

Frequently Asked Questions About Temporary Food Facilities

Why do food booths serving food to the public need to get a temporary restaurant license?

In order to protect the public's health, the Health Department requires all food service facilities to obtain a license and be inspected. Through inspection, the Health Department is able to identify hazardous conditions that allow bacteria to grow, and bacteria and viruses to be spread to food items. These are the conditions that are responsible for causing food-borne illnesses. After identifying these conditions the Health Department is able to work with the operator of the food booth to eliminate and control these conditions.

What is an event and do I need a temporary restaurant license?

A temporary restaurant is any establishment operating temporarily in connection with any event where food is prepared or served for consumption to the public. Examples of events are:

- Fairs
- Circuses
- Concerts
- Carnivals
- Festivals
- Similar Public Gatherings

Are there foods that do not require a temporary restaurant license?

The following are some activities that are exempt from licensure:

- Cookies, confections, cotton candy, popcorn, nuts, or candied apples.
- Commercially packaged ice-cream, frozen desserts, potato chips, pretzels, and crackers
- Commercially processed pickles and jerky.
- Coffee (not espresso) and tea with non-potentially hazardous ingredients, and canned or bottled pop, alcoholic beverages or other non-perishable beverages served in their original container (not with ice).
- A food product promotion where only a sample (two to three ounce portion) of a food or beverage is offered to demonstrate the characteristics of the food product.
- Private events limited to members and/or invited guests are not public events and are not required to obtain a temporary restaurant license.

Do I need a temporary restaurant license if I am serving food to the members of my church, or fraternal organization?

If you are serving food to known groups of people such as your church members, fraternities, your family, or other closed and known groups of people, then a temporary restaurant license is not required. However, if members of the general public are invited to attend along with the members of your group, then a license is required.

How early should I apply for a temporary restaurant license before the special event?

An application for a temporary restaurant should be received in our office no later than two weeks before the event. This enables our department to review your application ahead of time to address any possible concerns indicated on the application.

Is there a fee for a temporary restaurant license?

Yes, there is a fee for each license. These fees vary according to types of food served and the length in days of each event. To identify the fee required refer to the [FEE SCHEDULE](#).

Can I prepare food at home and bring it to the special event to finish cooking, and/or service?

No. All food preparation, storage, handling, portioning, scooping, etc. must be done in a facility licensed by the Health Department, or Department of Agriculture (e.g. restaurant, or bakery). Absolutely no food from home is allowed.

Do I have to have a food handler's card?

Anyone working with food in the State of Oregon is required to have a food handler's card. However, if this is a once a year event where the event only lasts for a few days, and the organization or business is not doing other events later on, then having one person in charge at all times with a valid card will be accepted.

What do I need to set up a temporary restaurant?

There are a few items:

- **An Approved Kitchen** – If any food is to be prepared ahead of time, stored, or handled at a different location than the event, then it must be done in an approved and licensed kitchen.
- **Hand washing** – A hand washing station providing free flowing water must be set up inside the booth. This can be as simple as a 5+ gallon container with a faucet on the bottom which can drain out fresh warm water, a 5+ gallon bucket underneath to catch the falling water, liquid soap, and paper towels. The spigot must be the type that can stay on by itself so that you can wash both hands under the running water.
- **Cold and Hot Holding Facilities** – For cold items you can use commercial refrigerators, ice chests, and refrigerator trucks work well. For hot items you can use grills, steam tables, ovens, and/or burners.
- **Roof and Floor** – Unless you are inside a building your will need these items. For a roof a tarp like rain cover should suffice. For a floor sheets of plywood work well, unless you happen to be on concrete which will suffice.
- **Probe Thermometer** – A pocket probe thermometer with a range of 0 – 220° F is needed to check food temperatures.
- **Sanitizing Cloths** – A one gallon bucket of water with 100-ppm free chlorine (about a teaspoon/tablespoon of bleach is needed to sanitize food contact surfaces.)

When do I get my license to operate my food booth?

On the first day of the event a representative of the Health Department will come out and inspect your food service operation. After your operation has obtained a full inspection and all issues have been addressed, your food booth will then be given a license to operate.

For how long is the temporary restaurant license approved?

Each temporary restaurant license is only good for the event, location, and dates for which it was issued. All benevolent licenses are good for a maximum of three consecutive days, and all non-benevolent licenses are good for a maximum of 30 consecutive days. Should the same event last for longer than 30 days then more than one temporary restaurant license would be required for a non-benevolent license.

What is an ongoing event and do I qualify?

An ongoing event is when a temporary restaurant operating on an intermittent basis in conjunction with 6 or more retail vendors (includes other temporary restaurants, plant sales, clothing and arts & craft vendors). The temporary restaurant must not move from its same specific location and must operate two or more times within a 30 day period. Such operation shall be issued one license for each 30-day period and that the total amount of temporary restaurant license fees for a calendar year shall not exceed the highest annual restaurant license fee. Examples of ongoing events are:

- Saturday Markets
- Farmer's Markets

How do I get started?

You may call our office at 503-988-3400 and request a temporary restaurant packet. In this packet you will find an application for a temporary restaurant license, as well as other useful information on how to set up your temporary restaurant. If you are an old pro at temporary restaurants and just want an application, then just download and print the temporary restaurant application off of this website, fill it out, and mail or fax it to us:

Multnomah County Environmental Health Dept
847 NE 19th Ave, Suite 350, Portland, OR 97232
or FAX to (503) 988-5844.

What if I just have a question about temporary restaurants?

If you just have a question, you may call our office at 503-988-3400 between 8am and 5pm Monday through Friday, and speak to an Environmental Health Specialist who will answer your question. Or send an email anytime to: FoodSafety@co.multnomah.or.us