

TEMPORARY FOOD ESTABLISHMENT PERMITS

What is a temporary food establishment?

A temporary food establishment is a food booth at a temporary event that operates for no more than 14 consecutive days in conjunction with a single event or celebration. A temporary food establishment includes any booth at a temporary event that stores, prepares, packages, serves, or vends unpackaged food and/or drink including ice.

What is the purpose of permitting and inspecting temporary food establishments?

The primary goal of Harris County Public Health (HCPH) is to protect the public's health. To accomplish this, the Environmental Public Health (EPH) Division inspects and permits all temporary food service establishments to ensure the minimum requirements of the Texas Food Establishment Rules of the Texas Administrative Code 25 §228 are met.

Will my temporary food booth be inspected?

Yes. Both non-profit and profit temporary food establishments will be inspected by an EPH Investigator at least once during the event. Feel free to ask the investigator questions. The investigator is there to assist you in providing safe food to your customers and will check your food booth to ensure minimum requirements are met. Violations will require immediate correction or you will be directed to cease operations. Refer to the handout, **TEMPORARY FOOD ESTABLISHMENT OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS** for a list of the minimum requirements.

Must temporary food establishments purchase a permit to operate?

Yes. Temporary food establishments that are located in areas under HCPH's jurisdiction must obtain a temporary permit from EPH to operate.

- All booth operators that handle unpackaged food, drinks, and/or ice must have a permit.
- A separate temporary permit is required for every food booth at any given event and is only valid for one booth. If a food booth operator is operating more than one food booth, a permit must be purchased for each food booth.
- Operation of a food booth without a temporary permit could result in a citation issued to the person in charge of the food booth.

Are there exemptions to the temporary food establishment permit?

- Booths that sell only pre-packaged, single serving size, non-time/temperature control for safety food (candy, chips, frozen novelties) or unopened canned or bottle drinks are not required to obtain a temporary permit.
- Non-profit temporary food establishments that provide proof of their non-profit status (Tax Form 501C3) are required to obtain a temporary permit but are exempt from the permit fee. A non-profit temporary food establishment must be operated directly by members or volunteers of the charity organization and **all** proceeds go to the charity. A food booth which donates a portion of its proceeds to a charity, is **not** considered a non-profit temporary establishment.

HCPH is the local public health agency for the Harris County, Texas jurisdiction. It provides a wide variety of public health activities and services aimed at improving the health and well-being of the Harris County community.

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How much does a temporary permit cost?

The cost of a temporary permit is \$80.00, for timely purchase **at least two full business days prior to the beginning of the event.** Failure to purchase a temporary permit within this timeframe will result in a late temporary permit fee of \$160.00.

How do I obtain a temporary permit?

The event coordinator must register the temporary event with HCPH online at <http://hcph.tx.org/foodpermits> before booth operators can purchase a temporary permit for that event at EPH.

To purchase a temporary food establishment permit:

- **IN PERSON** – The temporary food establishment application can be filled out at the kiosk in our office. Payments can be made by cash, cashier's check, money order, or credit card.
Harris County Public Health
Environmental Public Health Division
101 South Richey, Suite G
Pasadena, Texas 77506
Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
- **ONLINE (at least 14 days before the start of the event)** – <http://hcph.tx.org/foodpermits>. Fill out the temporary food establishment operational statement. Email notification of booth approval will contain an online payment link. Online payments will only be accepted at least 14 days before the start of the event or you may make payment in the EPH office by cash, cashier's check, money order, or credit card. Please note, in-office payments not received at least two full business days prior to the beginning of the event will be subject to the late temporary permit fee regardless of when the booth was approved.
- **ONSITE AT THE EVENT** – Late temporary permits can be purchased at the event for \$160.00 by credit card, money order, or cashier's check **if** the booth meets the minimum requirements. Food booths operating without a valid and current permit will be asked to close if the operation does not meet minimum requirements **and** payment for the permit is not available at the time of the EPH inspection. **Investigators will not collect cash at the temporary event.**

NOTE: The Fire Marshall's Office permits and inspects temporary events in unincorporated Harris County. Please call 713-274-1730 or 281-436-8030 or visit: <http://www.eng.hctx.net/permits/Fire/Fire-Code/Temporary-Food-Vendors-Festivals-Theatrical-Performances> for application and requirements.

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