

Temporary Food Event FAQs

***How do I know if I need a permit?**

Festivals, parades, celebrations, and other special events contribute to the quality of life in Austin. Most of these events also feature food for sale or distribution. These Temporary Food Events (TFE) may include traveling fairs and carnivals, circuses, multicultural celebrations, special interest fundraisers, restaurant food shows, and other gatherings. Many of these TFEs can involve extensive preparation and processes that include the cooking and advanced preparation of food prior to service. Anytime food is being handled there is a possibility of food contamination. Some foods such as raw meats and poultry can be contaminated prior to obtaining them.

It is estimated that 76,000,000 cases of food borne illnesses occur every year in the U.S. and there are emerging illnesses and drug resistant bacteria that are increasing the hazards.

With this in mind, City of Austin and Travis County Code, the Texas Food Establishment Rules (TFER), and the FDA 2017 Food Code all provide guidelines for permitting and food safety.

The Environmental Health Services Division of Austin Public Health has established procedures that can assist with the advanced planning and management of TFE. We ask for your support in promoting these food safety practices. Individuals or organizations are required to obtain a temporary food service permit for any event in which food is offered for public consumption.

If you can answer “Yes” to any of the following questions you will need to obtain a temporary food service permit.

1. Is the general public invited to the event?
2. Can a person other than a member of the organization and their family members or invited guest attend?
3. Have you advertised the event (i.e., social media, websites) or sold tickets to the general public?
4. Are you serving open food, open container drinks (mixed drinks w/ ice, wine, or keg beer) or food that requires refrigeration or to be held hot? If you have additional questions, contact us at 978-0300.

***I only have alcohol; do I need a permit?**

Yes. The FDA 2017 Food Code defines any beverage, including alcohol, as food. Canned beer opened by the customer would not require a temporary food permit.

***What do I need to apply?**

A completed permit application and current, valid government identification card along with any applicable fees. The application can be downloaded from Environmental Health Services Division's

Temporary Food Events page. Click on the Permit to Operate under the Applications Section. Located here: <http://austintexas.gov/department/temporary-food-events>

***What's the cost of a permit?**

All Environmental Health Services fees are available on the current fiscal year's fee schedule which can be viewed from Environmental Health Services Division's Temporary Food Events page. Located here: <http://austintexas.gov/department/temporary-food-events>

***Is there a limit to length of time for my event?**

A temporary food event may be permitted for a maximum of 14 consecutive days. Any person or organization can apply for a maximum of six events (not to exceed a total 84 days) during a calendar year.

***Where do I get a permit?**

You may obtain a permit application online or at [1520 Rutherford Lane Building 1, Second Floor, Suite 205 Austin, TX 78754](#) Monday through Friday from 7:45 AM – 3:30 PM, by appointment only. Call 512-978-0300 to set up your appointment. When you arrive, park in the visitors parking on the East side of Building 1. You will need to bring an I.D. to sign in with the security desk at the main entrance.

The application can be downloaded from Environmental Health Services Division's Temporary Food Events page. Click on the Permit to Operate under the Applications Section. Located here: <http://austintexas.gov/department/temporary-food-events>

***When will my permit be ready and where do I pick it up?**

Completed applications should be submitted at least 10 days in advance to allow for processing time. Permits may be processed sooner, but an expedite fee may be assessed. Customer service staff will contact you when permits are ready to be picked up (they will not be mailed).

***How do I properly set up my temporary food booth?**

The Temporary Food Event Coordinator has developed guide on how to set up a temporary food booth. Additional information guides are also available. These can be viewed from the Environmental Health Services Division's Temporary Food Events page under the Guides section. Located here: <http://austintexas.gov/department/temporary-food-events>