

# Health Code Requirements for Community Events in LA County



Applications for a Community Event may be obtained from your Environmental Health local district office or online at [www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh)

## INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in participating in a Community Event in Los Angeles County. This booklet was prepared to help food service operators and event organizers to operate in a safe and sanitary manner by complying with the requirements of the California Retail Food Code (Cal Code).

Some food booth operators and event organizers may be exempt from County permit fees and/or the requirements of Cal Code. Please refer to the “Exemption Certification for Community Events” form. All event organizers and food booth operators who are not exempt from Cal Code are required to complete a community event application. The Exemption Certification for Community Events form and community event application forms are available on our website at [www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh) and may be found in the Areas of Interest – Food.

Completed applications should be submitted 30 days, but no less than two weeks prior to the event, to the Environmental Health local district office that has jurisdiction over the event. A list of offices and the areas they cover is available at [www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/DSE/districtOffices.htm](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/DSE/districtOffices.htm).

If you have any questions, contact your Environmental Health local district office or the Bureau of District Surveillance and Enforcement at (626) 430-5200.

**The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health hopes this guide will help you have a healthy and successful event. We look forward to helping you operate safely and in compliance with all requirements.**

## DEFINITIONS

**Commissary** – A facility that services mobile food facilities where any of the following occur:

- a) Food, containers, or supplies are stored.
- b) Food is prepared or prepackaged for sale or service at other locations.
- c) Utensils are cleaned.
- d) Liquid and solid wastes are disposed, or potable water is obtained.

**Community Event** – A civic, political, public, or educational event, including state and county fairs, city festivals, circuses, and other public gatherings approved by this department. Examples include traveling circuses, street festivals, church carnivals, “taste of” events, the temporary food facility section of a certified farmers’ market, and other similar types of events that are open to the public.

**Event Organizer** – The person, business, or entity responsible for the operation of the event and the facilities used by the public or shared by multiple food booths.

**Food Preparation** – Cooking, packaging, assembling, portioning, chopping, slicing, or any operation that changes the form, flavor, or consistency of food.

**Members and Guests** – Includes members of a church, private club, or other nonprofit organization. Guests mean people invited by a member to participate in a specific function.

**Nonprofit Charitable Temporary Food Facility** – A food booth run by a charitable organization in compliance with the Nonprofit Corporation Law, as per Section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code and Section 23701d of the Revenue and Taxation Code. This type of booth may only operate three

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**Environmental Health Division**

**Los Angeles County Department of Public Health**

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consecutive days per event and no more than four events per year.

**Temporary Food Facility (TFF)** – A food booth, food cart or food truck approved by the Department of Public Health to operate at a fixed location within a Community Event. A TFF may only operate for a period not to exceed 25 consecutive or nonconsecutive days in any 90-day period. For the purposes of this guide, the term temporary food facility is used when referring to both temporary food booths and temporary vehicles. The term temporary food booth is used when identifying requirements specific to the construction of a food booth.

**Temporary Food Preparation Facility** – Prepares and offers for sale non-prepackaged food. Examples include barbecued ribs, roasted corn, kettle corn, or fresh squeezed lemonade.

**Temporary Prepackaged Food Facility** – Offers for sale only commercially prepackaged food and may offer prepackaged samples of food. Example, selling prepackaged foods such as nuts, candy, sodas, ice cream.

**Temporary Prepackaged Food Facility with Food Samples** – Offers for sale only commercially prepackaged food, and serves unpackaged food without charge to the public to promote the sale of food. Example, selling prepackaged dips, and giving out open samples of dip and chips.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Does a community event need an event organizer?**

Yes, a community event must have an event organizer who is responsible for the operation of the event and the facilities used by the public or shared by temporary food facilities. The event organizer must apply and pay for an Event Organizer Permit and is responsible for ensuring that the event complies with community event requirements.

### **My church/nonprofit organization has a pancake breakfast fundraiser once a month. Do we need a health permit?**

No, event organizer and food booth permits are not required if a church or non-profit organization has an event which is **only** open to members and guests of members and the event is held 3 days or less in a 90 day period. However, if the event is open to the public or lasts longer than 3 days, you must obtain an event organizer and temporary food facility permit and comply with community event requirements.

### **Are there other events that do not need a health permit or where the fee is waived?**

Some temporary food facility operators and event organizers who participate in community events may be exempt from County permit fees and/or the requirements of the California Retail Food Code (Cal Code). Please refer to the “Exemption Certification for Community Events”, which can be found at [www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh).

### **Can my nonprofit association advertise our event in the newspaper without getting a health permit?**

No, an event advertised to the public with banners, flyers, newspaper articles, or radio/television announcements is a public event and requires permits. However, you can pass out flyers to members and guests to remind them of an upcoming event.



**Does wine tasting need a permit?**

A permit is not required if the food booth is operated by a wine grower at an event organized by a non-profit organization. However, if a wine grower does not operate the food booth or the event is not organized by a non-profit organization, a permit is required.

**There will only be one food booth at a Community Event. Do we need permits for both the event organizer and the temporary food facility?**

No, if there is only one food booth operating at a community event, a permit for the event organizer is not required. However, the Event Organizer Application and the Temporary Food Facility Application must still be completed and approved. You will only be charged the food booth fee.

**I have a permitted food truck/cart. Do I need a separate permit to operate at a Community Event?**

No, if you have a current Los Angeles County Public Health Permit for your mobile food facility, you do not need a separate permit. You can operate at a community event as long as you follow normal operating requirements, however, the event organizer must include your cart or truck on their application and plot plan. Mobile food facilities that do not have a current Los Angeles County Public Health Permit, must obtain a permit as a temporary food facility to operate at a Community Event.

**Can I share a booth with another food operator and obtain one permit to lower our expenses?**

No, a permit is limited to one person, business, or organization. Each food operator is required to have their own permit to operate. The Department does not allow the consolidation of food operations or sharing a food booth for the purpose of obtaining a single permit.

## TEMPORARY FOOD FACILITY REQUIREMENTS

### HEALTH PERMIT

Every temporary food facility that participates in a community event must have a valid Community Event/Seasonal Event Permit. The permit is only valid for the specified site, dates, and business or organization. Each permit is limited to one food facility operated by one owner. Two or more business or organization operating in a contiguous area may not combine their booths for the purpose of obtaining a single permit. The permit must be posted at the booth.

To obtain a permit, submit a Community Event Temporary Food Facility Application 30 days prior to the event to the District Office that covers the event location. An expedited processing fee equal to the greater of \$50.00 or 25 % of the permit fee will be assessed for an application submitted less than 14 calendar days prior to the start of the event.

## FOOD SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

### FOOD TEMPERATURES

Potentially Hazardous Foods (PHF) such as meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, cooked vegetables, and dairy products including cheese and milk must be held at or below 45°F, or at or above 135°F, not to exceed 12 hours in any 24-hour period. Provide accurate thermometers to test food temperatures.

- Dispose of all PHF held at 45°F or at or above 135°F at the end of the operating day.
- Maintain food at the required temperature during transport to the temporary food facility.



**COOKING TEMPERATURES**

Food must be cooked to the minimum required internal temperatures:

- 165°F for 15 seconds for poultry, ground or flaked poultry, stuffed fish, stuffed meat, stuffed poultry, and any food stuffed with fish, meat, or poultry.
- 155°F for 15 seconds for eggs, ground meat or chopped meat (e.g., hamburgers or sausage).
- 145°F for 15 seconds for fish and single pieces of meat including beef, veal, lamb, and pork.

**ADULTERATION**

Food must be maintained free from contamination. Food must be disposed of if contaminated.

**APPROVED FOOD SOURCE**

All food must come from an approved food facility. Food prepared or stored at home is prohibited. Sellers of certified agricultural products must possess a valid Certified Producer Certificate to be considered an approved source. Other food products must be processed or stored at a location regulated by an authority acceptable to the California Department of Public Health or Los Angeles County Environmental Health. Upon request by an inspector, a food vendor must provide verifications of approved food sources. Acceptable verifications can be receipts or a written agreement to use an approved facility.

Examples of approved sources include facilities that possess:

- A Food Registration from the State Food and Drug Branch (FDB)
- A valid permit from a local environmental health agency
- A federal inspection certificate
- Agreement for Sharing of a Permitted Facility

**Note:** Non-profit, charitable organizations may serve non-potentially hazardous baked goods that have been prepared in a private home. Examples include cookies, cakes, and muffins.

**LABELING/DISCLOSURE**

Prepackaged food sold directly to the customer must be prepared and packaged at an approved food facility. Prepackaged food must be clearly labeled with the following information:

1. Name of the item,
2. Weight or volume of the package,
3. Ingredient list, and
4. The name and location of the manufacturer.

**PURE FOOD/ICE**

Ice used for drinks should be stored in approved containers separate from ice used for food storage and cooling. Ice must be protected from contamination at all times.

**FOOD PREPARATION**

Food preparation must take place within the temporary food facility, in an approved kitchen, or commissary permitted by Environmental Health. Cooking food on barbecues, grills, or other equipment approved for outdoor cooking is allowed.

**FOOD STORAGE/DISPLAY**

- All food must be stored or displayed in approved food grade containers with lids, display cases or protected by sneeze guards.
- Provide separate coolers for raw meats and ready to eat foods.
- During hours of operation, containers of unopened, non-potentially hazardous foods may be stored adjacent to the food booth.



- When not in operation, protect the food from contamination by storing the food at a permitted food facility, inside a fully enclosed food booth, or in a lockable, vermin proof container.

### EMPLOYEE PRACTICES

Employees are required to:

- Wash their hands -
  - Immediately before engaging in food preparation.
  - After using the toilet facility.
  - As often as necessary to keep their hands clean and prevent cross contamination.
- Limit bare hand contact with ready-to-eat food and should use suitable utensils such as deli paper, spatulas, tongs, single-use gloves, or dispensing equipment.
- Wear gloves when contacting food or food contact surfaces when there are any cuts, burns, abrasions, artificial nails, nail polish, or a ring other than a plain wedding band.
- Wear clean clothing.
- Restrain hair with hat or other approved covering.
- Not smoke near, outside, or within the food booth.
- Not eat within the food booth.
- No sick employees may work at the event, as they are a source of possible disease transmission.

### EQUIPMENT AND UTENSIL SANITIZING

- Equipment and utensils must be cleaned and sanitized at least every 4 hours, when switching from raw animal products to cooked/ready to eat foods or at any time the utensil becomes contaminated.
- Utensils should be cleaned and sanitized in the dish washing sink by washing in the first compartment, rinsing in the second compartment, and sanitizing in the third compartment with an approved sanitizer.
- Provide a test kit to check the concentration of the sanitizer. Use sanitizer solutions at the appropriate strengths for the indicated time:
  - Chlorine (i.e. bleach) at 100 ppm for at least 30 seconds
  - Iodine at 25 ppm for at least 1 minute
  - Quaternary ammonium at 200 ppm for at least 1 minute

### DISH WASHING SINK (WARE WASHING SINK)

If the event organizer does not provide dish washing sinks, each temporary food facility operator with open food is responsible for providing their own approved sink. Dish washing sinks must meet the following requirements:

- Have three-compartments to wash, rinse, and sanitize utensils.
- Have two drain boards, one for dirty utensils and one for clean utensils.
- Have hot (120°F) and cold running water, overhead protection, and be connected to the sewer system or a holding tank.
- Be stocked with detergent and chlorine bleach or other approved sanitizer to wash, rinse and sanitize equipment and utensils.
- Have 25 gallons of potable water for each temporary food facility using the dish washing sink.

### Variances (must obtain prior approval from this department):

- Up to four (4) additional temporary food facilities may share a dish washing sink if the additional food facilities use less than four (4) multi-use utensils each.
- No dish washing sink is needed if only single-use disposable utensils are used for preparing or serving food and an adequate supply is maintained on site.



- For an event lasting less than four hours, a dish washing sink will not be required for each temporary food facility if:
  - At least one three-compartment sink is available, and
  - Temporary food facilities maintain a back-up supply of multi-use utensils.

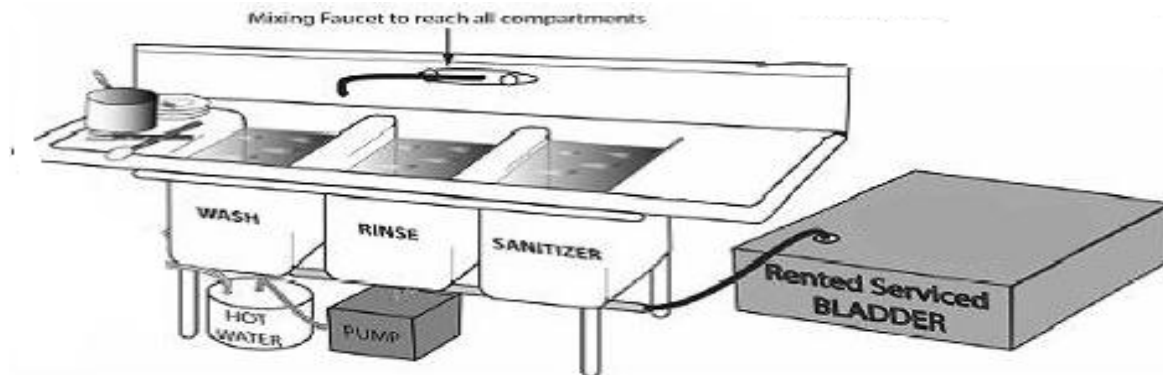


Figure 2 DISH WASHING SINK

### HAND WASHING FACILITIES

Each temporary food facility is responsible for having a self-contained portable sink with 5 gallons of warm water (100°F), liquid soap, single use towels, and a trash container available.

For events of three days or less a gravity-fed container (with a catch basin) that can provide a continuous stream of warm water (100°F) may be used in place of a portable sink.

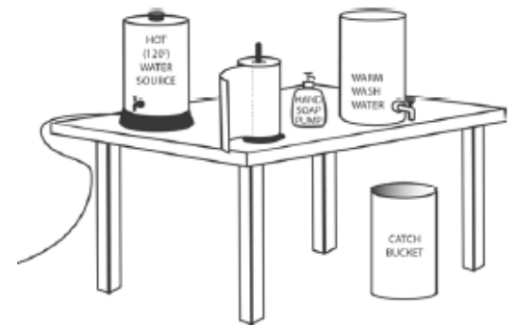


Figure 1 GRAVITY FED HAND WASH SET UP

### APPROVED EQUIPMENT/UTENSILS AND STORAGE

- All equipment and utensils should be commercial grade, in good repair, and clean.
- Equipment / utensils must be stored at least 6 inches above the floor, on tables or shelving.

### FOOD BOOTH

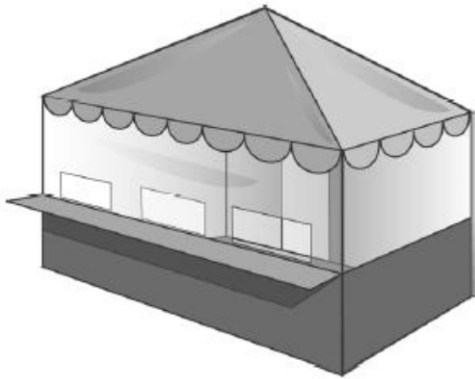
All food booths need to have overhead protection and a floor of concrete, asphalt, or wood.

Food booths with open foods are required to:

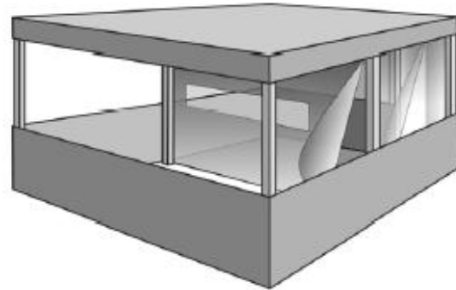
- Have four (4) walls of solid material or 16 mesh per square inch screen with pass through windows for customer service that are 216 square inches or less. Exception - If open food is limited to samples, walls are not required if samples are in covered containers.
- Locate barbecues, grills, or other approved outdoor cooking equipment adjacent to the food booth and with a barrier to prevent public access. Do not locate outdoor cooking equipment under trees.
- Be free from rodents, cockroaches, and flies

**Note:** For events lasting less than four hours, artificial turf, canvas, or other similar materials may be used if properly secured and do not present a tripping hazard. Dirt and grass are not acceptable floor surfaces.

**Obey all local fire department regulations regarding cooking equipment and food booths.**



**Figure 3 A FULLY ENCLOSED FOOD BOOTH FOR FOOD PREPARATION AND SERVICE**



**Figure 4 A SPLIT BOOTH WITH AN OPEN SERVICE AREA AND AN ENCLOSED REAR AREA FOR FOOD PREPARATION AND PACKAGING**

The business name must be displayed at each booth in letters that are at least three (3) inches high. The name of the owner, city, state, and zip code must be clearly displayed.

## FOOD TRUCKS AND FOOD CARTS

### FOOD TRUCKS AND FOOD CARTS WITH A CURRENT LOS ANGELES COUNTY PERMIT

- Permit posted on the truck or cart.
- Carts not required to be inside a tent.
- Food must be handled in compartments on the cart.
- Food trucks operating at a Certified Farmers' Market may store, display, and sell food from a table adjacent to the vehicle.

### FOOD TRUCKS AND FOOD CARTS WITHOUT A CURRENT LOS ANGELES COUNTY PERMIT

- Food truck and cart operators **WITHOUT** a current Los Angeles County Public Health Permit must apply as a temporary food facility and pay for a health permit.
- Food trucks and carts participating more than one day in an event must provide information on maintaining required food temperatures and storage of equipment during periods of non-operation and where and how the food truck or cart will be serviced (disposing wastewater, obtaining potable water, etc.) during periods of non-operation.
- Minimum requirements for dish washing, hand washing, maintaining food temperatures and food storage must be met as applicable. Equipment must be in working order.
- A food truck or cart without a permit from Los Angeles County or another jurisdiction must provide a direct connection to an approved water supply that bypasses the holding tank. Liquid waste must be removed through an approved connection to the sewer system or by an approved sewage transport vehicle.
- If direct connection to an approved water supply that bypasses the holding tank cannot be provided, the food truck or cart must utilize an external warewash and handwash sinks, and be subjected to the same warewash and handwash sinks requirements as that of a food booth.



## EVENT ORGANIZER REQUIREMENTS

### EVENT ORGANIZER PERMIT

The event organizer and every temporary food facility that participates in a community event must have a valid Public Health Permit. The permit is only valid for the specified site and dates. The permit must be posted at the facility. To obtain a permit, submit a Community Event Organizer Application or a Community Event Temporary Food Facility Application 30 days prior to the event to the local District Office that covers the event location. An expedited processing fee equal to the greater of \$50.00 or 25 percent of the permit fee will be assessed for any application submitted less than 14 calendar days prior to the start of the event.

- The event organizer permit and your approved plot plan must be available at the event.
- All food booths, food trucks, and food carts operating at the event must post their Public Health Permit.

### EVENT ORGANIZER RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the event organizer's responsibility to verify that temporary food facilities have adequate hand washing sinks, dish washing sinks, and toilet facilities before the community event starts. Hand washing sinks inside of a mobile food facility MAY NOT be substituted for a hand washing sink required at a restroom facility.

### DISH WASHING SINKS

It is the event organizer's responsibility to make sure the dish washing sinks meet the following requirements:

- Temporary food facilities with open food have properly set up dish washing sinks prior to the start of the event.
- Each dish washing sink has 25 gallons of potable water available for each temporary food facility using the sink.
- No more than four (4) temporary food preparation facilities share a dish washing sink.
- Sinks have hot (120°F) and cold running water and are properly connected to the sewer or holding tanks.

**Note:** Food trucks and food carts that are not approved to store water in holding tanks and are unable to connect to a water supply must use event organizer provided dish washing sinks.

### HAND WASHING FACILITIES

- See **TEMPORARY FOOD FACILITY** section for details.

### FOOD EMPLOYEE TOILET FACILITIES

- One (1) toilet for each 15 food employees is located within 200 feet of each food booth, food truck or food cart.
- One (1) hand washing sink with warm water (100°F), liquid soap, single use towels, and trash container for towel waste is available for every toilet.
- A sign should be provided indicating "Employees Only."

### PUBLIC TOILET FACILITIES

- Adequate toilet facilities (permanent or portable) are available for public use (See table below).
- One hand washing sink is available for every four (4) toilets. Sinks are stocked with liquid soap, single use towels, and a trash container for towel waste.



| Maximum Expected Daily Attendance | Number of Hours for Event |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|                                   | 1                         | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 |
|                                   | Number of Toilets Needed  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <500                              | 4                         | 4  | 4  | 6  | 6  | 6  | 8  | 8  | 8  | 8  |
| 500-1000                          | 4                         | 6  | 6  | 6  | 6  | 8  | 8  | 8  | 8  | 12 |
| 2000                              | 4                         | 8  | 8  | 8  | 8  | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 16 |
| 3000                              | 8                         | 8  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 12 | 16 | 16 | 20 | 20 |
| 4000                              | 8                         | 8  | 12 | 12 | 16 | 16 | 20 | 20 | 24 | 28 |
| 5000                              | 12                        | 12 | 12 | 16 | 20 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 34 |

### WATER SUPPLY

- Protect potable water sources with a backflow protection device when required by applicable plumbing codes.
- Use food grade hoses for connections.

### LIQUID WASTE

- A sewage transport vehicle is available (on call) to service portable toilets and remove liquid waste from sinks with holding tanks.
- Holding tanks must have a capacity 50% greater than the potable water tanks.

### TRASH/WASTE

- Trash containers with plastic bag inserts are available adjacent to food booths and throughout the event as needed.
- Trash containers are emptied and bags replaced on a regular basis to prevent a nuisance.

### ANIMALS

- Animals are maintained at least 20 feet away from food booths (except service animals).
- Animal waste from petting zoos or other animal attractions is removed on a daily basis and stored in a covered container.

*Thank you to Santa Barbara County Environmental Health for permission to use its food booth and sink illustrations.*

