2 hours or less; and from 70°F to 41°F within 4 hours or less at a permanently established approved food service facility.
- **REHEATING FOR HOT HOLDING:** Potentially hazardous food that is cooked, cooled, and reheated for hot holding shall be reheated so that all parts of the food reach a temperature of at least **165°F for 15 seconds**. Reheating shall be done rapidly so that the food is between 41°F and 165°F for less than 2 hours.

PERSONNEL

- **HANDWASHING:** Handwash facilities must be located in all TFEs where there is direct handling and/or preparation of food. Potable hot and cold running water under pressure with suitable hand cleaner, dispensed paper towels, and waste receptacle should be provided. Minimum requirements should include: a 5 gallon insulated container with a spigot which can be turned on to allow potable, clean, warm water to flow over one's hands into a waste receiving bucket of equal or larger volume; suitable hand cleaner; dispensed towels; and a waste receptacle. Hand wash stations are not required if the **only** food items offered are commercially pre-packaged foods that are dispensed in their original containers.

- **HEALTH:** Employees with communicable diseases which can be transmitted through food or who are experiencing vomiting and/or diarrhea must be excluded from food activities. Food workers shall not have any open cuts or sores.
- **HYGIENE:** Food service workers shall maintain a high degree of personal cleanliness and shall conform to good hygienic practices during all working periods. Food workers shall have clean outer garments, aprons, and effective hair restraints. Smoking, eating, and drinking are not allowed by food workers in the food preparation and service areas. All non-working, unauthorized persons should be restricted from food preparation and service areas. Food service workers shall wash their hands prior to entering the TFE or food preparation and service areas, immediately before engaging in food preparation, after using the toilet room, and as often as necessary to remove soil and contamination and to prevent cross contamination.
- **FOOD PREPARATION:** Employees preparing food may not contact exposed, ready-to-eat food with their bare hands and shall use suitable utensils such as deli paper, spatulas, tongs, single-use gloves or dispensing equipment.
- **SITE COORDINATOR:** A designated staff person responsible for compliance with health code requirements must be on site and accessible during all hours of operation of the temporary event, and shall be responsible for maintaining an accurate record of each worker's assignments at the TFE.

FOOD AND UTENSIL STORAGE & HANDLING

- **DRY STORAGE:** All food, equipment, utensils, and single service items shall be stored at least 6" off the ground or floor on pallets, tables, or shelving protected from contamination and shall have effective overhead protection.
- **COLD STORAGE:** Commercial refrigeration units should be provided to keep potentially hazardous foods at 41°F or below. An effectively insulated, hard sided, cleanable container with sufficient ice or other means to maintain potentially hazardous foods at 41°F or below may be approved for the storage of small quantities of potentially hazardous foods. Unpackaged food may not be stored in direct contact with undrained ice.
- **HOT STORAGE:** Hot food storage units shall be used to keep potentially hazardous foods at 135°F or above. Electrical equipment, propane stoves, grills, etc. must be capable of holding foods at 135°F or above.
- **THERMOMETERS:** A thermocouple or metal stem thermometer shall be provided to check the internal temperatures of potentially hazardous hot and cold food items. Food temperature measuring devices shall be accurate to $\pm 2^{\circ}\text{F}$, and should have a range of 0°F to 220°F. Each refrigeration unit should have a numerically scaled thermometer accurate to $\pm 3^{\circ}\text{F}$ to measure the air temperature of the unit.
- **WET STORAGE:** Wet storage of all canned or bottled beverages is acceptable when the water contains at least 10 ppm of available chlorine and the water is changed frequently to keep it clean. Liquid waste water must be disposed of

properly into a sanitary sewer or approved holding tank and cannot be dumped into streets, storm drains, waterways or onto the ground surface.

- **FOOD DISPLAY:** All food shall be protected from customer handling, coughing, sneezing or other contamination by wrapping, the use of sneeze guards or other effective barriers. Open or uncovered containers of food shall not be allowed at a temporary food service event, except working containers. Condiments must be dispensed in single service type packaging, in pump-style dispensers, or in protected squeeze bottles, shakers, or similar dispensers which prevent contamination of the food items by food workers, patrons, insects, or other sources.
- **FOOD PREPARATION:** All cooking and serving areas shall be protected from contamination. Cooking equipment, such as BBQs, propane stoves, and grills, should be roped off or otherwise segregated from the public. Patrons must be prevented from accessing areas of the TFE where food, food-contact surfaces, and equipment are located.
- **COOKING DEVICES:** Charcoal and wood cooking devices are not recommended. Propane stoves or grills are approved as cooking devices. The local fire safety authority must approve these devices. All cooking of foods should be done towards the rear of the food booth. When barbecuing or using a grill, the cooking equipment should be separated from the public for a distance of at least 4 feet by roping off or by other means to protect patrons from burns or splashes of hot grease.
- **UTENSIL STORAGE:** Food dispensing utensils must be stored in the food with their handles above the top of the food and container; in running water of sufficient velocity to flush particulates to the drain; on a clean portion of the food preparation table or cooking equipment; or in a container of water if the water is maintained at a temperature of at least 135°F and the water is changed at least every 4 hours.
- **CROSS CONTAMINATION:** Food shall be protected from cross contamination by separating raw animal foods from ready-to-eat foods during storage, preparation, holding, and display. Equipment and utensils (including knives, cutting boards, and food storage containers) must be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized after being used for raw animal foods and before being used for ready-to-eat food.

CLEANING

- **WAREWASHING:** A commercial dishwasher or 3-compartment sink set-up should be utilized to wash, rinse, and sanitize equipment and utensils coming into contact with food. The minimum requirements for a utensil washing set-up to wash/rinse/sanitize should consist of 3 basins, large enough for complete immersion of utensils, a potable hot water supply, and an adequate disposal system for the wastewater. A centralized utensil washing area for use by multiple food vendors may be permitted by the regulatory authority. *Equipment and utensils must be cleaned and sanitized at least every 4 hours.*

- **SANITIZING:** Chlorine bleach or other approved sanitizers should be provided for sanitizing food contact surfaces, equipment, and wiping cloths. Sanitizers must be used at appropriate strengths. An approved test kit must be available to accurately measure the concentration of sanitizing solutions.
- **WIPING CLOTHS:** Wiping cloths that are in use for wiping food spills shall be used for no other purpose and shall be stored clean and dry or in a clean chlorine sanitizing solution at a concentration of 100 ppm.

WATER SUPPLY AND WASTEWATER DISPOSAL

- **WATER:** An adequate supply of potable water shall be available on site for cooking and drinking purposes; for cleaning and sanitizing equipment, utensils, and food contact surfaces; and for hand washing. Water must come from an approved public water supply or an approved well water supply. The water supply system and hoses carrying water must be constructed with approved food contact materials. The water supply must be installed to preclude the backflow of contaminants into the potable water supply. All hose and other connections to the potable water supply shall be maintained a minimum of 6" above the ground or top plane surface. A supply of commercially bottled drinking water or sanitary potable water storage tanks may be allowed if approved by the regulatory authority.
- **WASTEWATER DISPOSAL:** Wastewater shall be disposed in an approved wastewater disposal system. Wastewater may not be dumped onto the ground surface; into waterways; or into storm drains, but shall be collected and dumped into a receptacle or sink drain designated for the collection of wastewater or into a toilet directed to a sanitary sewer.

PREMISES

- **COUNTERS/SHELVES:** All food contact surfaces shall be smooth, easily cleanable, durable and free of seams and difficult to clean areas. All other surfaces shall be finished so that they are easily cleanable.
- **FLOORS:** Unless otherwise approved, floors of outdoor TFEs should be constructed of concrete; asphalt; non-absorbent matting; tight wood; or removable platforms or duckboards which minimize dust and mud. The floor area should be graded to drain away from the TFE.
- **WALLS AND CEILINGS:** The TFE must be covered with a canopy or other type of overhead protection, unless the food items offered are commercially pre-packaged food items dispensed in their original containers. Walls and ceilings, if required, are to be of tight and sound construction to protect against the elements, windblown dust and debris, insects, or other sources that may contaminate food, food contact surfaces, equipment, utensils, or employees.
- **LIGHTING:** Adequate lighting by natural or artificial means must be provided. Light bulbs shall be shielded, coated, or otherwise shatter-resistant in areas where there is exposed food; clean equipment and utensils; or unwrapped single-service and single-use articles.

- **GARBAGE:** An adequate number of non-absorbent, easily cleanable garbage containers should be provided both inside and outside of each TFE site. Dumpsters must be covered, rodent-proof, and non-absorbent. Grease must be disposed of properly and shall not be dumped onto the ground surface.
- **TOILET FACILITIES:** An adequate number of approved toilet and hand washing facilities shall be provided for food service workers at each event. The toilet facilities, preferably permanently established, should be conveniently located to the food preparation areas (within 500 feet of the food preparation areas). An adequate number of toilet and hand washing facilities shall be provided for patrons at gatherings lasting longer than 2-3 hours. Toilets may consist of properly designed, operated, and maintained portable toilets.
- **CLOTHING STORAGE:** Personal clothing and belongings should be stored at a designated place in the TFE away from food preparation, food service and ware washing areas.
- **TOXIC MATERIALS:** Poisonous or toxic materials shall be properly labeled and stored so they cannot contaminate food, equipment, utensils, and single-service and single-use articles. Only those chemicals necessary for the food service operation shall be provided.