

Harris County
HCPHES
Public Health & Environmental Services

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OPERATIONAL STATEMENT FOR TEMPORARY FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS

Dates of Temporary Event: From _____ Through _____

Time of Temporary Event: _____

Name of Temporary Event: _____

Address of Event: _____

Operator of Food Booth (s) : _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Number of Food Booths Run by the Same Operator: _____

Location of Each Food Booth:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Food To Be Served: _____

Where Food Will Be Prepared: _____

Typing of Cooking Equipment: _____

Method of Garbage Disposal: _____

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 & Environmental Services (HCPHES) wants to insure that all temporary food service establishments:

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

Will my temporary food both be inspected?

Yes. Both non-profit and profit temporary food establishments will be inspected by a Harris County food investigator at least once during the event. Of major concern to the inspector will cleanliness, food storage arrangements, personal hygienic practices and proper food temperatures. Violations concerning these areas will be expected to be correct 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 the HCPHES' jurisdiction must obtain a temporary health permit to operate.

- All establishments that serve food and/or drinks and 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 health permit is required for ever food booth at any given event.

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

- A permit must be purchase 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, temporary 501C3) are also exempt, as long as all proceeds go to the charity. A non-profit, temporary food service establishment is defined as a booth, which is operated directly be 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 b considered a non-profit temporary establishment.

How much does a temporary food permit cost?

The cost of a temporary food permit is \$50.00, provided that it is purchase **at least 2 full business days prior to the beginning of the event, excluding Sundays and holidays. Failure to purchase a temporary permit within these guidelines will result in a fee of \$100.00**

How do I obtain a temporary food permit?

Anyone who plans to operate a temporary food establishment should contact the Environmental Public Health Section of HCPHES prior to the event. A list of sanitation guidelines and an operations questionnaire will be sent/given to you. You will save money if you purchase your permit at least 2 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
Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services
2223 W. Loop S., Suite 529
Houston, Texas 77027
M-F, 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 WEEK 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 for 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) 439-6270.

- **ONLINE** – to www.hcphe.org Fill out the operational statement and send it back to Environmental website for approval within 3 weeks of the event. Upon approval to operate the temporary food booth, you may purchase the permit online by means of a charge card or an e-check. Payment must be made within 14 days of the start of the event. Or may send a personal or business check to the Environmental Public Health office no later than 4 weeks prior to the beginning of the event. Payment made within 4 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 may be purchased at the event with a money order or cashier's check if the booth is in compliance with health code standards. Food booths operating with a valid and current permit may be asked to close if the operation poses a health hazard or if the permit is not purchased on site. Money orders and cashier's checks **ONLY** will be accepted at the event site. Inspectors will not collect cash at the temporary event site.

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

You will be asked to cease all food operations. Continuation of operations will result in an appeal to the Harris County Sheriff's Department for assistance.

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

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SANITATION GUIDELINES FOR TEMPORARY FOOD VENDORS

I. FOOD SUPPLY

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

II. STORAGE OF POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS FOODS

- A. Food shall be stored in clean containers and kept covered.
- B. Product temperatures shall be maintained at 41°F or below, or at 135°F or above.
- C. A metal stem thermometer shall be provided to check food temperatures.

III. WASTE DISPOSAL – Facilities or containers shall be provided to retain all liquid and solid waste.

IV. CONSTRUCTION OF BOOTH

- A. Booth or stand shall be constructed in such a manner as to prevent entrance of flies, dust, dirt and other Foreign matter. This includes a awing or dining canopy to cover food preparation areas.
- B. The interior surfaces shall be in good repair and readily cleanable.
- C. The surface under the booth must be grades 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.
- D. The booth shall be protected on 3 sides from the public (Create a partition using string, rope, tables, chairs or soda canisters.)

V. EQUIPMENT AND UTENSIL STORAGE – Food equipment and single service items shall be at least 6 inches above flooring.

VI. EQUIPMENT AND UTENSIL CLEANING AND SANITIZING

- A. 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.
- B. Liquid chlorine bleach shall be provided for use in sanitizing work surfaces (1/3 cup per 5 gallons of water.)

VII. HYGIENIC PRACTICES

- A. Hand washing facilities shall include an insulated container with a spigot that can be turned on to allow potable clean, warm water to flow; a waste water container, soap, disposable towels, and a waste receptacle. Water shall be from an approved source.
- B. Disposable plastic gloves shall be provided and used for serving line personnel. (These should be disposed of and new ones used after every absence from the work station.)
- C. Food service workers shall wear effective hair restraints (hair nets, caps or scarves.)
- D. No one shall eat, drink or smoke while preparing food.

VIII. TOILET FACILITIES – Toilet facilities must available nearby.