



Requirements for Fairs, Festivals, and Carnivals



Food Vendor Guide

This Food Vendor Guide has been developed to help you and your employees run your temporary food service operation using steps that follow basic food handling practices to minimize the risk of food-borne illness in the community. The Food Premises Regulation (O. Reg. 562/90) under the Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA), outlines the requirements that all food premises must follow to ensure the food being served to the public is safe.

Getting Started

The Windsor-Essex County Health Unit, Health Inspection Department requires all food vendors to complete a Food Vendor Application Form. If you're participating in different fairs and festivals in the community you must complete and submit a new application for each event. This form must be submitted at least 10 days prior to the event.

If you want to know if your food premises (whether it be a temporary or mobile unit) meets the requirements listed in this guide, you can contact the Health Inspection Department at 519-258-2146 ext. 1474 or 1450 to arrange to speak with the area's Public Health Inspector.



Pre-Operational Inspection

A Public Health Inspector (PHI) will conduct a pre-operational inspection to ensure your premises meets minimum requirements to operate. It's important that your premises is fully operational prior to the event opening to the public. This allows you to make necessary corrections.

Compliance Inspection

During the event, a PHI will conduct a compliance inspection. A compliance inspection is conducted by inspectors to ensure operators are meeting the minimum standards set out in the Ontario Food Premises Regulation 562. Where there is an immediate risk to the public's health, the PHI will close your operation. If significant infractions (not requiring closure) are observed by the PHI, you will have you make necessary corrections immediately and a re-inspection will take place.

Important Points to Remember

The first goal of any food premises must be to produce safe and high quality food. There's a need for special standards in the food industry because of:

- The chance for the spread of disease and illness through food.
- Customers wanting to be sure the places where they buy their food are safe.

When someone gets sick from something they've eaten or drank, it's called a food-borne illness. There are four causes of food-borne illness:

- Chemical Contamination
- Physical Contamination
- Allergens
- Microbiological Contamination

Bacterial illnesses are the most common type of food-borne illness. Microorganisms that make you sick are called pathogens. Food contaminated with microorganisms may look, smell, and taste normal even when it's not safe.

The food that you prepare for your events may be potentially hazardous.



Potentially Hazardous Foods

These foods can support bacterial growth because they're rich in protein and have a high moisture content. Potentially hazardous foods include:

- Moist foods with a pH above 4.5.
- Dairy products.
- Meat, fish, poultry, and eggs.
- Some raw vegetables and fruit (e.g., bean sprouts, garlic in oil, and cut melon), especially those that won't be cooked.
- Anything that contains any of the above foods.

Examples of potentially hazardous foods include: hamburgers, shish kebabs, chicken, pogos, hotdogs, gyros, cooked rice, pizza, and ice cream. Potentially hazardous foods must be handled with care.

These foods must be stored or kept at:

4°C (40°F) or lower, or kept frozen at -18°C (0°F), or 60°C (140°F) or higher.



Non-Hazardous Foods

These foods don't normally support the growth of disease causing microorganisms. Examples of non-hazardous foods include: cookies, breads, cakes, potato chips, popcorn, cotton candy, and candy bars.

Safe Food Handling Practice

Time and Temperature

To keep bacterial growth to a minimum, both the temperature of food and the amount of time it's kept at that temperature needs to be controlled.

- Refrigerated foods must be kept at 4°C (40°F) or lower.
- Frozen foods must be kept at -18°C (0°F) or lower.

All refrigerators and freezers must have a visible and accurate thermometer. Check the temperatures of cold holding units throughout the event to ensure safe food.

Store all hazardous foods immediately in the refrigerator or freezer and don't remove them until you are ready to prepare them.

NEVER thaw foods at room temperature (on the counter). Bacteria can multiply very quickly at room temperature.

Thaw food safely:

- In the refrigerator (this is the safest way to thaw foods).
- In a sink of cold running water.
- In the microwave.
- As part of the continuous cooking process (e.g., place a frozen hamburger patty or hot dog directly on the grill for cooking).

Cooking and Reheating

Food mixtures that contain hazardous foods need to be cooked and reheated to a minimum internal temperature of 74°C (165°F). Check the temperature with your probe thermometer for at least 15 seconds.

Clean and sanitize probe thermometers with alcohol swabs or a sanitizing solution after each use to stop cross-contamination.



Hot Holding

Food being held hot for service or display must be held at 60°C (140°F) or higher at all times. Hot holding can only be done after the food has been cooked to the right internal temperature.

Some examples of food held for hot service are:

- Food held in a steam table.
- Hot dogs kept hot in a hot dog cart.
- Fast food held in a warming tray until it's served.

Use a clean and sanitized probe thermometer to monitor temperatures regularly during the holding time.

Transporting Food

When transporting food, the food must be in covered, commercial food-grade containers that are capable of maintaining the food at proper temperatures. This includes cold temperatures at 4°C (40°F) or lower or hot temperatures at 60°C (140°F) or higher.

Cross Contamination

Cross-contamination happens when ready-to-eat food gets contaminated by microorganisms from raw food.

Cross-contamination happens in the following three ways:

Food to Food

Raw foods or juices come in contact with ready-to-eat food.

Equipment to Food

The same equipment used for raw food preparation is then used for ready-to-eat foods without being cleaned and sanitized between uses.

People to Food

Hands touch raw food and then touch ready-to-eat food without being washed in between.

Remember to:

- Refrigerate Right! Keep raw meat, poultry, and seafood on the bottom shelf, away from cooked and ready-to-eat foods.
- Provide a barrier to separate the food preparation area from the public.
- Food being displayed for service must be protected with a sneeze guard, and be covered or stored in an enclosed cabinet.
- All food and single service articles must be kept on racks or shelves that are kept at least 15 cm (6") off the floor.
- Keep enough clean utensils available at all times during the event. Change utensils frequently throughout the event.
- Avoid touching food with your hands. It's best to pick up food with utensils like tongs, ladles, forks, spoons, and scoops. Single-use barriers like napkins or sheets of wax paper can be used when handling donuts, bread, or ice cream cones.
- Thoroughly clean and sanitize all equipment and utensils before using, and frequently during the event.



Handwashing

Handwashing, when done correctly, is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of communicable diseases (Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, 2009).

Each handwashing sink needs to have a continuous supply of hot and cold running water, soap in a dispenser, and paper towels.

Remember to wash your hands:

- Before you start to work.
- Before preparing food.
- After handling raw meats, poultry, or fish.
- After coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose.
- After using the washroom.
- After handling garbage.
- After smoking or handling money.
- Any time your hands get dirty or contaminated with germs or with other types of food.

Gloves can be used instead of bare hands, but remember that gloves pick up microorganisms the same as hands. Glove use doesn't eliminate the need for handwashing. Be sure to wash hands before and after putting gloves on.



Cleaning and Sanitizing

When it comes to food contact surfaces like counters, dishes, cutting boards, or utensils, cleaning alone isn't enough. Once a food contact surface is clean, the next step is to sanitize. Properly cleaning and sanitizing these surfaces reduces microorganisms.

Cleaning removes obvious food, dirt, and other debris, while sanitizing reduces the number of microorganisms to safe levels.

Three chemicals used to sanitize are:

Chlorine-based product solution strength 100 ppm

Quaternary ammonium product solution strength 200 ppm

Iodine based product solution strength 25 ppm

Household bleach is the most common chlorine-based sanitizer.

To prepare, add 1 oz of bleach to a gallon of water.

Sanitizing solution can be stored in a spray bottle for cleaning surfaces. A separate supply of wiping cloths must be provided for cleaning food contact surfaces only. Store wiping cloths in a bucket with one of the recommended sanitizing solutions listed above.

Use a test reagent (substance used in chemical reactions) or test strip to measure your sanitizing solution's strength.



Checklist

- Contact the Health Unit (519-258-2146 ext. 1450 or 1474) at any time for advice.
- Fill out and submit application form at least 10 days before the event.
- Educate yourself and staff on proper food handling practices (food handler training classes may be scheduled through the Health Inspection department for you and your staff).
- Obtain proper equipment and supplies (see the Sponsoring Agency Event Organizer Guide for more information).
- Be prepared for the pre-operational inspection. Verify all equipment is working correctly before bringing food to the concession booth.
- After the PHI conducts your inspection, post the inspection reports in a visible location.
- Remember to wash your hands every time you handle food.

By following these regulations and recommendations you will be prepared to have a safe and successful event.



Windsor-Essex County Health Unit
1005 Ouellette Avenue
Windsor, ON N9A 4J8
519-258-2146 ext. 1450 or 1474
www.wehealthunit.org