

Temporary Food Establishment Permitting:

What is a Temporary Food Establishment? A Temporary Food Establishment ([WAC 246-215-131](#)) is where food is prepared and/or sold as a part of an event, with the same menu and at the same location, for (a) no more than 21 days in a row with a single event, such as a fair or festival, or (b) no more than three days a week as a part of an approved, re-occurring event, such as a farmers market or flea market.

Who needs to get a temporary permit? All individuals or groups planning to prepare and/or serve food at events that are *open to the public* are required to obtain a permit, even if the food is free. If you advertise—newspaper, television, internet or radio announcements, flyers, signs, banners, or other means to the public—you are required to get a permit.

Private events: Food served at events that are not open to the public must be provided from a licensed caterer or other licensed food service when there is compensation (a monetary charge or required donation) for the food (weddings, company banquets, private fundraisers etc.).

Why is a permit necessary? A Temporary Food Permit is required by state law (WAC 246-215) and it allows us to review your menu and processes, both in the office and in person, to make sure food safety rules are followed so that only *safe* food is served to the public. *Food service is serious business, as is preventing foodborne illness!*

Where can I get a permit application? A Temporary Food Permit application is available from the Grant County Health District (1038 West Ivy, Moses Lake), or by calling 509.766.7960, you may also print the application from our website (Application: [English/Español](#))

What are the requirements to operate?

1. Complete the Temporary Food Permit application.
2. Return the completed application to our office and pay the correct fee at least 10 business days before the event (fees are listed on the application and are based on the “risk level” of your proposed menu). Applications received less than 10 days before the event will be charged double the normal fee.
3. At the event, set up your temporary food establishment in accordance with the rules listed in the “Rules for Temporary Food Establishments” handout.
4. Make sure all food served at the event is either prepared onsite or was prepared at, and brought directly from, a licensed food establishment (restaurant, grocery store, licensed church/school kitchen).
5. Make sure at least 1 person-in-charge with a valid [Washington State Food Worker Card](#) is present at all times during the event.
6. You can begin your temporary food operation once **all** of the required items are in place (handwashing station, thermometers, overhead cover, etc.)

When will I be inspected? A food safety inspector will usually contact you by phone before the event to discuss your application and go over the rules. There will also be an inspection of your operation at the event. In most cases you do not need to wait for the inspection to start, as long as you’ve applied and paid for the permit—*don’t forget your receipt!*

Are there any food items I can sell that do not require a permit?

Yes, if you are unable to obtain a temporary food permit for your event, there are certain foods you can serve without a permit—bagged chips/cookies/crackers, canned/bottled drinks, hot brewed beverages with powdered creamer, non-profit “bake sale” goods, to name a few— You may also consider hiring a licensed caterer or a licensed mobile food unit (food truck) to provide the food at your event. Call our office for more information on “no permit-required” food or for a list of licensed food establishments.

I am still unsure if my event requires a temporary food permit...

See the following example scenarios for further clarification:

“My church is having a fall festival and we would like to serve hotdogs. Do I need to get a permit even if the hotdogs are given out for free?”

Answer: YES, if the festival is open to the public, a permit is required.

“My group would like to sell tamales for a fundraiser to help support a family in need. Do we need to a permit and can we make the tamales at home?”

Answer: YES, a permit is required, and NO, the tamales cannot be made at home, they must be prepared in a licensed kitchen.

“I own a restaurant in town and I would like to sell food at the fair. Do I need a temporary permit even though I already have a permit for my restaurant?”

Answer: YES, your restaurant license is for the restaurant only and does not cover your food operations offsite (or even outside of the restaurant); however, you may use your restaurant to prepare foods for the event because it is a licensed kitchen.

“My daughter’s class is baking cookies to sell to help raise money for their school field trip. Do they need a permit to sell their cookies and are they allowed to bake the cookies at home?”

Answer: NO, a permit is not required and YES, the cookies to be made at home because the food code allows an exception for “non-profit bake sales”, but there must be a sign posted at the event stating that the cookies were prepared in a kitchen that is not inspected.

“I am having a Customer Appreciation Day BBQ at my business and want to barbeque hamburgers for my customers. Do I need a permit?”

Answer: Yes, a permit is required. Another option would be to hire a licensed caterer to prepare and serve food to your customers. The caterer’s license would cover this food service and a temporary permit would not be needed.

“Our club meets monthly and we serve dinner. The food is prepared by club member volunteers and is only open to club members. Do we need a permit?”

Answer: No permit needed, this describes a private event. If the club members have to pay for the dinner, then a licensed caterer must be used.