

TEMPORARY FOOD ESTABLISHMENT OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The primary goal of Harris County Public Health (HCPH) is to protect the public's health. To accomplish this, the Environmental Public Health (EPH) Division inspects and permits all temporary food establishments to ensure the minimum requirements of the Texas Food Establishment Rules (TFER), 25 Texas Administrative Code §228, are met. The TFER defines a temporary food establishment as a food booth at a temporary event that operates for no more than 14 consecutive days in conjunction with a single event or celebration. A temporary food establishment includes any booth at a temporary event that stores, prepares, packages, serves, or vends unpackaged food and/or drink including ice. These requirements also apply to Farmers' Market Vendors (FMV) per Texas Health & Safety Code §437.

IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS ARE NOT MET AND CANNOT BE CORRECTED IMMEDIATELY, THE ESTABLISHMENT MUST CEASE OPERATIONS.

Food Supply

- Food must be in sound condition, free of contamination and shall be safe for human consumption.
- Food must be prepared on-site or from an approved and permitted commercial source and not be prepared in a private home. *NOTE: FMV are limited to foods that the FMV grew or produced.*
- Food, including ice, must be stored in clean, sanitized, covered containers and protected from contamination. Loosely packaged foods may not directly contact ice if water can penetrate the package.
Time/temperature control for safety foods must be maintained at 41°F or below or at 135°F or above and cooked to the proper temperature. The booth must have sufficient equipment to maintain food temperatures. *NOTE: FMV must discard food samples within two hours if not held under temperature control.*

Equipment

- A metal stem thermometer must be provided to check food temperatures.
- Food preparation utensils must be durable.
- All items provided for customer use must be single-service items.
- All food contact equipment and utensils, including single-service items, must be protected from contamination.
- The booth must have a warewashing set-up with 3 containers large enough to immerse the largest piece of equipment, sanitizer available on-site, and a means to heat water to wash, rinse, and sanitize food contact equipment and utensils.
- The booth must have a handwash set-up with warm water in a spigot container, soap, paper towels, and catch pan. Booths selling only commercially pre-packaged foods in their original containers are exempt from a handwash set-up.

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Employees

- Disposable gloves and hair restraints must be provided for all booth staff.
- An Employee Health Condition Reporting Sign or an agreement signed by each employee that details the employee health reporting policy must be at the booth. This sign is available at EPH or www.hcphtx.org.
NOTE: The Employee Health Condition Reporting Sign or agreement is not required for FMV.
- The booth must have at least one person on-site who has a minimum of a state accredited **Food Handler Certification**. Information on the HCPH Food Handler Certification is available at www.hcphtx.org or on the Texas Department of State Health Services website. This includes non-profit events.
*NOTE: FMV require **Certification** only if conducting a cooking demonstration for samples.*
- No one shall eat, drink, or smoke while preparing food.

Facility

- Water must come from an approved source for food preparation, handwashing, warewashing, and sanitizing.
- Waste disposal facilities or containers must be provided to retain all liquid and solid waste and wastewater.
- Toilets must be available.
- The booth must have walls and ceilings to protect from weather, windblown dust, birds, and debris. All food preparation and contact surfaces must be protected from contamination by the public and pests.
- The booth floor must be free of water accumulation on a non-absorbent, hard surface (concrete or asphalt) unless covered by mats, removable platforms, or duckboards to control dust and mud.
- The temporary permit must be onsite and posted in public view.

NOTE: The Fire Marshal's Office permits and inspects temporary events in unincorporated Harris County. Please call 713-274-1730 or 281-436-8030 or visit: <http://www.eng.hctx.net/permits/Fire/Fire-Code/Temporary-Food-Vendors-Festivals-Theatrical-Performances> for application and requirements.

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