

# El Paso County's Special Event Requirements to Operate

- Submit an El Paso County Public Health Special Event License with the required license fee and a Special Event Retail Food Establishment Review Form at least 10 days before the event to El Paso County Public Health.
- All food preparation must be done at the special event within the licensed establishment or at a RFE Licensed off-site commissary, which has been approved by El Paso County Public Health. Home preparation of food and ice is prohibited.
- Only food requiring limited preparation (i.e., seasoning, grilling, reheating, assembling finished products, etc.) shall be prepared or served at the special event.
- Extensive food preparation (i.e., vegetable washing/cutting, skinning/cutting raw meat, forming raw hamburger patties) shall not be done at the special event. These procedures must be completed at a RFE Licensed off-site commissary. A food product thermometer with a temperature range from 0-220°F is required to check food temperatures.



## Cooking

Follow these requirements for the minimum uniform internal temperatures:

- Poultry, stuffed fish, stuffed meat, stuffed pasta, stuffed poultry, or stuffing containing fish, meat or poultry: 165°F
- Whole cuts of pork, lamb, and beef\*, as well as eggs and all other potentially hazardous foods requiring cooking: 145°F
- Ground meats (hamburger, sausage), or any meat or fish, that is not a whole cut: 155°F
- Game meats of any kind: 155°F

\*Rare roast beef and rare beef steak: 130°F

## Holding

Potentially hazardous foods must be stored at or below 41°F (under refrigeration) or 135°F and above (hot holding) at all times, except when undergoing necessary preparation. Room temperature storage of potentially hazardous food is not allowed. Potentially hazardous foods found in the temperature danger zone between 41°F and 135°F must be discarded.

## Reheating

All potentially hazardous foods that have been cooked and then cooled, shall be rapidly reheated to 165°F or more within two hours or less before being served or placed in a hot food storage device.

Crock pots, steam tables, or other hot holding devices are not to be used for heating up food; they are only for maintaining hot food which has already been heated to proper temperature. Electrical equipment is recommended for hot holding. However, propane stove, grills, or any other heat source capable of holding food at 135°F or above may be used as long as it meets the requirements of the local fire authority.



## Cooling

All potentially hazardous food that has been cooked or held hot must be properly cooled if it will be reused. Food must be cooled from 135°F to 70°F in two hours or less and from 70°F to 41°F within an additional four hours or less.

Mechanical refrigeration is recommended, but ice chests with ice from an approved source (i.e., bagged ice from a store) may be used if potentially hazardous food temperatures below 41°F are maintained. Coolants or cooling packs used as ice substitutes are not acceptable.



## Storage and Protection

- All food and clean utensils must be inaccessible to the public and protected from dust, dirt and airborne contaminants.
- Except for open flame grills, all areas for food preparation and service must have overhead protection. Tents or canopies may be used, but must be constructed of materials that protect the interior of the operation.
- Sidewalls are required unless otherwise approved by El Paso County Public Health. Floors are required, unless the establishment site is paved or installed on well-established turf.
- Approved dispensing utensils or gloves are to be provided for handling and serving food. Using bare hands to serve ready-to-eat food is prohibited.
- An adequate supply of safe water must be provided. Events using a private water supply (such as a domestic well) must submit acceptable water sample results. Water samples shall be taken no earlier than 30 days prior to the event.

## Handwashing Facilities/Hygiene

A handwashing facility must be available for employee handwashing. This must include at least a continuous hands free flow of warm running water, soap, individual paper towels and a container to collect the wastewater. This unit must be of adequate pressure and size to facilitate proper handwashing.

A separate container of sanitizer must be present for rinsing/storing wiping cloths to be used on table tops or counters. One capful of liquid bleach added to one gallon of cool water will be acceptable. This should be changed frequently during the day. All utensils in continuous use must be washed, rinsed and sanitized every four hours. If areas for washing are not available, single use utensils may be used or several utensils may be used throughout the day, then taken to a commissary to be properly cleaned. Sanitizer and test strips are required.

Except for clean water, liquid waste must not be dumped into streets, storm drains, or onto the ground. Use the containers to collect wastewater and discard in a sanitary manner (i.e., public restrooms). Chemicals such as liquid bleach or detergents must be stored away from food preparation and display areas.

- All personnel must wear adequate hair restraints, and maintain a high degree of personal hygiene, including careful and frequent handwashing and clean clothing.
- Smoking, eating, or drinking in any food establishment while working is not allowed.
- Unauthorized persons or animals must not be allowed within the establishment.
- Any person who has experienced diarrhea, vomiting, or fever within the past 24 hours; or who is jaundiced; or who is infected with a communicable disease, such as a cold or flu; or who has open sores or infected cuts on his/her hands, shall not work in any retail food establishment until symptoms have resolved for at least 24 hours.

For more information contact El Paso County Public Health  
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