

2026 Special Events and Health Food Licensing (for Event Coordinators)

For events taking place in Cincinnati, vendors selling most foods and/or beverages at special events will require either a mobile food service operation license from anywhere in Ohio or a temporary food license from the Cincinnati Health Department. While these are generally obtained by the individual vendors, it may be helpful to know the requirements so you can pass these along to the operators you are working with.

WHAT ROLE DOES THE EVENT COORDINATOR PLAY?

- Event Coordinators should reach out to the Health Department at TempFoodLicensing@cincinnati-oh.gov as early as possible before an event. After initial contact, a Google form link will be sent to the event coordinator to gather additional info about the event.
- The Event Coordinator will work together with the Health Department to ensure that all food/beverage vendors participating in their event are properly licensed and that application is made by the 10 BUSINESS days-before-the-event deadline, usually either with a mobile food license or a temporary food license.
- The Event Coordinator must provide a list of food and beverage vendors to the Health Department as well as a labelled map of each vendors location – this should be done at least 15 business days (or three weeks) before an event to ensure that all vendors are properly licensed. No vendors should be added less than 10 BUSINESS days before an event, as licensing of the vendors can not be guaranteed.
- The Event Coordinator will help ensure their vendors have meet all requirements for food licensing.

TEMPORARY FOOD LICENSE INFORMATION

- Temporary Food License Fee - \$175, **payable online only** with an e-check or credit card. Fees are generally non-refundable once the license has been printed. There are no refunds for no-show operators.
- Temporary Food License Application – Must be received via email by our office with receipt showing license fee payment at least 10 **BUSINESS** days before the event. Applicants not meeting that deadline will not be eligible to participate in your event.
- Temporary Food Licenses are good for a single event lasting up to 5 consecutive days. Vendors may not obtain more than 10 temporary food licenses in a licensing year.
- Temporary food operations are inspected by Health Department personnel about an hour before the event starts, and licenses are issued after that visual inspection indicates operators have met the

requirements for licensure. At many events, vendors will receive multiple inspections throughout the course of an event.

WHO NEEDS A TEMPORARY FOOD LICENSE?

- Most vendors selling cooked, prepared, or packaged foods and some beverages at special events
 - Examples of food/drinks that often need a license **if sold**: hot food, sandwiches, salads, smoothies, ice cream (packaged/unpackaged), desserts (packaged/unpackaged), snacks (packaged/unpackaged), snow cones and shaved ice, fresh lemonade and tea, fresh juices, cottage food or home bakery products, coffee drinks, almost any drink (alcoholic or non) with ice or fresh fruit

VENDORS THAT DON'T NEED A TEMPORARY FOOD LICENSE

- Vendors with a valid mobile food service license from anywhere in Ohio
- Vendors giving away food (no charge, ticket cost, or required donation)
- Vendors selling:
 - Only fountain drinks (not served with ice), alcoholic beverages (not served with ice or fresh fruit), or **commercially** pre-packaged beverages that are not potentially hazardous and don't require refrigeration (i.e. soda, sports drinks, etc).
 - Only **commercially** pre-packaged food that does not require refrigeration and is contained in displays that take up less than 200 cubic feet.

NOTE: Vendors with local brick and mortar food licenses or food licenses from other states are NOT exempt from needing a temporary or mobile food license.

For questions, email TempFoodLicensing@cincinnati-oh.gov or visit

<https://tinyurl.com/Cincinnati-Temp-Food-Licensing> for information and temporary food license application

*****FOOD ALLERGEN NOTIFICATION AT SPECIAL EVENTS*****

The Ohio Uniform Food Safety Code requires that food service operators inform consumers of allergens present in both packaged AND unpackaged food. This will ALSO apply to temporary and mobile food license holders operating at special events. This can be achieved by a VERY visible sign posted near their point of sale (for unpackaged or open food) that reads something like:

“The following major food allergens are used as ingredients in our menu items: Milk, Eggs, Soy and Sesame. Please ask one of our employees for more information about these ingredients.”

Only allergens actually used in the menu should be included in the posted notice. The major food allergens are: 1) Milk; 2) Eggs; 3) Fish; 4) Crustacean Shellfish; 5) Tree Nuts; 6) Peanuts; 7) Wheat; 8) Soy; and 9) Sesame

See attached info sheet for more information.

Written Notification of Major Food Allergens as Ingredients

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Below is an example of a statement that could be listed on a menu, table tent, placard or display board that informs the consumer of major food allergens that are present as ingredients in unpackaged foods:

- * The following major food allergens are used as ingredients: Milk, Egg, Fish, Crustacean Shellfish, Tree Nuts, Peanuts, Wheat, Soy, and Sesame. Please notify a food employee for more information about these ingredients.



Written notification can be provided in many forms such as: physical or electronic means, including, but not limited to, brochures, deli case or menu notifications, label statements, table tents, placards, or other effective written means.

For more information, please contact your local health department.



Department
of Health

Department
of Agriculture

Temporary Food Booth Setup – What to Bring

1. Equipment

- a. Cold Holding - Commercial, mechanical refrigeration is required for events lasting longer than 6 hours. Use of coolers of ice for this purpose is not permitted.
- b. Hot Holding – Equipment appropriate for keeping food hot for the length of the event

2. Dish Washing (Not required if ALL items are pre-packaged)

- a. Dish Soap
- b. Sanitizer (for 3-bin dishwashing and wiping off surfaces)
- c. Sanitizer Test Strips (for the type of sanitizer you are using)
- d. 3 labelled bins for washing dishes/utensils (preferably with covers/lids)

3. Hand Washing

- a. Five-gallon, insulated dispenser w/ free flow, stay on spigot at the bottom
- b. Hand Soap (Soap required – sanitizer is optional)
- c. Single Use Towels
- d. Bucket or Tub to catch wastewater when washing hands
- e. Small trash can for single use towels

4. Other Important Supplies

- a. Buckets and Wiping Cloths (for sanitizing of non-food contact surfaces)
- b. Stem thermometers for checking food/water temperature
- c. Equipment thermometers (one for each refrigerator/freezer being used)
- d. Hair restraints and covering (hats, visors, etc) for all employees
- e. Plexiglass, lattice, sneeze guards, or similar to protect food when cooking/prepping near edge of booth
- f. Plenty of non-latex gloves (so they can be changed often)
- g. Broom and dustpan
- h. Risers or crates for storing items at least 6 inches off the ground
- i. Roofing paper for covering ground inside booth
- j. Tall containers for holding plastic forks, spoons, etc. upright
- k. Containers with lids to keep supplies clean and dry
- l. Extra sheet pans, aluminum foil, or foil lids to use as covers, barriers, etc
- m. Cooler for keeping employees' personal food and drinks **ONLY**
- n. Masking tape (for labeling and posting license), sharpie, scissors (these items are optional, but recommended)

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