

Temporary Food Establishment Permitting Guide (Revised 9/2022)

What is a Temporary Food Establishment?	<p>A Temporary Food Establishment (TFE) is where food is prepared and/or sold as a part of an event, with the same menu and at the same location, for no more than 21 days in a row with a single event, such as a fair or festival, or no more than three days a week as a part of an approved, recurring event*, such as a farmers market or flea market.</p> <p><i>*TFEs are not eligible to operate unless they are a part of an event.</i></p>
Who needs to get a temporary permit?	<p>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, internet/social media, or radio/TV announcements, flyers, banners, or other means to the public—you are required to get a permit.</p> <p>Private or Catered events: Food served at events that are not open to the public must be provided from a licensed caterer or other licensed food service <u>when there is compensation</u> for the food (a monetary charge or required donation) to either the person providing the food or for those consuming it (weddings, company banquets, private fundraisers with a ticket fee, etc.). Catered events, whether private or public, do not require a TFE permit as long as food is prepared and served by a licensed caterer</p>
Why is a permit necessary?	<p>A TFE Permit is required by state law (WAC 246-215). 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 <i>safe</i> food is served to the public. <i>Food service is serious business, as is preventing foodborne illness!</i></p>
Where can I get a permit application?	<p>TFE permit applications are available at the Grant County Health District office at 1038 West Ivy, Moses Lake, or by calling 509.766.7960. You may also fill out and submit the application on our website and we will call you for payment.</p>
What are the requirements to operate?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete the TFE permit application. English/Español 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 a late fee. 3. At the event, set up your TFE in accordance with the rules listed in the “Rules of Operation” 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 TFE operation once all the required items are in place (handwashing station, thermometers, overhead cover, etc.)
When will I be inspected?	<p>A food safety inspector will contact you by phone before the event to discuss your application and go over the rules. Most TFEs will also be inspected in person while in operation at the event or at the approved preparation site. In most cases you do not need to wait for the inspection to begin, as long as you’ve applied and paid for the permit and are following the rules.</p>

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

Yes, if you are not able to obtain a TFE permit for your event, there are some 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.

Exempt Food: There are also certain low risk foods like kettle corn and cotton candy that can be “[exempt from permit](#)” – TFE operation rules must still be followed, but a permit is not required. To serve exempt foods only, an [application](#) is required annually.

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

See the following examples 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. **Nonprofit organizations and charitable events may qualify for lower permit fees. A “[nonprofit attestation form](#)” is required.**

“My group would like to sell tamales for a fundraiser to help support a family in need. Do we need to apply for a TFE 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 TFE 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 can 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 TFE permit?”

Answer: **Yes**, a permit is required. However, if you hire a licensed caterer or food truck to prepare and serve food to your customers. Their license would cover the food service and a TFE permit would not be needed.

“Our service 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 TFE permit?”

Answer: **No**, a permit is not needed. This describes a private event. However, if the club members have to pay for the dinner, a licensed caterer must be used.