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REMINDERS CONCERNING TEMPORARY FOOD ESTABLISHMENT OPERATIONS & VENDOR TIPS

The following items should be read and incorporated into your temporary food establishment operation. Remember, each foodservice operation must obtain a temporary food establishment permit prior to operating and must pay the required Temporary Food Establishment Permit fee prior to operating. The permit fee must be paid to the Gaston Environmental Health Department located at 991 West Hudson Blvd. in Gastonia, North Carolina. Stands that are non-profit, tax exempt, or those that sell only candy apples, cotton candy, popcorn, ice cream and bakery goods are exempt from this requirement. However, all participants for each event must fill out and submit an application to their event coordinator.

If you have any questions on foodhandling, permitting, or other foodservice concerns, you may reference our Web site at www.gastonpublichealth.org or contact Shawn Blackmon at (704) 853-5214 or by email at shawn.blackmon@co.gaston.nc.us.

1. No advanced food preparation is allowed prior to issuance of a temporary food establishment permit. This includes marinating meat, peeling/cutting of vegetables and fruits, preparing sauces, etc. **Food and drink prepared at events outside of North Carolina or in a home cannot be sold in a temporary food establishment. Please consult this Department prior to scheduling an inspection if you have food prepared at a permitted food service establishment within North Carolina.** Examples include sliced vegetables, marinated meats, etc.
2. All raw meat and poultry products must be purchased in a "ready to cook" form. For example, if you wanted to prepare chicken fajitas, you would purchase the raw chicken already cut into slices, cubes, etc. No cutting of raw meats, deboning, or de-skinning is allowed in a temporary food establishment.
3. When holding hot foods on steam tables, grills or in hot boxes or insulated containers, the food must be kept at 135°F or above throughout.
4. Cold foods in refrigerators, ice pans or insulated containers must be kept at 45°F or below.
5. When cooking poultry or pork, or when reheating any perishable leftovers, all portions of these foods should be heated to at least 165°F. Hamburger must be cooked well done to 155°F.
6. A properly calibrated food thermometer (metal stem type - 0°-220°F) is needed for checking the perishable food temperatures. In addition, refrigerators should have thermometers in them for routine checking of air temperatures in these units.

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7. A bleach and water solution is required for routine sanitizing of food preparation surfaces in all establishments. The solution can be made by pouring approximately 1 capful of household chlorine bleach into 1 gallon of water. Use the cap from the bleach bottle to measure out 1 capful. This sanitizing solution should be checked with chlorine test strips to insure a mixture of 50-100 parts per million. This solution will kill germs which may not be fully removed with normal soap and water cleaning and should be applied (wiped on or sprayed on) to utensils after cleaning and allowed to remain for two minutes. Examples for use would be on cutting boards, preparation tables, food containers, spoons, spatulas, and other surfaces used for direct food contact.
8. Remember, when food is stored, displayed, or prepared in areas accessible to the public it must be protected by sneeze guards or counter protectors on the front, sides, and top of the display so as to protect the food from coughs, sneezes, or other contact. This is especially important when foods are located at the front or side of your tent.
9. Drinking water connections to food stands should be through a "potable" water hose designed for drinking water to avoid the bad taste and other effects of chemicals leaching into water such as can occur in regular garden hoses. Of course, a special hose is not needed for waste drainage. Remember, however, not to use a hose for drinking water connection that has ever been used for waste drainage.
10. Perishable frozen foods should be thawed in refrigerators whenever possible. Too frequently we are measuring "thawing" food temperatures at 60°F, 70°F, or even 80°F. These temperatures are ideal for bacterial growth, which could lead to foodborne illness.
11. Personal hygiene is very important in food protection. Remember to require hands to be washed after each visit to the toilet, after handling raw food products such as raw chicken, after eating or smoking, and after handling unclean objects such as garbage cans. Frequent hand washing should be the routine for a food handler. Remember also not to allow persons to handle food who are sick with fever, vomiting or diarrhea. Those who have open cuts or sores on the hands must not handle food unless foodservice gloves can be used as a barrier. Finally, food handlers should not smoke or eat while handling food and they should have clean outer clothing and use headwear.
12. Ask your event coordinator if a power source is provided. If not, you must provide your own power source.
13. Hair restraints are to be worn at all times. These can be baseball caps, hairnets, or sun visors.
14. You must have effective fly protection. You may do this by providing box fans (a minimum of two) over food preparation and serving areas.
15. Permitted Mobile Food Units and Push Carts in North Carolina must provide a photocopy of their Permit to Operate and their most current Inspection Sheet.