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## Environmental Health Services

126 W 5th Street, Benson, Arizona 85602  
TEL (520)586-8208  
EMAIL  
envhealth@cochise.az.gov

### Special Event Food Service Requirements for Food Vendors

1. All special event food vendors must meet the current FDA Food Code requirements pertaining to cooking, storage, transportation, cleaning, hand washing, etc. The operational requirements below give rules and instructions on preparing and selling food outdoors. ***Before filling out the application PLEASE take the time to carefully read through the outline of requirements listed below.*** Cochise County Environmental Health *strongly encourages* the applicant to be *very specific* and *communicative* during the application and plan review process to prevent any inconvenience for anyone at the event! If the applicant does not meet all requirements, a permit to operate will not be issued until compliance is achieved; facilities operating without a permit will be ordered to cease operations until all requirements have been met.
2. To operate a special event food booth in Cochise County, each food vendor must submit an application and payment at least 14 business days prior to the event. **Applications and payments received after the 14 business days maybe denied.** A permit to operate is valid for a single event. If obtaining a annual permit, please list all events you plan to attend. *If another event(s) comes available to you during that time that you did not anticipate, you can update your application on the portal, email [njohnson@cochise.az.gov](mailto:njohnson@cochise.az.gov), call (520) 586-8208, with the additional event(s) to be attended.*
3. **Who needs to apply for a permit?** Anyone (including licensed facilities) who *vends* or *samples* the following: non-potentially hazardous foods such as fountain drinks, hot drinks, snow cones, caramel apples, popcorn, cotton candy, kettle corn, alcohol, etc.; prepared potentially hazardous foods such as hot dogs, hamburgers, bbq, pizza, etc. If you have a question about whether you need a permit, please contact our office at (520) 586-8200.

### Operational Requirements for Special Event Food Service

1. **TENTS:**
  - a) Tents must have an overhead covering and be enclosed on at least **3 sides** using 16 mesh screening, tarps or a combination of the two. There are tent manufacturers that make screens with pass through windows. If screening is used, other wall covering(s) must be available onsite in case of inclement weather.
  - b) Tent floors must be on smooth, washable, non-absorbent surfaces. Tarps, duckboards, and concrete are approved materials. Dirt, gravel and grass are not approved.
  - c) Food preparation in a tent is very limited! Washing, cutting, and other types of preparation **CANNOT** be done in a tent. You will be required to either prepare food in a commissary (commissary agreement provided to County) or purchase the food commercially processed

(bring receipts with you so we can verify when & where food was purchased). Keep this in mind when filling out the menu section of the application. Be specific on how food items are purchased and then prepared.

- a. Food service allowed in a tent (see below) include:
  - i. Cooking of pre-formed hamburgers/hot dogs.
  - ii. Grilling/BBQing meats that have been prepared in an enclosed mobile unit or commissary.
  - iii. Cooking/reheating of commercially processed foods.
  - iv. Deep frying of commercially processed foods, such as fish & chips, corn dogs, etc.
  - v. Preparation of non-potentially hazardous foods such as kettle corn, lemonade/orange drinks, cotton candy; etc.
- d) The County will allow the cutting of some non-potentially hazardous food in a tent (see below). This includes the cutting of highly acidic foods such as lemons, limes, oranges, grapefruit and pineapple. Samplers with small quantities of non-potentially hazardous food (i.e. power bars, bread, etc.) can cut these items in a tent without a hazard analysis and critical control point (HAACP) and variance. Vegetables, non-acidic fruit and other food CANNOT be cut in a tent without completing a HAACP and receiving approval from the County.
- e) **HAACP (prior Approval) for Tents:** If more advanced food preparation in a tent is desired (i.e.: cutting of vegetables, non-acidic fruits, skewering of fruit, cutting of cooked meat, etc.) a written hazard analysis and critical control point (HAACP) plan must be submitted to the County and receive approval by the County. A HAACP will not be approved and no approval granted if the tent does not have an overhead covering and 4 sides using 16 mesh screening, tarps or a combination of the two.

2. **Commercially manufactured mobile units** are *preferred* for outdoor food preparation. Mobile units allow for more complicated menus. Mobile units must be equipped with the following:
  - a) Plumbed 3 bin sink with potable hot and cold running water and large enough to accommodate the largest piece of equipment used in the operation. There must be drain boards on either side of the 3-bin sink to store dirty and clean equipment and/or overhead racks.
  - b) Plumbed hand wash sink with potable hot and cold running water, dispensed soap and paper towels.
  - c) Food preparation sink (menu dependent).
  - d) Commercial refrigeration capable of keeping food at 41°F or less and/or freezers that maintain 0°F or less.
  - e) A wastewater storage tank at least 15 % greater than the freshwater tank.
  - f) The mobile unit must be enclosed to prevent the entrance of insects and rodents. Service windows must be screened (16 mesh) or capable of being closed during times of slow business.

### 3. Refrigeration:

- a) Commercial **refrigerators** are REQUIRED when potentially hazardous foods will be served at multi-day events and raw meats **MUST** be stored in commercial refrigerators, *no exceptions*. **Coolers** will only be approved under the following circumstances:
  - i. To store potentially hazardous foods for ONE day events,
  - ii. To store potentially hazardous foods at a Multi-Day event IF the food is stored overnight in a commercial refrigerator onsite or an approved commissary (a signed commissary agreement must be submitted with the application),
  - iii. Or for non-potentially hazardous foods like soda, condiments, raw vegetables, etc.

You must disclose on the application HOW foods will be kept cold and/or hot during transportation, and where food will be stored when the booth is not operational.

4. **Cooking/Hot & Cold holding equipment** should be NSF/ANSI sanitation underwritten. Home-style equipment may not be adequate or allowed.
5. **Temperatures.** Temperatures of food must be maintained throughout the event. All potentially hazardous food must be maintained at 41 °F or less or 140 °F or greater. If time as a control is used, food must be used or thrown away after 4 hours. This **MUST** be documented in writing through a log, stickers, etc.
6. **Thermometers.** Ambient air thermometers are required to be calibrated and to be present in all refrigeration equipment. **Metal Stem Probe Thermometers** are required to be calibrated and used to check internal food temperatures. Metal stem probe thermometers must have a range between 0°F – 220°F.
7. **Produce Washing.** Produce must be rinsed and scrubbed before preparation and service and must be washed in a plumbed food preparation sink. Produce cannot be rinsed and scrubbed in tents or in buckets or tubs. Produce can be purchased pre-washed, shredded, diced, and sliced.
8. **Bare hand food contact is not allowed.** Please use single-use non-latex gloves, tongs, spatulas, tissue paper, etc. when handling ready-to-eat food. Food handlers must understand and demonstrate when gloves need to be changed, i.e. before starting work, after handling raw meats, after handling dirty equipment/utensils, etc.
9. **Protecting Food from Contamination.** All food and food equipment must be stored at least 6 inches off the ground AND must be stored covered to protect against inclement weather and insects/rodents.
10. **Hand Washing Stations** (plumbed or gravity flow) must be available in each food booth and be able to contain a minimum of 5 gallons of water. If an insulated container is used, it must have a free flow spigot, a wastewater container at least 15% larger, liquid soap and dispensed paper towels. Water can be heated onsite and then poured into insulated container(s).

11. **Dishwashing.** The following options are available for cleaning of equipment and utensils:

- a) Manual or mechanical (dishwasher) at a licensed facility (commissary agreement must be provided to the County),
- b) Manual washing using a plumbed 3 compartment sink or 3 bin setup onsite,
- c) Back-up or extra utensils onsite,
- d) Single use/disposal utensils onsite

Dishwashing procedure is:

**WASH – RINSE – SANITIZE – AIR DRY**

12. **Sanitizers** must be available for the 3-bin sink AND in buckets with wiping cloths for sanitizing surfaces. Test strips specific to the type of chemical that will be used as a sanitizer must be available to measure the concentration of the chemical in solution. Approved sanitizers include chlorine/bleach, quaternary ammonium, and iodine. EPA approved sanitizing wipes are allowed in lieu of sanitizing buckets.
13. **Chemical Storage.** Chemicals must be labelled and stored in a manner to prevent food contamination. Sanitizer buckets must be labelled.
14. **Refuse Storage.** Trash containers must be covered or sealed to prevent harborage of insects and/or rodents.
15. **Food Protection.** Food and condiments must have protection (i.e. sneeze guard, lids) to prevent food contamination. Grills, cooking surfaces or tables with unprotected food must have a barrier from the public (i.e. sneeze guard, table in-between). Drinking and eating should not occur in the food preparation areas. If personal beverages are in food preparation areas, they must have lids.
16. **Water containers** *must be sanitized and air dried BEFORE the container is filled with potable water.* This includes containers used for hand washing, water for food preparation, dishwashing, etc.
17. **Water Requirements.** Water needs to come from an approved source. Approved sources include onsite at the event, from a licensed facility (with commissary agreement provided to County), or bottled water. Water cannot be obtained from a private residence, hotel room, etc. Water hoses must be NSF/food grade.
18. **Wastewater Requirements.** Wastewater must be stored in a container of adequate size to be able to properly dispose of into a sanitary sewer, mop sink or wastewater tank. Wastewater cannot be discarded by pouring on the ground! Some events may require grease trap interceptors. Please contact event coordinators for more information.

19. **Animals.** Animals are not permitted in food tents or mobile food units. Food booths must be at least 100 feet away from animal areas at events.
20. **Certified Food Handlers** must be at the booth during all hours of operation. All individuals preparing food **MUST** have a valid food handler card. For special events, food handler cards are not required to be obtained through Cochise County.

YOU MUST SUBMIT PROOF OF FOOD HANDLER CERTIFICATION WITH YOUR APPLICATION OR A PERMIT WILL NOT BE ISSUED.

21. **“Samplers”** include operations that give away small portions of nuts, dips, olives, jerky, etc. Depending upon the nature of your sampling operation, **SOME** of the requirements **MAY** be waived. However, **ALL** samplers must at a minimum have a tent, a hand washing station set up, and sanitizer with test strips (EPA approved sanitizing wipes are allowed in lieu of sanitizing buckets).

Samplers *do not* include outfits that sample chicken, cooked vegetables, or other potentially hazardous food.