



Environmental Health Division • Public Information

County of Ventura • Resource Management Agency • <http://www.ventura.org/rma/envhealth>
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COMMUNITY EVENTS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is a Temporary Food Facility?

As defined in the California Retail Food Code, “Temporary Food Facility” (TFF) means a food facility approved by the enforcement officer that may be readily disassembled for storage or for transporting, and readily assembled to its original integrity at a different location, is easily movable, and operates at a fixed location for the duration of an approved community event. Permanent structures, such as snack bars at parks and schools may be permitted as temporary food facilities, but must be inspected and permitted for each event.

2. Do I need a permit to sell or give away food at a community event?

Yes, a permit is required even if the food is given away. The requirements apply to all persons participating in food events, regardless of non-profit status, and include sampling.

3. My food is prepackaged...do I still need a permit?

Yes, a permit is still required. However, certain requirements may not apply.

4. I am only selling or giving away drinks ... do I still need a permit?

Yes. Beverages are considered food and a permit is required. The requirements for bottled or canned beverages are the same as for prepackaged food.

5. Can I prepare food at my home for sale/distribution from a temporary food facility?

Food intended for public consumption may not be prepared in a home. All food must be obtained from approved sources. Non-potentially hazardous beverages and bakery items given away or sold at a community event by nonprofit charitable organizations or by an established club or organization that operates under the authorization of a school or educational facility for fundraising purposes at community events are exempted from this restriction.

6. My booth is only to raise money for our club...do I still need a permit?

Yes, a permit is required for all food vendors offering food for sale to the public. The potential risk associated with handling food is the same, regardless of where the proceeds go.

7. Can I set up a temporary food facility outside a shopping mall or my permitted food facility, or in a park?

No, the temporary food facility must operate in connection with a community event. "Community Event" means an event that is of civic, political, public, or educational nature, including state and county fairs, city festivals, circuses, and other public gathering events approved by the local enforcement agency. The event must be open to the general public and provide some kind of benefit to the community. Store grand openings, anniversary celebrations or promotional give-away events do not constitute community events.

8. Do I need a permit to have a party for invited guests?

No, private parties intended only for members of an organization and/or their invited guests do not require a permit. If the event is advertised to the public; however, then a permit is required.

9. Can I have a Community Event and operate a Temporary Food Facility out of my home?

No, a private home cannot be permitted as a temporary food facility. The California Retail Food Code prohibits the use of a private home, a room used as living or sleeping quarters, or an area directly opening into a room used as living or sleeping quarters for conducting food facility operations. You may, however, operate a temporary food facility on private property (outside), provided all requirements are met. The kitchen of a private home may not be used as the utensil washing facility.

10. How long is the permit valid?

The permit issued to a temporary food facility vendor or to an organizer is valid only for the duration of that specific community event. A new application must be submitted, and a new permit obtained for each different community event.

11. Is there any way to reduce the organizer and food vendor fees?

Yes, we offer a Temporary Food Facility Food Handler Training class in the Hall of Administration at the Government Center. It is held once a month, from 9 am to noon and it is free to all participants. Once you attend the class and pass a test, you are entitled to either a discount or full fee waiver valid for one year. You must include a copy of your training certificate with each application in order to receive the waiver/discount. The certified individual must be present at the permit inspection. With the certificate, non-profit organizations receive a full fee waiver and for-profits receive a 50% fee reduction. The certification can be renewed online indefinitely.

The only certificate that will provide a fee waiver or reduction is the Ventura County Environmental Health Temporary Food Facility Food Handler training certificate. National food safety training as required for permanent food facilities, such as ServSafe or Thomson Prometric, or any training certificate issued by another county or state will not obtain a discount or waiver.

12. As a food vendor, what other permits do I need?

First, you must have permission from the organizer to participate in the event. The organizer must include you on their list of vendors participating at the community event. The local Fire Department may also have requirements for your booth.

13. As an organizer, what other permits do I need?

You may need to obtain a Conditional Use Permit from the city where the event will take place. You may need to contact California Alcoholic Beverage Control and local police if you offer alcoholic beverages. You will need to contact the California Board of Equalization regarding sales tax payment.

14. Does the booth need to be enclosed?

The booth must have overhead protection, cleanable flooring and be fully screened on all four sides if you are handling open food. If all foods are prepackaged, and the packages are sold or given away unopened, no screening is required, just overhead protection.

15. I have a hot dog cart with an annual permit to operate in Ventura County. Do I need another permit to operate at a temporary event?

No. If your Mobile Food Facility permit is current and valid in this county, no other environmental health permits are required. If you have a vehicle permit issued in another county, a TFF permit is required to operate in Ventura County at a community event. TFF requirements must be met to obtain a permit.

16. I already have a permit for my restaurant in Ventura County. Does that permit me to participate in temporary events?

No. The permit for your restaurant is site-specific and does not transfer to any other location, even right outside your facility. You may, however, display samples of your food outside your restaurant during a temporary event and invite patrons inside to eat.