

TEMPORARY FOOD ESTABLISHMENT GUIDELINES

Event organizers refer to these guidelines before [applying for a Temporary Food Establishment Permit](#) to:

- Determine the type of temporary food establishment you intend to operate at your event; **and**
- Ensure you have trained food workers, appropriate food sources, facilities and equipment to support safe food preparation, handling, and transport; **and**
- Understand when you or UW Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) may be required to stop operations at your food establishment.

After a permit is issued, event organizers follow these guidelines to support a safe and successful food event.

SCOPE

These guidelines include Washington State Retail Food Code requirements (view [Regulations and Policies](#)) and best practices for safety. These guidelines apply to all permitted temporary food establishments (TFEs) at University locations.

RESPONSIBILITIES

When event organizers apply for a Temporary Food Establishment Permit, they agree to meet the requirements in the Temporary Food Establishment Guidelines, which are designed to ensure food is prepared and handled safely and under sanitary conditions.

The person(s) in charge of the temporary food establishment (e.g., external vendors, caterers, mobile food units) may be designated by the event organizer to fulfill some of these requirements.

Temporary food establishments are required to stop operations and inform EH&S immediately if any of the following situations arise, which could introduce imminent health hazards:

- Foodborne illness outbreak
- Fire
- Flood
- Loss of electricity
- Lack of hot water or loss of water service
- Sewage backup
- Misuse of toxic or poisonous materials
- Any other circumstance that may endanger public health

INSPECTIONS

EH&S staff inspect temporary food establishments at University locations to ensure they have a visibly posted [EH&S Temporary Food Establishment Permit](#) and meet Washington State Food Code requirements and best safety practices during food preparation and service.

EH&S may stop operations or close a food establishment if any of the following situations occur:

- During an [inspection](#), the food establishment receives total violation points (total of critical/red and non-critical/blue) greater than 90 points, or critical/red violation points alone total greater than 70; **or**
- Operating without an EH&S Temporary Food Establishment Permit; **or**
- An imminent or actual health hazard is observed during inspection (may suspend operations in a portion of or the full establishment); **or**
- Operations/facilities/equipment or the permit holder do not comply with Washington State Retail Food Code; **or**
- There is interference with EH&S staff in performing inspections or other regulatory duties.

PERMIT APPLICATION

The permit application asks various questions depending on the type of temporary food establishment. EH&S staff review application information to understand how and where foods will be safely prepared, stored, and served at the event.

1. **Review the information** below and on the [Temporary Food Establishment Permit](#) webpage for application information.
2. **Download a copy** of the [Temporary Food Establishment Permit Application Form](#) and use it to collect information needed to complete the [online application](#).
3. **Submit your application(s)** to EH&S prior to the submission deadline.

Permits are specific to the food source (e.g., caterer, vendor, restaurant, food truck), menu, location, time, and date.

Multiple food sources

For an event with multiple food sources, *a permit is required for each food source*. Event organizers are required to **submit a separate permit application** for each source. For events with multiple food sources, EH&S recommends you submit permit applications at least one month before your event.

Single event permit

A single event permit allows a temporary food establishment to operate up to 21 consecutive days in conjunction with a single event; or up to three days per week in conjunction with a recurring event. The permit identifies your food establishment's approved service dates and times.

Multiple event permit

A multiple event permit allows an event with the **same food source, menu, location and service period** to occur up to five times in a calendar year. When applying for this permit type, include all service dates in one application. The permit identifies your food establishment's approved service dates and times.

TYPES OF TEMPORARY FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS

When event organizers apply for a Temporary Food Establishment Permit, they select one of the following types (described below):

- [External Caterer](#)
- [On-site Food Preparation](#)
- [External Mobile Food Unit](#)

EXTERNAL CATERER

An external caterer involves event foods that are *all of the following*:

- Provided by a restaurant, caterer, or food vendor with a current permanent operating permit issued by a [Washington state local health jurisdiction \(LHJ\)](#) or [Washington State Department of Agriculture \(WSDA\)](#); **and**
- Not prepared on site; food is fully prepared at the off-site permitted commissary/food establishment (e.g., boxed lunch kits, prepared buffet trays); **and**
- Delivered to the UW by the food provider or a UW individual with a [current Washington state food worker card](#); food is served upon arrival at the event; **and**
- Served buffet-style, plated, or table service by the food provider or UW individuals with food worker cards.



A **permitted kitchen facility is required** when *any* of the following apply:

- Storing event foods before preparation or service; **or**
- Event foods must be prepared in advance from ingredients; **or**
- Preparing foods from produce that is not purchased pre-washed and pre-cut; **or**
- Reusable food contact surfaces (e.g., serving utensils, pots) will be used.

If event foods are prepared in an EH&S-permitted kitchen or a covered food booth at the event, please select “[On-Site Food Preparation](#)” in the permit application. (Do not select “External Caterer.”)

If event foods are transported and served from a mobile food unit (i.e., food truck, food trailer, or self-contained moveable cart), select “[External Mobile Food Unit](#)” in the permit application.

ON-SITE FOOD PREPARATION

On-site food preparation involves event foods (including ice) that are:

- Sourced from a permanent food establishment (e.g., local restaurant, caterer, grocery store, Chef store) with a current operating permit from a [Washington state local health jurisdiction \(LHJ\)](#) or [Washington State Department of Agriculture \(WSDA\)](#); **and**
- Prepared on site prior to being served.



Examples of on-site food preparation include:

External vendors, caterers, or restaurants with a permanent LHJ or WSDA operating permit serving food from a covered booth at a UW sponsored event.

- o The vendor, caterer, or restaurant will bring foods initially prepared from ingredients in an off-site permitted commissary/kitchen.
- o The vendor, caterer, or restaurant will also bring commercial food storage, cooking, hot holding and cold holding equipment on site to do final preparation, store, and serve foods at the event.

UW unit personnel or registered student organization (RSO) members with current food worker cards doing *any of the following*:

- o Renting an EH&S-permitted staging kitchen¹ to prepare event foods on site and then transporting them for service at the event. EH&S permitted staging kitchens include: [UW Bothell North Creek Event Center](#), [UW Seattle Samuel E. Kelly Ethnic Cultural Center](#), [UW Seattle HUB Food Staging Areas](#), [UW Seattle wələbʔaltxʷ – Intellectual House](#). RSOs may also arrange with UW Dining to rent and prepare event foods in the [Husky Den Production Kitchen](#); **or**
- o Doing simple preparation and service of foods from a covered food booth; **or**
- o Using grills/BBQs to prepare and serve food at the event.

For on-site food preparation we recommend submitting your permit application at least one-month before your event.

EH&S needs time to review supporting documents that may include: event/booth layout, food worker cards, food equipment lists, ingredient lists and food preparation procedures, schedule for food preparation, transport and service.

EH&S will assess whether facilities, equipment, and procedures comply with Washington state retail food code requirements. EH&S will also evaluate if the person(s) in charge of the TFE demonstrate food safety knowledge, active managerial control, and the ability to safely prepare large food quantities.

If critical food safety gaps, food code violations, and/or insufficient food safety knowledge is identified during the review process [EH&S may recommend or require a reduction in the service scope to protect public health](#).

EXTERNAL MOBILE FOOD UNIT

An external mobile food unit involves event foods that are *all the following*:

- Initially prepared from ingredients in the off-site permitted commissary/kitchen;
- Stored in, and served by food workers from, a mobile food unit (i.e., food truck, food trailer, or self-contained moveable cart) with a current mobile food unit operating permit from a [Washington state local health jurisdiction \(LHJ\)](#) and meeting [EH&S's Mobile Food Unit Policy and Guidelines](#).



¹ Permitted kitchens may have additional requirements or restriction(s) on space or equipment you may bring to use. Make an appointment to tour permitted kitchen facilities as part of the event planning process. You must follow all kitchen requirements and amend your food service plan in the online application if it cannot be supported at your prep or service location. EH&S must approve any proposed changes to your food service plan prior to issuing you an operating permit.

Event organizers consult with UW Dining (dining@uw.edu) before submitting a permit application to EH&S for a mobile food unit serving the public or wider campus community on the UW Seattle campus. UW Dining may need to ensure that external vendor food sales on campus do not compete with campus brand contracts.

PRE-EVENT PLANNING

PERMITS

When hosting special events on a UW campus, a permit from [your local fire department](#) may be required. Additional permits may be required, depending on the circumstances of the event.

University meetings and functions at UW locations planning alcohol service must also follow the approval processes outlined on the [UW Seattle](#), [UW Bothell](#), and [UW Tacoma](#) websites. EH&S does not issue alcohol service permits.

SET UP

If the event is outside, **provide an overhead cover** to protect the food and service items from potential environmental contamination such as weather and dirt. *You may be exempt from this requirement if only serving individually prepackaged foods.*

Protect foods prepared, cooked, or displayed at the front of the temporary food establishment with **sneeze guards** or **active monitoring** by food worker(s).

Place a **barrier between hot equipment** (e.g., electric stoves, grills, steam tables) and the public.

Store **all food, utensils, and paper products** covered and off the ground.

Contain all food storage, equipment, and food preparation/handling activities **inside the temporary food establishment**.

FOOD WORKER CARDS

A current (not expired) [Washington State Food Worker Card](#) is required for individuals:

- **Handling** (e.g., cutting, washing, preparing, serving, cooking) unpackaged food, utensils, or other food contact surfaces; **or**
- **Transporting** perishable event foods; **or**
- **Supervising** large buffet service events. Event organizers are required to have at least one person with a current Washington State Food Worker Card for every 50 planned event attendees (e.g., at least two food workers are responsible for overseeing buffet service at a 100-person event).

Ensure food workers are familiar with food preparation and service plans. Assign one or more person(s)-in-charge to monitor and oversee operations.

On the [permit application](#), upload digital copies of food worker cards for UW personnel or students transporting foods, handling foods or supervising the food service. You do not need to upload food worker cards for caterers/restaurants/vendors with a current permanent operating permit issued by a Washington state local health jurisdiction.

Keep food worker card copies (hard-copy or electronic) available at the temporary food establishment in case EH&S staff request to review them during an inspection.

HEALTHY AND SAFE FOOD WORKERS

KEEP THE EVENT HEALTHY; STAY HOME IF SICK.

Food workers in the temporary food establishment are **required to review and follow** [EH&S food worker safety requirements](#) to reduce the risk of spreading foodborne illness.

Wear safe attire for food handling activities and **practice good hygiene**:

- [Wash hands often.](#)
- Wear [protective clothing](#) that fully covers arms and legs (non-baggy clothing) to prevent cuts and burns when working around kitchen hazards (e.g., sharp objects, fire, hot surfaces and substances).
- Wear clean clothing and restrain or cover hair (including beards and body hair) to protect exposed food and food contact surfaces.
- Limit jewelry to a single ring set.
- Keep your fingernails short, maintained, and clean.
- Wear gloves over painted or artificial nails while working with food.
- Wear [sturdy, closed-toe, non-slip shoes](#) to prevent slips/trips/falls.



HANDWASHING

Food workers are required to:

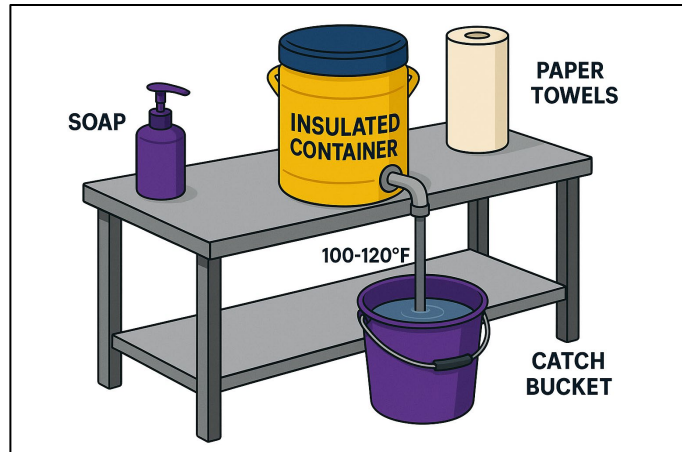
- Have access to handwashing facilities with [posted handwash sink signage, conveniently located, and within 25 feet](#) of all unpackaged food handling (e.g., prep, cooking, service) areas. This may require the establishment to have more than one handwashing station.
- **Wash hands frequently and at [appropriate times](#)** in a sink only used for handwashing;
- Wash hands **after using the restroom and again after returning to** the TFE.

If permanent handwashing facilities are not available, the person(s) in charge of the TFE can provide self-built temporary handwash station(s), **or** pre-built, self-contained handwash station(s) to the TFE to meet requirements.

Self-built temporary handwash station

A self-built handwash station (*shown at right*) is required to have hot (100-120°F), clean water supplied by:

- A 5-gallon or larger gravity flow, insulated container; **and**
- A continuous flow spigot that can lock in the open position to wash both hands simultaneously.



Self-built temporary handwash station

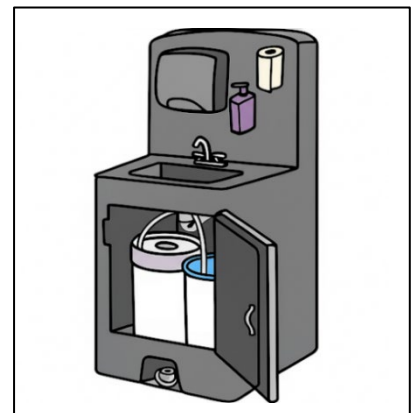
All of the following supplies must be provided at a self-built temporary handwash station:

- Pump soap
- Paper towels
- A waste receptacle
- A large catch bucket (at least 6 gallons) for collecting wastewater

Pre-built, self-contained handwash station

A pre-built, self-contained handwashing station (*shown at right*) is required to have all of the following:

- Clean water
- Water and wastewater containment
- A heating element
- An electric water pump
- Soap
- Paper towels



Pre-built handwash station

Wastewater: Never dump wastewater into a [storm drain](#) or directly on the ground.
Dispose of wastewater only in a septic or sanitary system (e.g., mop sink).

RESTROOM FACILITIES

Food workers are required to have **access to restrooms with handwash sinks;**

- within 200 feet of a [food booth](#);
- within 500 feet of a [mobile food unit](#).

Restrooms used by food workers must have hot, clean, running water, soap, and paper towels. Portable toilets are allowed if handwash sinks with hot water, soap, and paper towels are provided next to the portable toilet.

Food establishments offering seating to customers are [required to provide restroom access](#) to customers.

FOOD PREPARATION AND STORAGE AREAS

Store and prepare food in a **kitchen or commissary with a permanent LHJ or WSDA operating permit.** Final food preparation and cooking for service can be done in a temporary food establishment at the event site.

Plan event food quantities carefully to minimize waste.

Event foods sourced from, prepared at, or stored in a **personal home or unpermitted kitchen are *never* allowed** to be served at a temporary food establishment.

DURING OPERATIONS

CLEAN AND SANITIZE FOOD CONTACT SURFACES

Food establishments are required to regularly (at least every 4 hours) clean and sanitize food contact surfaces (e.g. equipment, pots, cutting boards, utensils) to reduce germs on surfaces to a negligible level.

Only use food contact surfaces that are **smooth, non-porous, and easily cleanable.**

Dishwashing

For one day events:

- Foods can be served with **unused, disposable, or compostable utensils and other food contact surfaces;** or
- If you have access to a permitted kitchen with [dishwashing facilities](#), bring **extra sets of cleaned and sanitized reusable** utensils and food contact surfaces and change the sets with clean ones **at least every four hours.**

For events lasting more than one day:

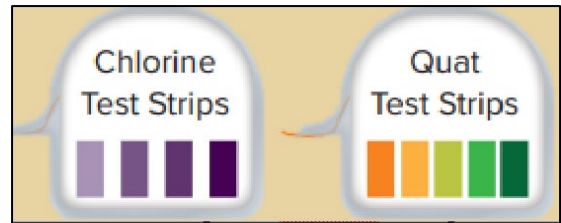
- [Plumbed dishwashing facilities](#) (e.g., three-compartment sink, dishwashing machine) in a permitted kitchen are required to wash, rinse, and sanitize all reusable food contact surfaces.
- Soap, sanitizer, and sink drain plugs must be provided. Dish tubs are *not* an acceptable replacement for dishwashing facilities.



Sanitizing

A food-safe sanitizer solution with wiping cloths is required to be prepared and in use on food contact surfaces prior to, and during, food service.

Follow steps in the [EH&S Sanitizing Food Contact Surfaces poster](#) to prepare and use sanitizer safely and effectively.



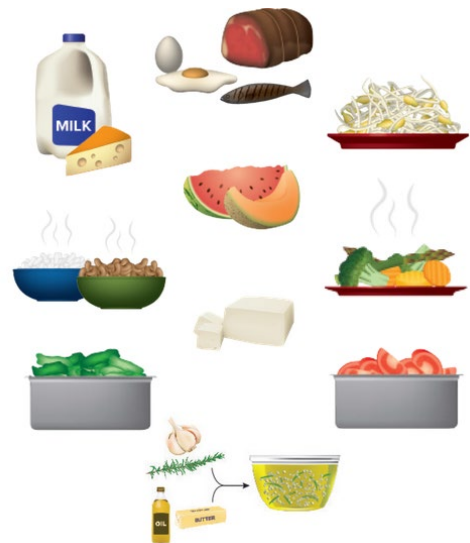
TIME AND TEMPERATURE CONTROLS FOR PERISHABLE FOODS

Perishable food will spoil, decay, or become unsafe to eat if time or temperature controls are not used to limit the growth of illness-causing bacteria or toxins. Perishable food is also known as [time/temperature control for safety \(TCS\) food](#).

Temperature controls keep hot foods at 135°F or above and cold foods at 41°F or below to avoid growth of bacteria and toxins.



Time controls limit the time the food is in the ***danger zone*** (between **41°F** and **135°F**), where bacteria and toxins can multiply rapidly, increasing the risk of foodborne illness.



TCS foods are required to be:

- Kept [hot \(135°F or above\) or cold \(41°F or below\)](#) for safety during storage, transport, and service, **and/or**
- Held at a safe hot or cold temperature, then [prepared and served over a short period of time, if only time is being used as a control for safety.](#)

TCS food service periods will be limited by EH&S to a maximum of 2 hours unless the caterer or UW individual(s) with a current [Washington state food worker card](#) are on site and actively monitoring all food temperatures (per the instructions below).

TRANSPORT AND STORAGE

We recommend you plan to have your **TCS food picked up and delivered to the temporary food establishment no more than 1 hour (including transit time) before** your approved food service start time.

[Transport and store](#) TCS foods at safe hot (135°F or above) or cold (41°F or below) temperatures until served.

Prepare temperature holding equipment before putting TCS food in it.

- Warm insulated carriers (e.g., Cambro) with hot water 1 hour before use.
- Turn on electric warmers for service at least 30 minutes before use.
- Add bagged ice to coolers ahead of placing food inside.

COOKING

Raw foods (e.g., raw vegetables, raw meats, rice, pasta) **must be [cooked to a safe internal cooking temperature](#) before hot-holding or serving foods.** Proper cooking kills germs in raw foods and makes them safe to eat. Different types of foods can have different germs and require different cooking temperatures. Cook foods to safe internal temperatures as quickly as possible to **limit the time they spend in the *danger zone*.**

REHEATING

You can [reheat](#) foods that were cooled safely. **Reheat cooked and cooled foods that will be hot held during service** (e.g., chili that was cooked and cooled in a permitted kitchen the day before and reheated in the food booth) **so that all parts reach 165°F or above for a minimum of 15 seconds.** Reheat foods as quickly as possible, ([within 1 hour at a temporary food establishment](#), within 2 hours in a permitted kitchen) to limit the time foods spend in the *danger zone* and prevent germ growth.

COOLING

[Cooling](#) foods is allowed only in a permitted kitchen or commissary using commercial cooling equipment (e.g., walk-in cooler, walk-in freezer, blast chiller). Cooling food in a temporary establishment (e.g., mobile unit, food booth) is **prohibited.**

Freshly prepared **TCS foods (e.g., cold sandwiches, salads, meat/cheese platters)** **must be cooled completely to 41°F or below** at the permitted kitchen before covering, transporting, and storing them at the temporary establishment. Covering foods before they are fully cooled prevents them from cooling properly, prolongs time spent in the *danger zone*, increasing the risk of germ growth and foodborne illness.

MONITOR TEMPERATURE

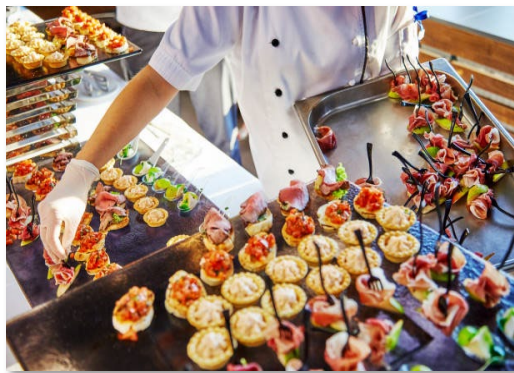
Food workers are required to have and use a clean, **digital stem thermometer** to [regularly monitor](#) (e.g., hourly) TCS food temperatures when cooking, cooling, storing, and serving foods.



Use a **written log to record temperature** (and the time temperature was checked) during final cooking or reheating, cooling, and hot- or cold-holding of each food item.

EH&S may require food workers to recondition (e.g., quickly reheat) or remove and discard TCS foods that have been cooked to (or held at) an [improper temperature](#).

PREVENT FOOD CONTAMINATION



[Bare hand contact](#) with ready-to-eat foods (e.g., cookies, vegetable platter, hamburger buns, ice) is prohibited.

Use barriers like tongs, ladles, single use bakery papers, or single use gloves.

Store utensils on a clean paper plate or cup with the handles up in between uses.

Food workers are required to **protect foods and food contact surfaces from potential contamination** (e.g., dust, debris, hands, pests, sneezes, foreign objects) during preparation, transport, storage, and service.

- **Keep foods covered** (e.g., lids, plastic wrap) when not being actively served.
- Store foods at least **2 feet off the ground** if they are not inside equipment (e.g., ice chest).
- **Have a food worker present** when foods or food contact surfaces are at the TFE.
- Foods must be stored in secure areas.
- **Separate raw animal foods** (e.g., raw meat, raw eggs) **from ready-to-eat foods** during transport and storage at the temporary food establishment.
- Food workers **hand service items** (e.g., cutlery, plates) to guests rather than guests helping themselves.
- Customer self-service (i.e., buffet) needs to meet these requirements:
 - The external vendor(s)/caterer(s) or a UW event organizer (who has a food worker card) is required to **actively monitor the buffet service to ensure foods are handled safely and protected from contamination**. Otherwise, **sneeze guards** are required to protect unpackaged foods.

- Foods that becomes contaminated are required to be removed immediately from service and discarded.
- Offer condiments from dispensers or single-use packets.
- **Store personal items outside of food preparation areas.**
- **Limit personal foods;** label and store them where they cannot contaminate event foods.
- **Eat or drink outside of the temporary food establishment.** You can have a beverage in a closed-lid container in the establishment if it is stored where it can't contaminate foods or food contact surfaces.

POST-EVENT

LEFTOVER FOOD DISPOSAL

The person(s) in charge of the TFE **are required to ensure leftover TCS and/or unpackaged foods are discarded/composted at the end of the food service and not cooled and saved for later consumption** (i.e., no boxing up leftovers to take home). This is a food safety and food code requirement.

Disposal is not required for refrigerated and frozen foods stored in mobile food units, unopened TCS foods that have been temperature controlled during the event, or commercial shelf-stable foods in resealable packaging (e.g., frying oil, spices, seasonings).

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Ensure the event location is clean and tidy.

Have adequate waste containers at the TFE.

Have food workers regularly remove waste during operations and post-event.

MORE INFORMATION

Visit the EH&S [Temporary Food Establishment Permit](#) webpage for more information.

Contact EH&S Environmental Public Health Program at phdept@uw.edu with questions.