

SERVING SAFE FOOD AT SPECIAL EVENTS

Successful ventures in food service at special events can be achieved when the requirements outlined in DCMR Title 25-A, also known as the DC Food Code, are diligently followed. The Food Safety and Hygiene Inspection Services Division (FSHISD) will have inspectors on-site during the special event to ensure that all of the requirements as stated in the DC Food Code are being met throughout the event. If, during the inspections, the sanitarian finds that the operation may threaten the health or safety of the patrons, the vendor or event organizer will be required to correct the violations. If there is an inability or unwillingness to correct violations observed, the vendor may be required to suspend or discontinue their operation. During the day(s) of the event, there will be one (1) sanitarian conducting inspections for every ten (10) vendors. Every attempt will be made for all food service operators to be inspected prior to conducting any sales. **The number of food vendors participating must be consistent with the number of vendors as endorsed on the Special Event Application Questionnaire.**

All vendors are required to have enough hot water (100°F) for hand-washing throughout the event. This can be accomplished by a temporary hand washing station equipped with an insulated, free-flowing water dispensing thermos, a catch bucket for waste water, soap, and paper towels. The vendor must also have enough hot water for warewashing (110°F), with a temporary three-compartment sink set-up for washing, rinsing, and sanitizing dishes. Appropriate sanitizer and test kit is required for warewashing. Hot water must be available throughout the event. **If the vendor is unable to obtain hot water for hand washing and warewashing, the event organizer will be responsible for providing an approved method of supplying sufficient hot water for all vendors.** The vendor is responsible for ensuring the safety of their food operation including, but not limited to, adequate temperature control, proper food handling and protection practices, and proper employee hygiene to include frequent, thorough hand washing.

Special event guidelines for temporary food service operations are available for vendors participating in the event. These guidelines will aid in ensuring that vendors at the event are aware of and follow the requirements. Please provide the FSHISD with a list of the potential vendors for the event with the following information:

- Name of lead vendor (person in charge at the vendor's stall or area)
- Alternate point of contact
- Trade name or food establishment association
- Contact telephone number(s)
- On-site cell phone number to be available during event
- Contact e-mail address(es)
- Contact mailing address
- Menu/food items to be offered for sale
- Name of the event, dates/times of event, and name of the organizer

Please e-mail this information to food.safety@dc.gov or fax to **(202) 535-1359**.

For events where food is not offered for sale, but is to be distributed at no cost, to participants or spectators, vending operations must still meet the requirements of the DC Food Code and serve food safely.

Questions? Contact us at (202) 535-2189 or Food.Safety@dc.gov

CHECKLIST FOR COMPLIANCE AT A SPECIAL EVENT

- ✓ Set up a temporary **hand washing station** with the following:
 - Free-flowing water dispenser. Water must be at least 100 °F
 - Catch bucket
 - Paper towels (no cloth towels)
 - Soap
- ✓ Set up a temporary **warewashing station** for washing utensils and food contact surfaces
 - Warewashing stations must be provided at special events where food is prepared
 - Utensils and food contact surfaces must be washed, rinsed, sanitized, and air dried
 - 1 Container of hot (110°F), soapy water
 - 1 Container of clean rinse water
 - 1 Container of sanitizer (Chlorine, Quaternary Ammonium, or Iodine)
- ✓ **Wash your hands often!** You can help prevent the spread of disease!
- ✓ Set up a **temporary warewashing area** with the following:
 - Three bins for washing, rinsing, and sanitizing any of your utensils or equipment:
 - Soapy water
 - Clean rinse water
 - Sanitizer (don't forget your test strips!)
 - * TIP: Generally, one cap full of bleach per 1 gallon of water will be sufficient for your sanitizing solution.
- ✓ **Protect your food!** Keep food off the ground, use sneeze guards when food is on display, cover foods when not in use.
- ✓ Bring **thermometers** for checking food temperatures.
- ✓ Keep **hot foods hot** (135°F or higher) and **cold foods cold** (41°F or less).
- ✓ **Reheat foods** as close to the time of sale or serving as is reasonably possible (165°F for 15 seconds).
- ✓ Make sure your food handlers are educated on serving safe food and monitor them throughout the event. We love to see **Certified Food Protection Managers** and Food Handlers at these events!!
- ✓ Handle food with gloves, tongs, spoons, or other suitable barriers. **Do not handle food with bare hands!**
- ✓ Make sure all food workers are wearing **hair restraints, gloves, and clean clothing.**
- ✓ **Keep your area clean!** Clean up your trash and keep an eye out for melting ice on the ground.
- ✓ Have a **trash can with a lid** to keep away pests and reduce foul odors.
- ✓ Unpackaged, prepared food remaining at the end of the day should be **thrown away!**

Remember: if during an inspection we find that your food service operation is not following the above guidelines and it poses a risk to public health, **we may require that you discard food or shut down your operation completely.**

Be prepared to serve safe food and don't forget to wash your hands!

Have questions? Call us at (202)535-2180 or email Food.Safety@dc.gov