



**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH – CHARLES COUNTY**  
**4545 Crain Highway, Post Office Box 1050**  
**White Plains, MD 20695-1050**  
**Tel: 301-609-6751 Fax: 301-932-0254 MD TTY: 1-800-735-2258**

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**REQUIREMENTS FOR OPERATING A TEMPORARY FOOD BOOTH**  
**KEEP FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES**

This information has been developed to help concessionaires set up and run food operations in a sanitary and healthful manner and to minimize the possibility of food borne illness.

Concessionaires should contact the Health Department as early as possible when planning a food booth.

A sanitarian will be pleased to help with your plans. He/she will point out the steps that must be taken to help ensure a sanitary operation that will protect the public from foodborne illness.

I. Definition

A Temporary Food Service Establishment is a food establishment that operates at a fixed location for a period of time not more than 14 consecutive days in conjunction with a single event or celebration, such as:

- A fair
- Carnival
- Circus
- Public Exhibition
- Or Similar Transitory Gathering

II. Licensure Requirements

A. Temporary Licensure if required by Law. The State food regulation C.O.M.A.R. 10.15.03 states that “No person shall operate a food service establishment who does not have a valid license issued to him/her by the health officer”. A valid license shall be conspicuously posted in every food service establishment, mobile unit and temporary food service establishment. These requirements were included to help ensure that food handled in food establishments will be as safe as possible. **MANY, MANY OUTBREAKS OF FOODBORNE ILLNESS HAVE BEEN TRACED BACK TO FOOD IMPROPERLY HANDLED AT TEMPORARY EVENTS.**

B. Individuals or groups planning to hold events that are open to the public must have a license.

Our department requires that a temporary food license be purchased for each food booth in operation during an event. If you advertise your event with flyers, banners, newspaper articles, or by other means, it is considered a public event. Church dinners or other events that are for members and their guests only and are not advertised are not considered to be public events.

III. Application and Review

Individuals must apply for a license in order for the Health Department to review the proposed food service techniques.



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The Health Department's Environmental Sanitarian will work with you to review the following steps:

- The types of foods to be prepared
- How they will be prepared
- And the methods used to keep foods hot and cold

He/she may also suggest shortcuts that will enable your booth to operate more efficiently and safely.

Applications may be obtained from the Charles County Environmental Health Department, located at 4545 Crain Highway, White Plains, Maryland, by mail at P.O. Box 1050, White Plains, Maryland 20695 or by calling 301-609-6751. Office hours are weekdays from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

We **RECOMMEND** the application be returned with the fee a minimum of 2 weeks before the event.

This allows time for the Health Department staff to adequately review the application and to make any changes necessary well in advance of the event.

IV. Minimum Requirements to Operate

- A. Fill out a temporary application, and submit it with the fees at least 2 weeks before the event.
- B. Food booth operators may be required to make an appointment for a pre-opening inspection prior to the first day of the event.
- C. All food preparation and utensil washing areas shall have effective and approved control measures to eliminate the presence of rodents, flies, birds, roaches, and other vermin on the premises (i.e. screening, effective air curtains/fans, tarps, etc.)
- D. All foods must be protected from contamination at all times. Store all foods off the "floor".
- E. Scoops must be provided for dispensing ice. Utensils must be provided to minimize food handling.
- F. A metal-stem thermometer must be available and used to check internal food temperatures; thermometers must be able to measure from 0 degrees to 165 degrees F.
- G. Handwashing facilities – The facility shall consist of at least warm running water, soap, individual paper towels, and a bucket to collect the dirty water. For example, an air pump thermos or jug of warm water with a push button or turn spout container will be an acceptable method used to obtain warm running water.
- H. All personnel must wear clean clothing, hair restraint and wash hands frequently.
- I. Wiping cloths – A separate labeled bucket of sanitizer must be present for rinsing/storing wiping cloths to be used on table tops, counters, and so forth. For example, one capful of liquid bleach added to one gallon of cool water will be acceptable. This should be changed frequently during the day.



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- J. Dishwashing facilities – Equipment and utensils must be washed in three compartments/sinks. The process included washing the utensils/equipment in hot soapy water, rinsing in hot water, sanitizing, and air drying.
- K. All food preparation must be done in the booth or in an approved “kitchen” facility [e.g., the “kitchen” is permitted by the Health Department] to minimize the potential for foodborne illness. Home preparation of foods is not allowed.
- L. Smoking, eating, or drinking in booths while working is not allowed. All non-working, unauthorized persons are to be kept out of the booth.
- M. Crock pots, steam tables, or other hot holding devices are not to be used for heating foods; they are to be used only for hot holding purposes. Reheated foods should reach 165 degrees F within 2 hours.
- N. No person who is infected with a communicable disease, such as a cold, flu, or who has open sores or infected cuts on his/her hands, shall work in any temporary food establishment.
- O. Chemicals such as liquid bleach and detergents must be stored in a separate area away from food preparation and display areas.
- P. Toilet facilities shall be located within a reasonable distance and accessible during all hours of operation.
- Q. An adequate number of refuse containers with tight-fitting lids should be available for the garbage.
- R. Provide adequate waste disposal for hand wash, utensil wash and other sewage water. It must be discharged to a sanitary sewer.
- S. Adequate ventilation must be provided for cooking.
- T. All foods must be protected from contamination at all times. Store all foods off the “floor”.
- U. Water and ice must be from safe and approved potable sources.
- V. Temperature control-proper cold storage of foods.
  - 1. All potentially hazardous foods must be stored below 45 degrees F except during necessary preparation or procedures.
  - 2. All potentially hazardous foods such as salads prepared from eggs, meat, potatoes, or pasta must be prepared using pre-chilled ingredients (chilled to 45 degrees F or less). Such salads stored on buffet lines must be kept at 45 degrees F or less.



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3. Foods stored in containers on ice must be stored at 45 degrees F or below. Foods must be stored so that the ice level on the outside of the container is as high as the food is on the inside of the container. Containers must be self-draining if ice is used as a refrigerant.
  4. Enough cold holding equipment must be present, properly designed, maintained, and operated so that all potentially hazardous foods can be stored at or below 45 degrees as required. Separate containers must be used for raw meats and ready to eat foods when ice is used as a refrigerant.
- W. Temperature control, proper hot holding of potentially hazardous foods.
1. Potentially hazardous foods stored hot must be kept at 140 degrees F or above during hot holding.
  2. Enough hot holding equipment must be present, properly designed, maintained, and operated to keep hot foods at required temperatures.
- X. Temperature control, proper cooking and reheating of potentially hazardous foods.
1. All poultry, poultry dressings, and other foods containing poultry or poultry juices must be initially heated to 165 degrees F or above.
  2. All pork or foods containing pork must be initially heated to 155 degrees F or above.
  3. All other potentially hazardous foods requiring cooking must be heated to 145 degrees F or above before they are placed in hot holding equipment, except that rare roast beef or rare beef may be served at 130 degrees F or above.
  4. Hamburger must be heated to 155 degrees F or above.
  5. All foods after initial cooking temperatures have been met must be maintained at 140 degrees F.