

Bell County Public Health District Rules for Temporary Food Operations

The Bell County Public Health District provides these rules and requirements for operations of temporary food service facilities. They are based on the requirements and standards in the Texas Food Establishment Rules, Bell County Retail Food Sanitation Order 2016, and other applicable laws. The Bell County Public Health District is authorized to restrict or prohibit certain types of food or operations based on the ability of the operator to adequately meet the minimal standards for food sanitation and protect public health. Bell County Public Health District does not require special permits for a temporary food operation operating only at specific events. Your operation will still be mandated to adhere to the previous mentioned rules and your operation is subject to inspection during the event without prior notification by the health district. Failure to meet the standards required for food safety can result in immediate cessation of your operation. If any questions arise regarding these requirements, you may contact the Food Protection Division, Bell County Public Health District at 254-771-2106. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM (CST).

Definitions

Health District: The Bell County Public Health District.

Food: ANY item intended for human consumption. This includes beverages of any kind, ice, raw or cooked foods, pre-packaged foods, and any other item that will meet the definition found in the TFER. Nutritional value is not a determinant factor in consideration of this definition.

TCS Foods: ANY food that must be placed under time and temperature controls to minimize or eliminate the growth of infectious or toxigenic micro-organisms capable of causing food born intoxication or infection. This would include any food in whole or part of animal protein whether cooked or raw, ANY cooked vegetables or products containing cooked vegetables, raw eggs, sliced melons, seed sprouts, or ANY synthetic food that is capable of sustaining growth as defined.

Potable water: Water that is considered **SAFE** for human consumption. Sources include municipal water supply, a water supply from an approved community well, or bottled water. Water from a private well is **prohibited** for use. Any food, food-related procedures or sanitation requirements must use potable water. Water that is not potable is **prohibited except for means of fire suppression or climate control**.

Approved source: An approved source is any facility or operation that has met minimal standards from an authorized agency and is licensed, permitted, or legal to provide a particular product. All food **MUST** come from an approved source. This requirement prohibits food prepared in a private home with exception of foods provided in accordance with the cottage food production operation law. Foods under the cottage food production operation must meet minimal standards applied in that law.

Sanitization: The effective removal/elimination of harmful micro-organisms by 99.999%. This may be achieved through heat treatment, hot water at or above 170° F, or approved chemical sanitizers.

Sanitizers: Any chemical or heat that is capable of and approved for effective sanitization procedures. These include chlorine bleach, quaternary sanitizer, or water at or above 170° F.

Single service articles: Any item that is used for the food operation (preparation, service, food consumption, dispensing, etc.) that is intended for a one-time, one-customer use. Single service items cannot be re-used.

Food contact surface: Any surface of equipment or utensils that normally come in contact with food, and those surfaces which may allow draining, dripping, or splashing of substances normally in contact with the food or the food itself.

Rules and Requirements

GENERAL: A temporary food service operation must comply with these rules and requirements. Exceptions and waivers may be granted but **ONLY WITH PRIOR APPROVAL OF THE HEALTH DISTRICT**. Additional requirements may be imposed by the Health District to accommodate waivers or any food related issue that requires such additional requirements

or waivers. The Health District has the authority to require cessation of operations for any facility that fails to meet the minimal standards required. This cessation will last only until the standards can be achieved. This may include any part of or all of the operation. If the standards cannot be met in a reasonable time, then the facility will be required to permanently cease operations related to retail food sales. This cessation is not negotiable and will be strictly enforced to include complete exclusion from the event if the operators are un-cooperative.

RESTRICTED OPERATIONS: Food sold to the public must come from an approved source. With the exceptions listed in the definitions, food made in a home kitchen is prohibited for sale. Church kitchens, VFW kitchens, and other facilities that are not part of a residential location, may be used on a limited basis as a location to prepare foods. Foods that are vacuum-packed or canned must come from an approved source (**HOME CANNED GOODS ARE STRICTLY PROHIBITED**). Any food not prepared in an approved location, must be prepared on sight.

FOOD PRODUCT TEMPARATURES: All TCS foods must be subject to temperature standards required by law to maintain safety of the food and minimize/prohibit bacterial growth or eliminate/destroy live organisms.

Any TCS foods that are maintained cold (cooked or raw) must be held at a product temperature of below 45 ° F. This can be achieved by any means that is capable of achieving this requirement. Any means that does not meet this standard will be prohibited.

Any TCS foods that are maintained hot must be held at a product temperature above 135° F. This can be achieved by any means capable of this standard. Any method that fails to keep the foods above 135° F will be prohibited.

Any foods that are cooked prior to service must meet a minimal cooking temperature specific to the product (examples):

Vegetables 135° F

Beef (whole intact) 145° F

Pork 145°F

Ground Meat (beef, pork) 155° F

Poultry (whole or ground) or Stuffed Meats 165° F

Any food cooked in microwave must reach 165 ° F or higher

The Bell County Public Health District, because of excessive risk, will not allow the sale or service of undercooked foods, or raw fish or shellfish (sushi, oysters) from a temporary food operation.

THERMOMETER REQUIREMENTS: Any operation that sells TCS foods must have a thermometer capable of reading from 0° F to 220° F. There are two types required: Product (metal stemmed capable of insertion into the product to indicate actual food temperature accurate to + or – 2° F.) and Ambient air (thermometer that is used to indicate the air temperature accurate to + or – 3° F of a hot/cold holding device). Any thermometer that is used to check product temperature must be properly cleaned and sanitized immediately prior to insertion into and immediately after removal from the food. The Bell County Public Health District recommends alcohol swabs for this procedure.

THAWING TCS FOODS: The thawing procedures used for TCS foods must be done in a manner to eliminate unsafe time in the temperature danger zone (45° F to 135 °F). Approved methods include cooking as part of the complete thawing process, thawing in a microwave to a complete cook, in a refrigerated unit that is capable of 45° F or lower, or thawing in a microwave followed by IMMEDIATE continuation of cooking by conventional means, or thawing under cold potable water (70° F or less) for no more than 2 hours followed by cold storage or cooking. Room temperature thawing is prohibited.

REHEATING TCS FOODS: Any process that reheats TCS foods must meet “rapid” standards. Rapid reheating is defined as obtaining a minimal temperature of 165° F within 2 hours. Any food that is to be reheated prior to service or sale, MUST meet this standard FIRST.

COOLING TCS FOOD: TCS foods that have been heated (cooked, reheated) and are then allowed to cool shall be “rapidly” cooled in a manner required by these rules. Foods must achieve 70° F or lower within 2 hours, and then must achieve a temperature of 45° F or lower within an additional 4 hours. Both of these time/temperature requirements must be achieved. Any food not meeting these stipulations will be pulled from sale.

ICE DISPENSING: Ice used for consumption must be dispensed in a manner that protects it from contamination by the public. This can be achieved by proper scoops or dispensing means, or by restricting ice dispensing to the operators only. Ice used for cooling packages, containers or other items CANNOT be used for consumption.

EQUIPMENT: All equipment used for the operation shall be located and installed in a way that prevents food contamination and facilitates cleaning. Equipment shall be maintained in a sanitary manner which includes a frequency of cleaning that will meet this standard. Food contact surfaces must be cleaned to eliminate contamination.

FOOD PROTECTION: Food while being prepared, stored, dispensed, displayed or served shall be adequately protected against contamination from the employees, environment, and the public. Employees must use gloves or hand sanitizer gel after hand washing prior to handling food. The operation must provide overhead cover and screening (as feasible) to prevent insect/rodent contamination. Contamination by the public must be prevented through means of proper dispensing, covering, or sneeze guards.

WATER: There must be enough potable water available to supply the needs of the operation throughout the duration of the event. With exceptions, the facility must have hot and cold water available for washing utensils and hands.

WASTE: All solid and liquid waste must be properly disposed by means approved by law.

HAND WASHING STATION: All operations must have ready access to hand wash stations. These must be under the control of each operation and shall be supplied with adequate amounts of water, soap, and paper towels.

DISHWASH/UTENSILWASH PROCEDURES: All dishes, utensils, and food contact surfaces of equipment shall be washed as often as necessary to eliminate or minimize contamination. This is accomplished by means of a three stage process of wash, rinse, sanitize. Wash with detergent and water, rinse with clean clear water, and sanitize with an approved method. All items must be air dried.

The remaining pages are provided to allow examples of how to achieve the various methods required for the operation.