



County of San Diego

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND QUALITY
FOOD AND HOUSING DIVISION

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FHDTempEvents@sdcounty.ca.gov



TEMPORARY EVENTS - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

What documentation is required to qualify as a non-profit organization?

An IRS 501 (c) letter or CA non-profit entity number must be submitted with your application to verify non-profit active status and potentially have your health permit fee waived or reduced. Non-profit fee exemptions are tracked by non-profit number.

When should I submit my paperwork?

Applications should be submitted at least 14 days prior to the event start date. Completed applications not received 14 days before the event will incur a late application submittal fee.

Why am I being charged a late fee?

Applications received less than 14 days prior to an event start date or updated/modified within 14 days of the event are subject to an additional late application submittal fee.

What are my payment options?

Once the completed application is received, you will be contacted by our staff and provided with an invoice. Payments can be made by mail, in person, or online. If paying by check, make checks payable to “**County of San Diego.**”

- Mail to P.O. Box 129261, San Diego, CA 92112-9261. Please ensure that your payment will arrive in our office at least 14 days prior to the event start date.
- Submit in person at the Department of Environmental Health and Quality (DEHQ) office located at 5500 Overland Ave., Suite 170, San Diego, CA 92123.
- Pay online at www.dehqpay.com. Refer to our online payment instructions in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

What will happen if I don't pay and I am found operating without a health permit?

All food facilities must obtain a valid health permit prior to operating at a temporary event. A facility found operating without a valid health permit will be subject to immediate closure until a health permit is obtained and may be charged up to three times the health permit fee in addition to the original cost of the health permit.

Can I use my Temporary Food Facility permit at multiple events on the same date, at the same time?

Temporary Food Facility Permits may only be used for one booth location at a time. If a vendor wishes to operate at two separate events or CFMs, multiple permits must be obtained unless the events do not overlap (this includes set up and break downtime). For example, if you are operating two booths on the same day at the same location or operating two booths on the same day, at the same time, in different locations, and the setup and breakdown times overlap, you need two separate permits.

I have a Temporary Food Facility vendor permit; can I host my own Temporary Event to set up my booth and sell my product?

To host a temporary event, the event must first meet the definition of a community event as established in the California Retail Food Code (CRFC) and be an event that is civic, political, public, or educational in nature, including state and county fairs, city festivals, circuses, and other public gathering events approved by the local enforcement agency. If the event meets this definition, then the organizer of the event must obtain a Temporary Food Facility Organizer permit. A temporary event organizer fee is required for events with two or more food vendors participating. For events that have only one vendor, no additional organizer fee is required.

If I am the organizer and plan to have only one booth (my own), do I need a separate vendor permit?

Yes, a separate vendor permit is required. Please submit both an organizer application for the event and a vendor application for your booth. You will only be charged the permit fee for the vendor permit. If there are more than two booths that operate, then the organizer fees will be applied.

I have an annual Organizer permit. Can this be used for any event at the same location?

Each annual organizer permit allows for the operation of the same event at the same location. An annual Temporary Food Facility Organizer permit allows for the operation of an event for a maximum of 25 days within a 90-day period.

Do I need a permit to sell food at a brewery or winery?

Yes, our department offers multiple permit options that would allow a vendor to sell food at a brewery or winery.

- An Organizer permit must be obtained to hold a Temporary Event at the brewery/winery. Food vendors can obtain a Temporary Food Facility vendor permit and operate in conjunction with the permitted community event.
- If the brewery/winery has obtained a permit as a Host Facility, a food vendor would need to obtain a Direct Sales Catering Permit. For additional details on our Host Facility/Direct Sales Catering program, please visit our [catering webpage](#).
- Any permitted mobile food facility may operate at a brewery/winery. For additional details on obtaining a mobile food facility permit, please visit our [mobile food facility webpage](#).
- A single food truck operating at a brewery/winery does not need an additional DEH permit. If multiple food trucks are operating at a brewery/winery, an Organizer Permit is required. Please make sure to verify the local zoning requirements before the event. Contact our Temporary Events staff at (858) 505-6809 or fhdtempevents@sdcounty.ca.gov for additional information.

What permit type do I need if I am selling alcoholic beverages?

- Vendors selling/serving mixed cocktails, including alcoholic beverages with ice and/or garnishes, are required to obtain an Unpackaged Food Vendor permit.
- Vendors selling/serving various beers/wines directly from the bottle or keg through “crack/pour and serve” (from a can/bottle/keg) must obtain a Limited Beverage Service permit.

PERMIT OPTIONS

What are the types of vendor permits, and what is allowed to be sold with each permit type?

There are three types of vendor permits that allow the sales and distribution of food and beverages. There is the option of either a single event (1-4 days) or an annual permit within the three types. Please refer to the [Temporary Events Permit Type](#) guidance document for a detailed description of these options.

What are the requirements to be considered a prepackaged vendor?

Food items must be manufactured and prepackaged in approved permitted food facilities: a restaurant, federal (USDA, FDA) manufacturing facilities, or state permitted/registered facility in the manufacturer's sealed container. At the state level in California, a Processed Food Registration (PFR) is one way to meet this requirement. No sampling is allowed with a prepackaged permit unless the product stays in its original packaging from the time it is manufactured to the time it is provided to the consumer at the event.

Suppose I make food at my commissary and package it for retail sale. Can I obtain a prepackaged temporary food facility vendor permit to sell at a temporary event or Certified Farmer's Market?

No, food made at a commissary kitchen and then packaged for retail sale at a temporary event/farmer's market is part of an open food preparation process and would require an Unpackaged Temporary Food Vendor Permit. If you obtain a Processed Food Registration (PFR) license from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) to allow for the processing and subsequent commercial packaging of your food item, then you would qualify to obtain a Prepackaged Temporary Food Facility Vendor Permit. A copy of your PFR certificate must be submitted with your Temporary Event Vendor application. For more information on obtaining a PFR, please visit the California Department of Public Health's [Processed Food Registration webpage](#) or contact: FDInfo@cdph.ca.gov (800) 495-3232.

What happens if I apply for a prepackaged permit and decide to offer unpackaged/open food?

Please notify us before the event start date if you decide to offer unpackaged/open food or change your permit type so that we can update your permit type and provide an updated invoice. In addition, you must meet all CRFC requirement for unpackaged/open food. If there are imminent health hazards that cannot be corrected on site, the facility will be subject to immediate closure at the event. Additional fees will be invoiced for the difference in the permit type.

EXISTING PERMITTED FACILITY ALLOWANCES**Can I set up a booth outside my permanent food facility during a Temporary Event or Certified Farmer's Market?**

Yes, per the California Retail Food Code, any permanent food facility may operate a Satellite Food Service location. Satellite food service must occur on the same property as, and in reasonable proximity to, and in conjunction with and by, a fully enclosed permanent food facility. Depending on the location, you may need to coordinate with the event organizer to see if space rental within the event is required. Satellite operations may only conduct limited food preparation and must submit a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to this department for review and pay the applicable permit fees prior to starting any Satellite Operation. Satellite Food Service locations can operate any time throughout the year, independently of Temporary Events. Satellite operations must be disassembled and stored within a fully enclosed food facility overnight. Please fill out the following [Satellite Food Facility Application](#) and review the [Satellite Food Service Guidance](#) to apply for a satellite food permit. If you have any questions, feel free to contact our permit's desk at fhdpermits@sdcounty.ca.gov.

I have a mobile food facility that has been permitted in San Diego County; can I participate in a Temporary Event or Certified Farmer's Market?

Yes, to sell food or beverages as part of a Temporary Event, San Diego County permitted Mobile Food Facilities must first obtain permission from the event organizer to be included on their list of participating vendors. No additional permits are required to participate in a temporary event if the mobile food facility operator does not operate outside of the scope of their mobile food facility permit. (ex. All food sales must take place within the approved mobile vehicle). Should the event organizer not have space for the mobile food facility and require the facility to operate out of a booth, a Temporary Food Facility permit must be required. Mobile Food Facilities that

have obtained a permit with DEHQ-FHD may sell their product anywhere in the County if they meet any local zoning requirements established by the city/county in which they wish to sell.

I operate a mobile pushcart. Do I need a Temporary Food Facility permit?

If you have a valid San Diego County permit for your pushcart, you do not need to obtain a Temporary Food Facility permit as long as you operate within the scope of your mobile permit. You cannot sell additional food items or conduct any handling of food with a pushcart permit.

I have a mobile food facility that has been permitted outside of San Diego County; can I participate at a Temporary Event or Certified Farmer's Market?

A mobile food facility that does not have a current San Diego County Mobile Food Facility Permit, but has a health permit from another county, can participate in a Temporary Event in San Diego County if they obtain the correct single event vendor Temporary Food Facility Permit for their type of operation and provide a copy of their out of county health permit with their application packet. Out-of-county mobile food facilities seeking an annual permit must go through the mobile food facility permitting process in our Plan Check Department. All food preparation must occur on the mobile food facility and cannot take place in a booth without obtaining a separate Temporary Food Facility Permit.

I have a Cottage Food Permit; can I sell at a Temporary Event or Certified Farmer's Market?

Yes, a Class A or Class B Cottage Food Operation may participate in a Temporary Event, Certified Farmer's Market, or Swap Meet and sell their prepackaged cottage food product directly to customers without obtaining another health permit. A Cottage Food Operator that wants to offer open samples or sell other products that are not part of their approved Cottage Food Operation must obtain the appropriate Temporary Food Facility permit. The Cottage Food Operator must contract with an approved commissary to store all food and equipment used that is not already part of the approved Cottage Food Operation.

Can I use my temporary food facility vendor permit to sell at a swap meet?

To become a vendor at a swap meet, you must obtain a Swap Meet Vendor Single Location temporary event permit. Swap Meet Vendor Single Location permits allow the sale of only prepackaged non-potentially hazardous food and beverages and whole uncut produce. Another option would be to obtain a mobile food permit, which are also allowed at swap meets.

OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

What paperwork should I have at the event?

The original health permit or a copy of the receipt for permit, food safety manager certificate(s) and foodhandler training cards if handling open food, and proof of approved food source(s) (e.g., PFR or receipts from an approved source) should always be available at the event.

What is considered potable water, and where can I get approved potable water?

Potable water is water that is suitable for human consumption. Potable water should be used to wash and sanitize any equipment used to prepare the food product, to wash hands and arms, and be used as an ingredient. Potable water can be obtained from either an approved commissary location or an on-site approved warewashing (3-compartment) sink.

As a Temporary Food Facility vendor, am I required to provide my own warewashing (3-compartment) sink?

The California Retail Food Code requires all unpackaged/open temporary food facility vendors to provide, or have access to, a warewashing (3-compartment) sink with pressurized hot and cold water when participating in an

event that is longer than 4-hours in duration. Alternatives to this requirement are 1) the organizer of the event may provide the warewashing (3-compartment) sink(s) for the vendors to use, 2) the vendor can complete a warewashing agreement with a nearby food facility that has granted temporary access to the warewashing facility for the duration of the event.

As an event organizer, do I need to provide handwashing stations at the restrooms?

Yes, handwashing stations need to be provided for food employees. Each toilet facility needs to have an approved handwashing facility. Additionally, one toilet is required for every 15 food employees within 200 feet of food booths.

What would lead to a closure of my food booth?

The following major violations that are not corrected on-site can lead to the closure of a food booth: lack of health permit, vermin present, lack of handwashing facilities for unpackaged/open food vending, food temperature violations, food from an unapproved source, cleaning-sanitization issues, lack of available hot water for utensil washing, improper liquid waste disposal, lack of available toilet facilities for food employees, no overhead protection or enclosure, no available warewashing facilities, lack of available potable water, and lack of power.