



Food Stand Operations— What you need to know



Food stands are an important part of many community celebrations and athletic events. Selling a variety of food and beverages can be an effective fundraising activity—but ONLY if no one gets sick. Organizers and workers need to be aware of certain regulations and develop safe procedures BEFORE the event.

Who's in charge?

A person knowledgeable about food preparation and service should coordinate and supervise the food stand. Ideally this person has completed a certification course in food safety, such as the ServSafe® program of the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (see page 4 for details).

What permits are required?

Most food stands qualify as a temporary food establishment because it is where “food is prepared or handled and because the stand is operated at the same location and at a single event or celebration (such as a fair, carnival or festival) for no more than 14 consecutive days.” Iowa Code requires temporary food establishments to hold a permit (currently about \$35).

Temporary foodservice establishments require regulatory oversight because many people may be served. Event food stands at community celebrations require this permit and are subject to inspection. For more information, contact your local health inspector or the Department of Inspections and Appeals.

Concession stands affiliated with public school districts and located on school property may be covered under the district's foodservice establishment permit IF the school district is responsible for the food served.

Questions for consideration in this decision are:

- Does the school district take responsibility for foods sold at school concession stands?
- What is the school district's liability if someone becomes ill from eating concessions?
- What organizations are selling food at school activities?
- What food safety training is offered to organization volunteers?

With few exceptions, concessions operations in school districts are subject to their own licensing and regulation.

Are there any types of food stands that do not require permits?

Permits are not required for stands that only serve bottled water or cans of soda, or for produce stands that sell only whole, uncut fresh fruits or vegetables.

Non-profit organizations that serve only prepackaged foods are not required to have a permit if the foods served are not potentially hazardous or do not require temperature control.

What about bake sales?

- Bake sales are generally not required to have a permit or prior health approval IF all of the proceeds are going to a non-profit organization.
- Products typically suggested for bake sales include breads, cakes, buns, rolls, cookies, bars, and pies (except meat, custard, and cream pies).
- Organizers and sponsors should follow good sanitary practices when planning, organizing, and holding a bake sale. Items that are potentially hazardous can not be sold (see list on page 2).
- Bake sale products should be packaged and have a label listing the common name of the product, ingredients used, and name and address of the food preparer.
- It is advisable to wrap bake sale items in ready-to-sell amounts to protect from contamination during display.

Individuals may not use another individual's license to produce or sell food.

Non-profit organizations that are registered with the state of Iowa, serve food on their own premises only once per week and not on two consecutive days, do not need a permit.

What are potentially hazardous foods?

Foods that support rapid growth of infectious or toxic microorganisms are more likely to cause foodborne illness. Examples of potentially hazardous foods, also known as foods temperature controlled for safety, include:

- raw or cooked food from animals (meat, eggs, poultry, etc.)
- raw seed sprouts
- cut melons
- sliced tomatoes
- heat treated plant foods
- washed and chopped leafy greens
- garlic and oil mixtures
- dairy products
- custard and cream pies

What types of foods are ok to sell?

Menu items that are “food stand friendly” should be sold. For example, coconut cream pie requires constant refrigeration so apple pie might be a better choice.

Certain foods should not be sold unless you can guarantee that they will be handled properly and stored safely at correct hot (above 135°F) and cold (below 41°F) temperatures. Consider the types and amounts of storage space, cooking equipment, and other utilities that will be available.

What utilities are needed?

The amount of on-site cooking and the types of foods served at a food stand will dictate what utilities are needed.

A source of potable water is required unless only prepackaged food and beverages are sold. An approved water source is needed if handling unpackaged foods or beverages, even coffee.

Planning tips

- Products that have not been processed in a state- or federally-inspected facility and under supervision of state or federal inspector (for meats) are prohibited from sale to the public. Examples include home-canned salsa and meats.
- The seller/license holder must prepare potentially hazardous foods in a licensed kitchen or cook at the service site to avoid excessive holding times and temperature abuse. Be sure there is adequate storage space for hot and cold foods.
- To maintain good product quality, plan food preparation so that hot, potentially hazardous foods are served as soon as possible after cooking.
- Consider using pre-cooked, potentially hazardous foods—such as ground beef crumbles—to avoid temperature abuse and risk of cross-contamination.
- Separate work areas should be provided for foods that are prepared from raw ingredients (such as meat) and for foods that are ready to eat (such as bread, produce items, cooked meats and desserts).
- Pre-chill any ingredients to be used in cold food menu items.
- Use proper equipment. For example, wooden cutting boards or rubber cleaning gloves should not be used in contact with food.
- Schedule work assignments to include enough time for orientation and training about proper handwashing, food handling and

service, and cleaning practices with food stand volunteers. Allow time for questions so all volunteers understand *what* they are to do and *why* it is important to follow the guidelines.

- Portable handwashing stations can be purchased for about \$400 or rented for a nominal fee. A portable handwashing station can be set up using a container that holds a minimum of 2 to 5 gallons of potable water and with a dispenser valve that enables a constant flow of water when opened. Waste water must be collected and disposed of in a sanitary sewer. Soap from a sanitary dispenser and disposable towels must be provided.
- Provide volunteers with the proper supplies for cleaning. This includes a drinkable water supply, cleaning agents, cloths for counters, mops for floors, aprons for staff, etc.
- Use temperature gauges and accurate thermometers (available for less than \$10) to ensure accurate measurements of food temperatures and temperatures inside storage units (such as coolers). Routinely monitor hot, cold, and cooking temperatures of foods.
- All food supplies must come from an approved source, such as a wholesale or retail outlet. All foods must be delivered to the stand in the manufacturer's original package accompanied by an invoice or receipt.
- Remind those contributing non-potentially hazardous food for non-profit events to be sure items are tightly wrapped or sealed and transported in clean vehicles at proper temperatures. Foods should not be transported in open containers along with family pets.
- Communicate with donors of food that it is expected reasonable care is taken in prep and transport of food.

- Maintain a list of contributors of non-potentially hazardous foods. Include name, address, telephone number, name or type of food donated, list of ingredients used, and dates food was prepared and accepted.

- Keep a log of workers/volunteers that includes name, contact information, and hours and shifts worked for at least 30 days after the event has ended.

Food Stand Operations

What is done at home may not be acceptable when serving large groups, as there is greater public health risk.

Everyone working in the food stand should receive training in basic guidelines related to:

- health and hygiene,
- food preparation and handling practices, and
- proper cleaning procedures.

Health and Hygiene

- Individuals should not work on days when they have a fever, nausea, diarrhea, or have been infected with Norovirus, Hepatitis A, Nontyphoidal *Salmonella*, *Salmonella* Typhi, shiga toxin-producing *E. coli*, and *Shigella* spp.

- Remind workers to wash their hands for 20 seconds. Wet with warm water, lather with soap for 10-15 seconds and rinse:

- when entering the work area,
- after touching any part of their face or body (no finger licking)
- after touching money or other unclean surfaces,
- after using the toilet,
- before handling food,
- before putting on gloves, and
- after taking out garbage.

- Plastic gloves should be changed frequently and worn over clean hands.

- Clean aprons should be worn while in the food stand and removed when leaving the food stand.

- Jewelry (except a watch and plain ring band) should not be worn because it can contaminate food or fall into food products. For the same reason, fingernail polish and fake nails should not be worn.

- Hair must be effectively restrained.

Food Preparation and Handling

- Keep raw ingredients separate from foods that won't receive additional cooking.

- Work tasks should be organized to reduce cross-contamination risks. For example, an individual who is working with raw foods should not be handling cooked and ready-to-eat foods at the same time. Individuals who are handling soiled dishware and garbage should not be serving food at the same time.

- Meats and casseroles must be cooked to proper temperatures—ground beef to a minimum of 155°F and casseroles to 165°F—as shown by an accurate thermometer.

- Routinely monitor to ensure hot foods are kept hot (above 135°F) and cold foods cold (below 41°F). Avoid the “Temperature Danger Zone” (TDZ) between 41° and 135°F. Use thermometers to check food and internal temperature gauges to check storage units.

- Discard any potentially hazardous food item if not served within four hours after cooking. Cook food at staggered times so fresh batches are available throughout the serving period.

- Limit time between preparation and service as much as possible. Set out small amounts of product at a time to minimize time in the TDZ.

- Use plastic gloves or utensils to avoid bare hand contact with foods. Change gloves with each new task (after washing hands).

- Use a separate serving utensil for each dish. Be sure handles are long enough to prevent sliding into the dish. Change out service utensils frequently.

Cleaning and Sanitizing

- Work counters and equipment should be cleaned and sanitized thoroughly and regularly.

- Both dishwashing detergent and hand soap should be available.

- A surface looks clean if there is no visible debris. But invisible, harmful bacteria can be present. When serving large groups, it is necessary to practice an extra level of care, so sanitizing is needed.

- Non-scented chlorine bleach is an effective and inexpensive over-the-counter sanitizing agent. Two teaspoons of concentrated bleach (containing 8.25% sodium hypochlorite) mixed with one gallon of warm water will make an effective sanitizer that can be used on visibly clean surfaces. New batches should be mixed periodically because chlorine is broken down by food particles and other organic materials. Buckets and spray bottles can be used but should be clearly labeled.

- Cloths and buckets should be used only for cleaning or sanitizing purposes and not have any contact with food or ice. A drinkable water supply is needed for cleaning.

- Surfaces and items should be washed and rinsed before the sanitizer is applied. Otherwise, the sanitizer's effectiveness is minimized by the food particles, other debris, or the detergent residue.

Where can I get more info?

Regulations

Questions about the regulations for foodservice establishments and food stands should be directed to the health inspector in your area or to:

Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals

Lucas State Office Building

Des Moines, IA 50319

(515) 281-6538

www.food.iowa.gov

Local health department contact information by county

www.dia.iowa.gov/page27.html

Temporary Food Establishment Guidelines

www.dia.iowa.gov/page3.html

License Application

www.dia.iowa.gov/page29.html

Publications

Several publications are available from the Extension Store. Go to store.extension.iastate.edu, and enter the reference number in the search box to find these resources:

- *Glove Use in Retail Foodservice Establishments*, PM 2070
- *Safe Food Is YOUR Job*, PM 1419
- *Be Food Safe*, PM 2062
- *Food Safety Tips for Food Stand Volunteers*, SP 452
- *Thermometer Use in Retail Foodservice Establishments*, PM 2083
- *Starting a Home-based Food Business in Iowa*, PM 1294
- *Stop! Did You Wash Your Hands*, PM 3015

Cooking for Groups: A Volunteer's Guide to Food Safety is available from USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service at www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/food-safety-education/teach-others/download-materials

On-line training

For when-you-need-it information—including videos and short lessons—visit the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Food Safety Project website at:

www.iowafoodsafety.org

Face-to-face training

Registration information for these two programs is available from local Iowa State University Extension and Outreach offices and from www.iowafoodsafety.org



ServSafe®

This nationally recognized certification program is recommended for the person in charge of the food stand. The day-long course is taught at various locations throughout the state in partnership with the Iowa Restaurant Association and includes a textbook and sitting fee for the certification exam. The cost is about \$150 per person.



SafeFood™ Program

This two- to four-hour program covers basic information related to food handling practices and avoiding contamination. It can be taught on site and tailored to fit the group's needs. Participants receive educational handouts, a thermometer, or other useful tools to ensure food safety in operations. The registration fee is about \$30 per person. Contact the Nutrition and Wellness Specialist serving your area.

General questions

If you have questions related to other aspects of food safety when serving food to the public, contact

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Find the Nutrition and Wellness Specialist serving your county:

www.extension.iastate.edu/

humansciences/staff-nutrition-wellness

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