



**Westport Weston  
Health District**

## **GUIDELINES FOR FOOD SERVICE AT TEMPORARY EVENTS**

The purpose of these guidelines is to minimize the risk of foodborne illness outbreaks at temporary food service facilities. By following these guidelines, you can help ensure the safety of the foods served and, in turn, protect the health of your patrons.

Certainly no one would like to see a foodborne illness mar a temporary food service event; however, foods contaminated with illness-causing bacteria will not look, taste or smell any different from safe foods. The only way to prevent an outbreak is to personally see that the food is from a safe source and is properly stored, prepared, and served. Most temporary operations have limited food preparation, (seasoning and cooking). If more extensive food preparation, such as cleaning, cutting, blending, and shaping is planned, the requirements are stricter because this food has more opportunity to become contaminated.

The State of Connecticut and the Westport Weston Health District require that all temporary food service facilities, (church or temple fund raisers, school fairs, club fairs, antique shows, etc.) serving food to the public be permitted by the local health district. A brief description of the rules and regulations that must be met in order to obtain a Westport Weston Health District Food Permit follows.

### **PERMITTING PROCEDURE**

Each food booth serving food at a temporary event must obtain a permit from the Westport Weston Health District (WWHD). **IMPORTANT:** An application must be filed with the Health District at least 2-4 weeks prior to the date of the event. Failure to file on time may be cause for a denial of a permit. In order to obtain the permit, the designated food booth operator, in whose name the permit will be issued, must:

1. Obtain an application and information packet from the WWHD.
2. Complete the application and provide any information that has been requested. For example, if out-of-town caterers will be preparing the food, you may be asked to provide copies of their current food licenses and/or copy of last inspection from a regulatory agency.
3. Your application and the appropriate fee should be submitted to the WWHD.
4. A preliminary inspection may be required before the booth or food service is allowed to open. If the sanitarian is satisfied that the conditions of the permit have been met, the permit will be issued and posted in the booth or food service facility.

Communication is very important to ensure that the application process goes smoothly. The designated food booth/service operator must be someone who will be actively involved in the preparation of food that will be served, such as the head chef or shift supervisor. Someone with previous commercial food service experience is preferred. This person will act as the liaison between the food handlers and the Health District and will be responsible for making sure that the proper procedures are understood and followed.

## **INFORMATION FOR THE PROSPECTIVE PERMITTEE**

The information included here has been developed following a major illness outbreak (600 individuals) associated with improperly prepared and cooked chicken at the Norwalk Oyster Festival in September 1991. All health departments and districts have been made aware of the importance of education for food handlers and volunteers at food fairs and temporary events. The Environmental Division, Norwalk Health Department, developed this material and has generously shared it with us. With permission, we have adapted the material to Westport and Weston.

### **MENU**

All foods served must be from an approved source, such as a commercial processor or a licensed public eating place, and prepared in a licensed commercial establishment.

**No home cooking or preparation is allowed.**

**No home canned foods are allowed.**

**No wild game or fin fish from non-commercial sources are allowed.**

**All meats and poultry must be USDA inspected.**

**Only shellfish from approved sources may be served. All tags must be saved for 90 days.**

**All receipts and bills of sale must be retained and made available to the sanitarian upon request.**

The sanitarian may restrict or modify the menu and/or preparation methods as deemed necessary to minimize the risk of foodborne illness.

### **PREPARATION**

The easiest and safest methods of preparing food for sale at a temporary facility is cooking to order. Example: pre-formed frozen hamburger patties that are cooked on a grill and served immediately. Keep in mind that the more steps involved between raw product and final service, the greater the potential for foodborne illness to occur.

On-site preparation should be minimal. Same day preparation is safest. However, off-site preparation could take place the day before in a licensed facility that is equipped to handle the large volumes of food involved. Example: Shish kabob could be assembled on skewers, stored overnight, and transported under refrigeration the next morning. A large capacity, full service restaurant with walk-in refrigerators would be suitable as opposed to a small deli with two small refrigerators. All potentially hazardous foods must be delivered under refrigeration to the site as close to the day of the event as possible. If food is prepared off-site, the establishment must be in compliance with Local, State and Federal codes. Copies of a recent inspection report and a valid health department license may be requested.

## **FOOD PROTECTION**

1. The number one cause of foodborne illness outbreaks is the failure to keep potentially hazardous foods at the proper temperatures. Potentially hazardous foods are those consisting in whole or part of milk, milk products, eggs, meat, poultry, fish, shellfish or other foods capable of supporting the rapid growth of infectious or toxigenic microorganisms. This includes hot dogs, pizza, cooked rice, beans, potatoes and other cooked vegetables, sliced melons, cream-filled pastries, as well as the more commonly accepted types of foods.

### ***Observe safe food temperatures:***

#### **Hold potentially hazardous foods below 45° F. or above 140°F.**

Cook foods without interruption. Partial cooking in advance is a dangerous practice and is not allowed. The following are minimum cooking temperatures:

Poultry:	165°F
Pork:	150°F
Beef:	155°F

Cooked, barbecued chicken must never be taken off the grill until it is sold. If this cannot be done, the chicken must be placed in a heated oven or steam table and held above 140 °F until served. Reheat previously cooked and chilled foods to 165°F. A long, stem-dial type thermometer must be provided for monitoring food temperatures (Range 0° to 220°F.). See Appendix.

Only equipment capable of maintaining foods at these safe temperatures shall be used. Adequate refrigeration such as refrigerated trucks, refrigerators, and coolers (no styrofoam) with ice or ice packs must be provided for keeping food cold. For example, a refrigerated truck would be used for bulk storage, and small refrigerators or coolers used for short-term service near the grills. Obviously, an ample supply of ice and ice packs must be provided. If electrically powered coolers are used, care must be taken to be sure that the service lines can handle the voltage. **All units must be provided with accurate thermometers placed in the warmest part of the unit to monitor ambient air temperature.**

Defrost frozen foods in the refrigerator below 45 ° F. never at room temperature. (Off-site only).

Chill foods rapidly (within 2 hours). Large quantities of foods must be broken down into smaller containers that are shallow enough to allow for rapid cooling. Store in refrigerators promptly; do not allow to cool at room temperature. (Off-site only)

All potentially hazardous foods must be transported under refrigeration regardless of the distance to be traveled.

As previously stated, the cook-and-serve method is preferred. However, if foods need to be held hot, gas-fired steam tables are preferred. Other warming units may be approved provided that they are capable of holding foods over 140 ° F. Warming units must never be used to heat or cook foods. They are designed only to hold foods that have just been heated. Example: fried rice is cooked in a wok, then transferred immediately to a preheated steam table and held for service.

2. **Do not cross contaminate.** Separate raw and cooked potentially hazardous foods. Do not interchange utensils, cutting boards, containers, or other equipment that has been previously used

for raw foods with cooked or ready-to-serve foods. Example: Do not slice onions or tomatoes to be served on hamburgers on a cutting board that was previously used to cut raw chicken; do not use a knife to slice cooked ham that was previously used to trim a piece of raw beef. **Designate raw and cooked (or ready-to-serve) prep areas.**

Never reuse marinade. Once the meat is removed for cooking, the marinade must be disposed of properly. The container must be washed and sanitized before it can be reused. Always use a freshly-made marinade if the recipe calls for adding while meat is cooking.

3. **Never pool eggs.** When large quantities of eggs are called for, liquid pasteurized eggs must be used. Example: for making scrambled eggs, pancakes, funnel cakes, or other batters, liquid pasteurized eggs must be used.
4. **Discard leftovers at the end of the day; do not re-serve.**
5. All foods must be protected from flies, dust, sneezing, unnecessary handling, or other contamination during transportation, storage, handling, display, and service. All preparation and service must be done under a tent, or similar approved structure, with overhead protection.

Store foods in clean, sanitized food-grade containers and keep them covered. All equipment must be clean and in good repair. If coolers are used, they must be a non-porous type (not styrofoam). Food should not be placed directly in contact with ice. Ice should be well drained and not used for any other purpose. Ice for drinks must be stored in separate, clean containers. Remember: **Ice is considered food.** All ice must be from an approved source; do not bring ice from home.

Store all foods off the ground, on shelves, or stacked on empty crates. Sugar, mustard, ketchup, and other condiments must be individually packaged or dispensed in a manner that prevents contamination, such as squeeze bottles.

6. Minimize hand contact. Use utensils such as tongs, spoons, and spatulas. They may be stored in clean containers with handles extending out. When manual contact is necessary, use wax tissue paper or disposable gloves. Remember, however, that gloves are not a substitute for hand-washing and should be changed frequently.
7. Only single service disposable utensils are to be provided for public use. They must be stored and dispensed in such a manner that will prevent contamination. Example: Store utensils with handles up to allow customers to pick them up without touching food end.
8. Salad bars (and other self-service type displays) are not allowed at temporary facilities.
9. Provide adequate lighting in the booth.

## **SANITATION**

1. The food booth or food service facility must be maintained in a sanitary manner at all times. All food contact surfaces and equipment shall be cleaned at regular intervals and as often as necessary to maintain a high standard of cleanliness. A bleach solution (100 ppm) or other approved sanitizing solution shall be provided in sufficient quantities for sanitizing all food contact surfaces.

The following procedure is to be used for all food contact surfaces such as cutting boards, utensils, food containers, counters, etc.:

- a. **Wash** (in hot, soapy water)
- b. **Rinse** (in hot, clean water)
- c. **Sanitize** (soak for 1 minute in a 1200 ppm bleach and water solution: approximately 1 tbsp. of bleach per gallon of water, or 1/3 cup bleach per 5 gallons of water.)
- d. **Allow to air dry** (Never towel dry, bleach will dissipate).

If you choose another type of sanitizer, it must be approved by a sanitarian prior to use. Bleach is inexpensive, easily accessible, and very effective as a sanitizing agent. Ideally, a three-compartment sink or a mechanical dishwasher should be used, if available. Example: An on-site school kitchen, church kitchen, etc. If such a facility is not available, then three (3) clean 5-gallon buckets may be used when an adequate, potable water supply is available. See Appendix.

For short-term events, this requirement may be waived when an ample supply of extra replacement utensils are available.

2. An adequate supply of clean wiping cloths must be provided for cleaning purposes. When not in use, they must be stored in the bleach solution.
3. Each food booth must be provided with a handwashing station consisting of an adequate supply of warm, potable water (minimum 5 gallons) in a sanitary container and dispensed through a free-running tap or spigot. (See Appendix.) Portable handsinks are available from some rental agencies. Liquid handsoap, paper towels, and a bucket to catch waste water must also be provided. Indoor food service facilities or kitchens must have a designated handsink with hot and cold running water.
4. An adequate number of toilets must be provided for public use. The actual number of toilets will be determined on an individual basis depending on attendance and menu. Toilets for food booth workers must be positioned near the food areas. At least one handwashing station for every 5 toilets must be provided as described above. Toilets for food handlers in indoor facilities should be near the kitchen.
5. All liquid waste must be collected and disposed of in an approved manner that will not create a nuisance or a public health hazard. Dumping liquid waste on the ground, in waterways, or storm drains is not allowed. Waste cooking oil and grease must be disposed of in an approved manner. This type of grease cannot be dumped with the other trash. A grease container must be provided and arrangements made with a grease hauler for removal. Waste water shall not be reused for any purpose.
6. All garbage and recyclables must be in self-contained units and removed nightly from the function location.

### **PERSONNEL AND HYGIENIC PRACTICES**

1. A copy of the basic requirements for temporary events must be posted in the booth or kitchen and read by all food handlers. A log book showing name, address, phone number, date, and time worked must be signed by all food handlers.
2. Only authorized personnel are allowed in the booth. No pets or animals are allowed in the booth.

3. No person with a communicable disease or afflicted with boils, sores, infected wounds, or an acute respiratory infection, shall work with food. Example: If you have a fever, diarrhea, or vomiting, you cannot work.
4. All workers must wear clean outer garments and maintain a high degree of personal cleanliness. For personal protection, all food handlers who prepare or cook food must wear long pants or a long apron while working. No sandals or open toed shoes will be permitted.
5. Wash hands frequently, but always upon entering the booth, after using the toilet, eating, smoking, taking a break, coughing, handling garbage, handling raw or potentially hazardous foods, etc.
6. Do not use tobacco in any form.
7. Wear hats, hairnets, or some other type of hair restraints.

### **POWER SUPPLY**

A policy must be agreed upon by the vendors and the Health District in case of an electrical failure. Backup arrangements such as generators, must be available for the storage of all perishable foods in case of a power failure.

### **REVOKING OF LICENSES – BOOTH CLOSURES**

The food permit may be revoked at any time for any reason by the Director of Health or her agent (sanitarian), when, in her opinion such action is warranted. The booth or kitchen will not be allowed to reopen without the written approval from the Director of Health, the sanitarian or her agent.

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**Other requirements may be imposed, based upon the individual needs of each booth or food service facility.**

<b>Check List for Food Operators</b>
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- \_\_\_ Thermometers in all refrigerators and coolers
- \_\_\_ Metal probe thermometer (0° - 220° F. range)
- \_\_\_ Prep coolers and ice/ice packs
- \_\_\_ Cutting boards
- \_\_\_ Plastic wrap
- \_\_\_ Handwash station with liquid soap and paper towels
- \_\_\_ Extra utensils: tongs, spatulas, spoons
- \_\_\_ Potable water supply (hot and cold)
- \_\_\_ Utensil washing containers
- \_\_\_ Bleach for sanitizing
- \_\_\_ Wastewater disposal
- \_\_\_ Grease disposal
- \_\_\_ Garbage containers, plastic bags
- \_\_\_ Clean wiping cloths and storage containers
- \_\_\_ Aprons
- \_\_\_ Hair restraints
- \_\_\_ Shelves, crates for off-the-ground dry food storage
- \_\_\_ Lights
- \_\_\_ *No Smoking* signs
- \_\_\_ Toilets with handwash stations
- \_\_\_ Logbook for employee/volunteer sign in

