



NorthWest Bergen
Regional Health Commission

Good Public Health Grows a Stronger Community

TEMPORARY FOOD EVENT LICENSES FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Temporary Food licenses are required for events where foods are made available to the public. A retail temporary food establishment can operate no more than 14 consecutive days in conjunction with a single event or celebration.

Why are Temporary Food Licenses Required?

Temporary Food Licenses are required by the Health Department. A license is required in order to ensure that organizations and businesses understand how to provide properly prepared, safe food. A food-related illness can result from poor food preparation and subsequent serving practices. One or many people may become ill; some may require hospitalization and possibly die as a result of food-related illnesses. The very old, the very young, pregnant women and those who suffer from chronic illnesses are at great risk for food-related illness. When you apply for an application for a license to serve food, Health Department staff provides education to help you understand how to provide safe food at your event.

What Events Require Temporary Food Licenses?

Individuals or groups planning to hold events that are open to the public must obtain a license. The following are examples of events that typically require a license:

- A fair, carnival, music event or circus
- Community celebrations
- Public exhibitions
- Sports events
- Fundraisers
- Craft Fairs
- Open houses

****The requirements do not change if the food is being sold for profit or provided at no charge.***

Are There Any Events that DO NOT Require Temporary Food Licenses?

Your event is not considered a temporary food establishment if the food is prepared or provided by members of a group for members of the group and their invited guests. This only applies to the gathering if it is **PRIVATE**. Any **public advertisement** (i.e. flyers, banners, newspaper article, list serves or any other means) of an event will mean a license is required. Examples of events that do not require a temporary food license are:

- A meeting or an event for a private or charitable organization, association, a fraternal group or club
- An activity in a church or other religious congregation for members
- A gathering such as a party, picnic or potluck where food is shared
- Private weddings that do their own food preparation

What about a Bake Sale?

A bake sale is not considered a temporary event as long as only dry baked goods, such as cookies, brownies and cake are offered. If you are offering baked goods with cream toppings, fillings or pumpkin pie then a temporary license is required.

How Do I Obtain a Temporary Food License?

- Contact the Health Department or your Borough/Town Hall for an application.
- A license must be obtained for EACH food booth operating during an event.
- If a caterer is hired who is located outside of the town, he/she must provide proof of municipal licensing and the most current establishment rating.

When Should I Submit an Application?

An application for a temporary food establishment license must be submitted at least 10 days prior to your event to allow time for processing of the license. Cost of the license varies. All fees must be paid prior to a license being issued.

Questions? Please contact Northwest Bergen Regional Health Commission at 201-445-7217 or info@nwbrhc.net. Thank you!

*Shared/Temporary Food Events