



County of Santa Cruz

Health Services Agency ♦ Environmental Health Division

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CATERING OPERATION REQUIREMENTS AND PERMITTING

Effective January 1, 2019, California Retail Food Code (CRFC) was amended to add *Chapter 10.1 Catering Operations and Host Facilities*. The new regulations include two new food facility categories called the “**Catering Operation**” and the “**Host Facility**”. These new regulations expand allowable activities so that “Catering Operations” can vend by the plate at contracted off-site food service locations permitted with a “Host Facility” permit. Below are the new definitions of “Catering Operation” and “Host Facility”:

§113739.1 CRFC

(a) “Catering operation” means a food service that is conducted by a permanent food facility approved for food preparation where food is served, or limited food preparation is conducted, at a location other than its permitted location, in either of the following circumstances:

- (1) As part of a contracted offsite food service event.
- (2) When preparing in conjunction with a host facility with direct food sales.

(b) “Catering operation” shall not include either of the following:

- (1) Food ordered for takeout or delivery from a food facility, where the food is provided to the customer for self-service.
- (2) A food facility that is participating as part of a community event.

§113806.1 CRFC

“host facility” means a facility located in a brewery, winery, commercial building, or another location as approved by the local enforcement agency, that meets the applicable requirements to support a catering operation that provides food directly to individual consumers for a limited period of time, up to four hours, in any 12-hour period and that has a permit pursuant to Section 114328.1. “Host facility” does not include the premises described in paragraph (5) of subdivision (c) of section 113789.

The new Catering Operation and Host Facility regulations include additional conditions and requirements to promote food safety in these venues. These conditions and requirements are outlined here.

GENERAL CATERING OPERATION REQUIREMENTS

The first sections cover requirements for all Catering Operations. The section titled “VENDING AT A HOST FACILITY” includes additional requirements for work at a Host Facility.

Prior to conducting food service, an individual must apply for and obtain a Catering Operation permit through the Santa Cruz County Environmental Health Division. A caterer must work out of a commercial kitchen that has the equipment required to support the intended menu(s) and any off-site services.

Please submit the following to apply for a Catering Operation permit:

- A completed Food Establishment Health Permit Application (found at link below) with fee <https://sceeh.com/Portals/6/EHD%20100CP%20Food%20Facility%20Health%20Permit%20Application-PDF%20Fillable.pdf>
- Menu
- A signed Kitchen Agreement
- A completed “Catering Operation: Requirements and Permitting” form
- Standard Operating Procedures (See SOP Guidelines)

****Permitting is site and operator specific. You must contact this Agency if you change kitchens****

CATERING OPERATION ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Please review the following conditions for Catering Operation food service permitting. Initial each line to acknowledge receipt of the information and sign below.

_____ **A HOST FACILITY MAY ONLY SUPPORT ONE CATERING OPERATION FOR UP TO 4 HOURS IN ANY 12-HOUR PERIOD.**

_____ I must verify that the Host Facility that is supporting my Catering Operation has a current and valid Host Facility Health Permit before I provide food service at their location. I must provide a copy of my current Catering Operation Health permit to my host facility operator.

_____ I must work out of a permitted commercial kitchen. My kitchen must be equipped to support my menu (s) and include adequate storage space for food and equipment. Health permits are site, operator and service specific and **non-transferrable**. I will need to apply for another permit prior to expanding food service or changing the location of my Catering Operation kitchen.

_____ I must pay the annual Catering Operation permit fee before my permit expires to continue food service. I will be subject to late fees and facility closure if my account is delinquent.

_____ I will be subject to unannounced inspection by the Santa Cruz County Environmental Health Division. Inspection staff will provide identification (badge or business card) upon request.

_____ I am aware that inspection staff may request documentation related to an inspection/ investigation, take pictures, collect samples, discard product or impound food/ equipment. I must keep records of food service for **at least 90 days** after each event and be prepared to present them to the inspector.

_____ I may be issued violation notices, charged re-inspection fees, referred to another agency, and/or subject to closure if I am found to be out of compliance with food safety regulations.

_____ I shall ensure there is always at least one person in charge during food service. At least one person per facility shall hold a Food Safety (Manager’s) Certificate within 60 days of start of service if required.

_____ All food service staff (except the person with the Food Safety Certificate) shall provide proof of a Food Handler Card within 30 days after the date of hire. Staff shall be knowledgeable of safe food practices as they relate to their assigned duties regardless of certification.

_____ I will not allow individuals to prepare food when with an illness transmissible through food. I will notify the Santa Cruz County Environmental Health Division at (831) 454-2022 when a food employee has been diagnosed with Salmonella typhi, Salmonella spp., Shigella spp., Entamoeba histolytica, Enterohemorrhagic or shiga toxin producing Escherichia coli; Hepatitis A virus, Norovirus, or other communicable disease transmissible through food or when two of more food service employees are concurrently experiencing acute gastrointestinal illness. I will have an illness policy and train my staff regarding illness restrictions and exclusions.

_____ I will voluntarily close and discontinue food service work when there is no potable water, hot water, electricity, wastewater services or other vital food service equipment.

_____ I will continuously monitor for cockroaches, rodents, flies and other pests. I will take immediate action to eliminate any pest and close voluntarily if they are observed in places that can contaminate food.

_____ I must obtain review and approval from the Santa Cruz County Environmental Health Division prior to changing/ adding equipment, changing my menu/mode of service or making modifications to my food service.

_____ Additional structural and operational requirements may apply depending on the proposed service to ensure sanitary operation.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

For more information please contact the Santa Cruz County Division of Environmental Health at (831) 454-2022 or visit our web site at scceh.com

SHARED KITCHEN RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Kitchen deficiencies are everyone's responsibility.** A food facility violation is a violation that belongs to all those permitted to use the facility. Major deficiencies include lack of hot water, lack of potable water, lack of functional restrooms, vermin infestation, sewage overflow, and lack of electricity. These types of violations will result in immediate closure of the facility by district inspection staff. Other critical violations include unstocked hand wash stations, lack of sanitizer for washing of utensils, refrigeration problems, etc. Notify the kitchen manager as soon as you observe a deficiency and/or take measures to correct them immediately or discontinue food service voluntarily.
- **Do not prepare food if you are sick or feeling ill.** Conducting work while ill can result in affecting both your operation and that of others. You may avoid an outbreak if you stay home until you feel better.
- **Wash your hands before commencing food work.** Hand washing is an important part of any health program.
- **You will have to sanitize all work surfaces prior to the start of work.** Work surfaces include food preparation tables, food preparation sinks, large shared pieces of equipment, etc. It is also important to clean and sanitize after finishing work to prevent vermin infestation or cross contamination from one operation to another.
- **Allow enough space and time** to manage the food safely. Take measures to prevent cross contamination between raw and ready-to-eat foods (ie. green salads, cooked meats, and desserts).
- **Potentially hazardous (perishable) food must be cooked to proper cooking temperatures (165°F being the most conservative) and cooled to 41°F and below within 6 hours.** Food must cool from 135°F to 70°F within 2 hours and from 70°F to 41°F and below within 4-hours to meet the 6-hour cooling period.
- **Potentially hazardous foods must be held at 135°F and above or 41°F and below** while awaiting preparation. Potentially hazardous ingredients must be managed diligently and then returned to safe temperatures after use.
- **Provide adequate individual storage to protect against contamination.** Each operation must have its own designated food, food container and utensil storage area. This designated area must be labeled with the name of the business. Keeping the sharing of equipment to a minimum will minimize the possibility of cross contamination. Having separate food /food container storage facilities will allow you to control the safety of your product more effectively.
- **All equipment must be stored at the commercial kitchen** and protected from contamination. **No food or equipment can be stored at home.**
- All equipment used for commercial food service must be **Sanitation Listed by an ANSI accredited sanitation certification program.** Examples are NSF, ETL Sanitation and UL EPH. Home grade or imported equipment will either fail early, be difficult to clean or may contain metals that can contaminate your food.
- **Operators must keep personal belongings and chemicals stored away from food and food containers.** Separate storage for employee belongings and chemicals must be available.
- **Discard all garbage, oil, rubbish and wastewater carefully** in its appropriate location to prevent attracting vermin or coming in contact with contaminated water.
- **All food business personnel must have food safety training** as required by law. At least one person in charge of food service must obtain a Food Safety Certificate (manager level training) within 60 days of commencing work. All other staff shall hold a food handler card within 30 days of hire/start of work. All personnel must conduct safe food practices regardless of certification or registration.

TRANSPORTATION AND SERVICE

- **Potentially hazardous foods must be held at 41°F and less or 135°F and above** during transport and service.
- **Raw meats must be stored/ transported separate from ready-to-eat foods and produce.**
- **Food and utensils must be transported separate and protected** from tools, chemicals, personal belongings and other sources of contamination.
- **You must provide handwashing equipment** if these are not provided at the service location. The handwash must be located within the food handling area/ canopy. The restroom handwash sink does not allow for handwashing as required and can contribute to contamination.
- **Bring enough utensils or a utensil wash station** if a warewash sink is not available or accessible to food service staff at the service location. Utensils used to dispense potentially hazardous foods shall be kept in the food with handles away from the food or in a clean container and replaced at least every 4 hours. Transport sanitized wares in a manner that will protect against contamination. Any utensil in contact with any food must be replaced if subject to contamination.
- **Access to or bring adequate supply of potable water**
- **Bare hand contact with ready-to-eat food must be minimized.** Glove use is an additional protective layer does not replace the need for handwashing. Gloves must be handled with clean hands. Staff shall wash their hands in between change of gloves.
- **Access to an approved restroom within 200 feet** of the service area
- **Only *Limited Food Preparation* must occur at the Host Facility.** Most of the food preparation must occur at the approved commercial kitchen. "Limited food preparation" is defined as follows:

§113818 CRFC Definition of limited food preparation

- (a) "Limited food preparation" means food preparation that is restricted to one or more of the following:
 - (1) Heating, frying, baking, roasting, popping, shaving of ice, blending, steaming or boiling of hot dogs, or assembly of nonprepackaged food.
 - (2) Dispensing and portioning of nonpotentially hazardous food.
 - (3) Holding, portioning, and dispensing of any foods that are prepared for satellite food service by the onsite permanent food facility or prepackaged by another approved source.
 - (4) Holding, portioning, and dispensing of any foods that are prepared by a catering operation for a host facility.
 - (5) Slicing and chopping of food on a heated cooking surface during the cooking process.
 - (6) Cooking and seasoning to order.
 - (7) Juicing or preparing beverages that are for immediate service, in response to an individual consumer order, that do not contain frozen milk products.
- (b) "Limited food preparation" **does not** include any of the following:
 - (1) Slicing and chopping unless it is on the heated cooking surface.
 - (2) Thawing.
 - (3) Cooling of cooked, potentially hazardous food.
 - (4) Grinding raw ingredients or potentially hazardous food.
 - (5) Reheating of potentially hazardous foods for hold holding, except for steamed or boiled hot dogs and tamales in the original, inedible wrapper
 - (6) Except as authorized in paragraph (3) of subdivision (a), hot holding of non-prepackaged, potentially hazardous food, except for roasting corn on the cob, steamed or boiled hot dogs, and tamales in the original, inedible wrapper.
 - (7) Washing of foods.
 - (8) Cooking of potentially hazardous foods for later use.
 - (9) Handling, manufacturing, freezing, processing, or packaging of milk, milk products, or products resembling milk products subject to licensing under Division 015 (commencing with section 32501) of the Food and Agricultural Code.

- **A barrier must be present around any barbeque or wood burning oven** to prevent patrons from getting burned or contaminating the food.
- **All food service at the off-site location** must be protected from contamination via approved chafing dishes, sneeze guards, clean utensils and by providing a distance of at least 3 feet from public access.
- **A staff person must oversee buffet / self-serve areas** or plate-out the food from a protected area to ensure reusing of tableware or conditions that can result in food contamination.
- **Provide overhead protection at all food handling areas.**
- Be prepared to **provide business contact information including address, e-mail and phone number upon request.**
- **Clean-up** after the meal. Discard waste and wastewater in an approved manner. Return all multi-use wares to the kitchen for proper washing, sanitizing and storage.
- **Potentially hazardous food must be discarded at the end of service unless held to proper temperature and protected from contamination.** All food in the buffet line shall be discarded at the end of service unless held in an approved dispenser such as a ketchup bottle, saltshaker, etc.

HEALTH AND HYGIENE

It is imperative that staff not work while experiencing gastro-intestinal illness. One ill person can result in an outbreak, facility closure, loss of income and possible lawsuits. Below are symptoms/ conditions that would result in inability to work:

- Salmonella typhi, Salmonella spp., Shigella spp., Entamoeba histolytica, Enterohemorrhagic or shiga toxin producing Escherichia coli, Hepatitis A virus, Norovirus or other communicable disease transmissible through food
- Diarrhea
- Vomit in conjunction with stomach pain/cramps, diarrhea, or fever
- Fever
- Uncontrollable discharge from eyes, nose and mouth
- Open sores, blistering, pus or infection on hands or other areas that require frequent tending

Individuals conducting food service shall not tend to infants, disabled individuals or animals during work hours. Children or infants must remain at home with another parent, sibling or relative. The likeliness of spreading an illness can increase when a food service staff must tend to an ill person while conducting food service.

RECORDS

In addition to maintaining Standard Operating Procedures, the caterer must keep records regarding off-site activities for **90 days after each event**. These records must be provided to an inspector upon request. The following records are required:

- Location, date and time of the offsite food service activity
- Customer name and contact information including address, email, and phone number
- Complete menu of foods provided
- Whether food was delivered to a catered function or sold by the plate at a host facility.
- Departure and arrival food temperature logs for transportation, and corrective action if food arrives out of temperature.

VENDING AT A HOST FACILITY

Catering Operation operators conducting direct food sales must comply with the following:

- _____ Work in conjunction with a **permitted Host Facility**. The host facility operator must add you to their list of caterers. The host facility operator must maintain and report the names of contact information for the caterers they are supporting.
- _____ Will not operate at a location for longer than **4 hours in a 12-hour period**.
- _____ **Cannot use the same permit to operate at a community event**. You must apply for a separate Temporary Food Facility Permit to participate at a community event.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOPs)

§114328 CRFC requires that an operator provide and maintain written standard operating procedures for the catering operation. The following must be included (add pages as necessary):

1) Transportation to and from the catered event (means to hold temperature must be provided if transportation time is 30 minutes or more):

Procedure/Method(s) to maintain food temperature:

Equipment:

Procedure/method to protect against contamination:

Equipment:

2) Types of foods to be prepared or served:

List foods or provide a menu:

Describe the food service activities that will occur at the service location:

***Only Limited Food Preparation can occur on site.**

3) Handwashing procedure and equipment for:

How hands will be washed and when (list):

Equipment (must dispense 100-108°F water and include soap and single use paper towels):

****Use of gloves and or sanitizer does not eliminate the requirement for handwashing. These activities are in addition to not in lieu of handwashing.**

4) Holding of potentially hazardous foods during service (below 41°F or 135°F and above):

Procedure:
Cold:
Hot:
Equipment:
Verification Method:

5) Sanitizing procedure/ methods and schedule for equipment:

Procedure:
Sanitizer:
Frequency/schedule:

6) Extent of off-site preparation and equipment:

Types of off-site food preparation:
Equipment (wood burning oven/barbeque):
**Only limited food preparation can occur off-site. See the definition below.

Additional requirements may apply depending on the proposed service venue.

For Office Use Only	
Reviewing REHS:	Date:

