

Spokane Regional Health District's (SRHD) Food Safety program works with owners and operators of temporary food establishments (TFEs) to ensure food offered to the public is prepared and served as safely as possible. The following questions are those most commonly asked by people considering or preparing to operate a TFE. For additional information and forms, visit our TFE web page at <http://www.srhd.org/services/tfe.asp>.

Permits

Does a Washington State food worker card (or a food handler's permit or health card) allow me to operate a TFE?

No - a permit to operate a temporary food establishment is required to operate a TFE. An [application](#) for a permit to operate must be submitted at least 14 days prior to the event to avoid a double permit fee. At a minimum, the person in charge (PIC) for each shift or during hours of operation must have a valid [Washington State food worker card](#).

What events do not require a permit?

- **Private event** does not require a permit to operate. A private event is defined as a private gathering limited to members and guests of a family, organization or club, where the event is not open to the general public and where food and beverages are provided free of charge. Examples of private events include Scout meetings or student club meetings where only students and their family members are invited and there is no charge for the food. If an event is advertised to the general public or if there is a charge for the food, it is *not* considered a private event.
- **A bake sale** sponsored by a non-profit organization for religious, charitable or educational purposes does not require a permit. Only non-potentially hazardous* baked goods (examples include: cookies, cakes, and breads that don't require refrigeration) prepared and wrapped in a sanitary manner for sale or service will qualify as "Exempt from Rules". A clearly visible sign or placard at the sales or service location stating that the foods are prepared in a kitchen that is not inspected by the regulatory authority (SRHD) must be posted. *Regularly scheduled bake sales are considered a commercial enterprise and will require permit.*
- **Potlucks** do not require a permit if the people attending are expected to bring food to share, people are gathered to share food, there is no compensation, there is no charge for food or beverages and the event is not conducted for commercial purposes.

If I am sampling food at an event, do I still need a TFE permit?

- Yes – If sampling potentially hazardous foods* (PHFs) and/or if sampling crackers, bread or chips with commercially produced non-potentially hazardous* jam, jelly, honey, peanut butter, condiments, dips, sauces or salsa; or with salad dressings and dips made from commercial mixes mixed with commercially produced yogurt, sour cream, pasteurized milk, or canned tomato products.
- No - if offering only commercially prepackaged non-potentially hazardous foods, non-potentially hazardous* minimally cut unprocessed fruits and vegetables or commercially produced ready to eat non-potentially hazardous foods* served without direct hand contact, limited portioning, into sanitary single use articles (cookies, donuts, cake, jerky). See the [Exempt from Rules](#) list.

What is a Temporary Food Establishment (TFE)?

It's a food establishment that operates:

- at a fixed location, with a fixed menu, for not more than 21 consecutive days in conjunction with a single event or celebration, e.g., a fair or festival

OR

- not more than 3 days a week at a fixed location, with a fixed menu, in conjunction with an approved, recurring, organized event, e.g., a farmers market

*A potentially hazardous food (PHF) is one that needs to be held hot or cold in order to be safe to eat. Cream pies, cut leafy greens, cut melons, sprouts and cut tomatoes need refrigeration. Chocolate chip cookies, bread, and brownies are some examples of non-potentially hazardous foods.

Do we need a permit if we will be offering free hot dogs to customers of our business?

Yes - if the food will be available to the general public regardless of whether or not you are charging for the food. Applications must be submitted at least 14 days prior to the event or a double permit fee will be required. Contact the Food Safety program at 324-1560, ext. 2 to determine the permit category you will need.

I have a valid catering permit in Spokane County; do I still need to apply for a TFE permit?

- Approval to operate at a temporary event will only be issued to a current Caterer permit holder that has been in operation for a minimum of 1 year and has had at least 1 routine inspection as a Caterer.
- A catering permit may not be issued for temporary food events only.

If I have a permit for my permanent food establishment, do I need a TFE permit to cook or serve food outside?

Yes - A TFE permit is required to cook or sell foods from a temporary set up outside the facility. The permit for a permanent food establishment applies only to food that is prepared and served from the approved food preparation and service areas in the permanent facility.

Do I need a permit from any other agency besides SRHD?

Please contact Spokane County or the city where your event is located and check for any permitting or fire department requirements.

Permit Categories

What is the difference between a Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 TFE permit?

- A Level 1 TFE serves only food on the [TFE Level 1 Menu](#) Item list. The number of menu items may be limited. The permit options are 1 day, 2-4 days, 5-21 days and annual/recurring. Prices range from \$100.00 to \$160.00.
- A Level 2 TFE may serve animal products that have been commercially pre-cooked, commercially produced raw milk distributed in its original un-opened package. The number of menu items is limited. The permit options are 1 day, 2-4 days, 5-21 days and annual/recurring. Prices range from \$250.00 to \$300.00.
- A TFE Level 3 does not meet the definition of a Level 1 or a Level 2. There are *no* annual permits. The permit options are 1 day, 2-4 days, 5-21 days, recurring and repeat/additional. Prices range from \$300.00 to \$480.00.
- Level 1, 2, and 3 TFE permits are not transferable between operators. Permit holders/operators must also use the same menu and same operation (e.g., set-up, food preparation steps) for all dates the TFE is open.

What types of foods would be considered high risk, requiring a Level 3 TFE permit?

Any raw animal product or foods that require extensive preparation and handling, or foods that has been cooked from the raw state and will be hot held. Examples of foods that would require the level 3 TFE permit including but not limited to: raw hamburger patties (frozen or fresh), raw chicken, or BBQ ribs.

Permitting Process

How far in advance of my event do I have to submit an application?

A permit [application](#) *must be submitted at least fourteen days prior to the projected date of opening* to allow us time to work with the applicant and process the permits. If this doesn't occur, a penalty fee of 100% of the permit fee will be assessed and in extreme cases your event could be delayed or postponed.

What is the process for obtaining a TFE permit?

Before applying for a TFE permit we recommend that you go to SRHD's Temporary Food Establishment web page to review forms, handouts and other resources. Remember to submit your application at least 14 days prior to the event to avoid a double permit fee. See the [TFE Permitting requirement handout](#) for a description of the permitting process.

Operating your TFE

What type of equipment do I need to operate a TFE?

- Protection from contamination: overhead cover, ground cover and walls.
- Method of food transport: insulated food grade containers for hot/cold food, and protected from contamination.
- Cold holding equipment: ice chests, mechanical refrigeration. Cold food must be maintained at 41°F or below.
- Hot holding: steam tables, sterno chaffers, roasters, rice cookers, and hot dog rollers. Hot food must be maintained at 135°F or above.
- Cooking: BBQ grill, stovetop, fryers, oven, wok.
- [Handwashing set-up](#): 5 gallon insulated container, warm water, soap, paper towels, and a [handwashing sign](#). Extra set-ups may be required when working with raw animal products.
- A thermometer: a digital thin-probed thermometer is required for smaller thinner foods.

When do I need a Commissary Agreement?

Anytime you are using a commercial kitchen for food preparation, food storage, cleaning of equipment, or warewashing. A signed [commissary agreement](#) must be submitted with a TFE application.

What if my event doesn't fit into one of the food service categories listed?

It could be that your establishment meets the definition of another permit category. For additional permit information please visit the Food Safety Program website at <http://www.srhd.org/services/foodsafesafe.asp> or contact SRHD at (509) 324-1560 ext 2.

Additional Resources:

TFE Application - http://www.srhd.org/documents/Enviro_Public_Health/TFE-Application-June-2016.pdf

TFE Application INSTRUCTIONS - http://www.srhd.org/documents/Enviro_Public_Health/TFE-Application-instructions-FINAL-revised-June-2016.pdf

Commissary Agreement - [http://www.srhd.org/documents/Enviro_Public_Health/CommissaryAgreement\(1\).pdf](http://www.srhd.org/documents/Enviro_Public_Health/CommissaryAgreement(1).pdf)

TFE Permitting Requirements and Flow Chart - http://www.srhd.org/documents/Enviro_Public_Health/TFE-permitting-requirements-June-2016.pdf

Handwash set up - http://www.srhd.org/documents/Enviro_Public_Health/TFETemporaryHandWashingStation2015.pdf

Handwash sign - http://www.srhd.org/documents/Enviro_Public_Health/YellowWashYourHands.pdf

Are You Ready to Operate? - http://www.srhd.org/documents/Enviro_Public_Health/TFEAreYouReady2015.pdf

TFE Level 1 Menu - http://www.srhd.org/documents/Enviro_Public_Health/TFE-Level-1-List.pdf

Exempt from Rules - http://www.srhd.org/documents/Enviro_Public_Health/Exempt-from-Rules-June-2016.pdf

Exempt from Permit with Approval - http://www.srhd.org/documents/Enviro_Public_Health/Exempt-From-Permit-June-2016.pdf

We are here to provide you with assistance and help your event go smoothly. For additional information and forms, visit our Temporary Food Establishment web page at <http://www.srhd.org/services/tfe.asp> or contact our Food Safety Program, at (509) 324-1560 ext. 2.