



GUIDELINES FOR THE INSTALLATION AND USE OF OPEN-AIR BARBECUES

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND QUALITY
FOOD, WATER, & HOUSING DIVISION

BACKGROUND

The **California Retail Food Code (CRFC)** contains requirements for the use of open-air barbecues, which are defined in Section 113843. The purpose of these guidelines are to provide uniform minimum structural and operational criteria to assure that proper health and sanitation standards are met.

SCOPE

The provisions of the CRFC which permit the use of an open-air barbecue, apply only to approved food facilities where the open-air barbecue is operated on the same premises as, in reasonable proximity to, and in conjunction with a permanent food facility that is approved for food preparation, a catering operation, or a temporary food facility, or mobile food facility that is operated at a community event (Section 114143a).

DEFINITIONS

1. **Open-air barbecue** - means a piece of equipment designed for barbecuing food, where the food is prepared out of doors by cooking directly over hot coals, heated lava, hot stones, gas flame, or other method approved by the department, on equipment suitably designed and maintained for use outdoors.
2. **Permanent open-air barbecue** - means an open-air barbecue unit that is permanently fixed in place.
3. **Temporary open-air barbecue** - means an open-air barbecue unit that is of such size and design to be readily movable to storage and clean up facilities.

Note: *Barbecuing means that cooking is achieved by radiant heat and not via conduction or convection. The food being barbecued must be heated **directly over** the heat source and not through an intermediate medium or vessel. Wrapping the food in foil or placing the food in cooking utensils, (i.e., pots and pans) and then placing the wrapped food or utensil over the heat source, does not constitute barbecuing. Examples of equipment that are not considered to be open-air barbecues include but are not limited to, griddles, ranges, smokers, ovens, and some underground vaults and pits.*

STRUCTURAL REQUIREMENTS

1. The open-air barbecue must be separated from public access to prevent food contamination or injury to the public by using ropes or other approved methods. A minimum 3-foot distance is recommended or otherwise as approved by the local fire department. Check with the local fire jurisdiction for specific minimum distance requirements.
2. If the open-air barbecue is a permanent structure, it shall be equipped and maintained with a floor surface that is smooth, impervious, and easily cleanable. This floor surface must extend a minimum of five (5) feet from the open-air barbecue on all open sides. When wall surfaces are within five (5) feet of a permanent open-air barbecue, they shall be durable, smooth, nonabsorbent, and washable [Section 114143 (d)].



3. The open-air barbecue shall be in an area which suitably protects the food and/or equipment from dust, dirt, and overhead contamination. The surface of the ground adjacent to the open-air barbecue must consist of a material including, but not limited to, metal, tile, concrete, or other acceptable material which will inhibit the generation of dust.
4. The open-air barbecue and all accessory equipment associated with its operation shall be made of nontoxic materials, constructed to be rodent-proof, readily and easily cleanable, maintained in good repair, and designed for its intended use. Exterior surfaces of open-air barbecue units shall be made of acceptable materials that are flush, smooth, and made nonabsorbent. Food contact surfaces shall meet or be equivalent to approved applicable sanitation standards. For example, grill grates shall be made of an industry standard metal material (i.e., stainless steel, cast iron, cast aluminum, sheet metal, etc.). All open-air barbecue and all accessory equipment must be in compliance with the following sections:

114130.1 – Materials that are used in the construction of utensils and food contact surfaces of equipment shall not allow the migration of deleterious substances or impart colors, odors, or tastes to food and under normal use conditions shall be safe, durable, corrosion-resistant, and nonabsorbent, sufficient in weight and thickness to withstand repeated ware washing, finished to have a smooth, easily cleanable surface and resistant to pitting, chipping, crazing, scratching, scoring, distortion, and decomposition.

114130.3 – Multi-use food-contact surfaces shall be all of the following:

- (1) Smooth.
- (2) Free of breaks, open seams, cracks, chips, inclusions, pits, and similar imperfections.
- (3) Free of sharp internal angles, corners, and crevices.
- (4) Finished to have smooth welds and joints.
- (5) Except as specified in subdivision (b), accessible for cleaning and inspection by one of the following methods:
 - (A) Without being disassembled.
 - (B) By disassembling without the use of tools.
 - (C) By easy disassembling with the use of handheld tools commonly available to maintenance and cleaning personnel such as screwdrivers, pliers, open-end wrenches, and Allen wrenches.

5. All accessory equipment located at an open-air barbecue site (other than the open-air barbecue unit) shall be portable. The operation of an outdoor barbecue operation with installed food-related equipment (including but not limited to, refrigeration and hot holding units), structures, counters, or enclosures shall be considered a satellite operation and will require additional review, approval, and an operating permit.
6. Approved toilet and hand washing facilities which are on the same premises as the on-site food facility shall be available for use within 200 feet of the open-air barbecue. All restroom and hand washing facilities shall be kept clean, fully operative, and in good repair. All hand washing facilities associated with the open-air barbecue operation shall meet Section 113953 and be approved by the enforcement officer prior to use.
7. All necessary approvals and permits from the local fire and building authorities must be obtained for all open-air barbecues.

Note: Only those approved permanent food facilities, mobile food facilities, catering operations and temporary food facilities that meet the requirements for food preparation and service will be approved to operate and maintain an open-air barbecue. Adequate preparation and storage space and adequate equipment shall be provided to accommodate the operation of the open-air barbecue so as not to interfere with the sanitary operation of the food facility.

OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Open-air barbecues may only be operated by the permit holder adjacent to the permanent food facility, temporary food facility or mobile food facility. The permit holder of the open-air barbecue shall be responsible for ensuring that it is operated in full compliance with this part.

Note: An open-air barbecue shall not be operated in, or out of, any motor vehicle, or in any area or location that may constitute a fire hazard, as determined by the enforcement officer.

2. Food handling from an open-air barbecue operation shall be accordance with Section 113996 and 113818. Examples of approved food handling for open-air barbecue operations include, but are not limited to, the use of pre-washed/pre-sliced vegetables, food stored in a food compartment, and potentially hazardous foods held at proper temperatures.
3. A standard operating procedure (SOP) will be required for review and approval by this department. This SOP shall indicate how the following requirements will be met:
 - All foods held at an open-air barbecue must be returned to the food facility during periods when the open-air barbecue is not in use.
 - Food preparation at an open-air barbecue does not include the following:
 - (a) Slicing and chopping potentially hazardous food, other than produce that has been washed at permitted facility and non-potentially hazardous foods, unless it is on the heated cooking surface.
 - (b) Thawing.
 - (c) Cooling of cooked, potentially hazardous food.
 - (d) Grinding raw ingredients or potentially hazardous food.
 - (e) Washing of foods.
 - (f) Cooking of potentially hazardous foods for later use.
 - (g) Handling, manufacturing, freezing, processing, or packaging of milk, milk products, or products resembling milk products subject to licensing under Division 15 (commencing with Section 32501) of the Food and Agricultural Code.
 - Food which is barbecued on the open-air barbecue may be served directly from the open-air barbecue unit using sanitary utensils or returned to the food facility for further processing and/or serving.
 - All food to be barbecued on an open-air barbecue shall always be protected from dust, dirt, insects, rodents, and other forms of contamination by utilizing an approved food compartment (Section 113784).
 - All food capable of supporting the rapid and progressive growth of pathogenic microorganisms shall be barbecued to the appropriate final cooking temperature. Pre-cooked and refrigerated food that is prepared for immediate service in response to an individual consumer order may be SERVED at any temperature (Sections 114014, 114014).
 - An accurate, metal stem, probe type thermometer suitable for measuring the temperature of the potentially hazardous food shall be kept readily available for use at the barbeque (Sections 114157, 114159).

- All open-air barbecue equipment, utensils, and accessory fixtures associated with an open-air barbecue shall be kept clean and in good repair. They shall be cleaned daily or more often as needed. Food contact surfaces, including utensils, shall be cleaned, and sanitized properly. (Sections 114097, 114099.6).
- No open-air barbecue may be operated under conditions in which the foods are likely to be adulterated. The operator of the open-air barbecue shall immediately cease operation and dispensing of food if unsanitary conditions exist whereby the food may become contaminated, rendered unwholesome, or otherwise adulterated (i.e. by inclement weather). (Section 113980).
- No insecticide shall be used at an open-air barbecue unless it is approved for use within food facilities and is used in a manner consistent with the label instructions such that it will not cause contamination of food or utensils (Sections 114254 – 114254.3).
- No live animals, birds, or fowl shall be kept or allowed within 20 feet of any area where food or beverage is prepared, stored, kept, or served, except as provided in Sections 114259.4 and 114259.
- All food waste or rubbish associated with an open-air barbecue shall be placed in disposable bags, impervious to moisture, and sealed or stored in non-absorbent, rodent proof containers which have tight-fitting lids. All waste containers shall be kept clean and in a sanitary condition.
- All equipment associated with an open-air barbecue must be returned to approved clean up and storage facilities at the end of each day's use.
- Approved storage facilities for temporary open-air barbecue shall include accommodations that will properly protect the equipment from contamination when the temporary open-air barbecue is not in use. The storage of the temporary open-air barbecue equipment in an on-site food facility shall not interfere with the sanitary operation of the approved on-site facility, and the storage facilities shall be available during periods when the temporary open-air barbecue is not in operation.

Note: When permanent open-air barbecues are not in operation an adequate means of fully protecting the area from contamination must be proposed in your SOP. Examples include but are not limited to impermanent pull-down canvas covers such as tight-fitting waterproofed tarps/protective vinyl covers (Velcro/button secured) OR permanent fully enclosed structures such as hard lid canopies with coiling roll-down shutters.

AIR QUALITY EXEMPTIONS

Neither this department, nor any city, county, city and county air pollution control district, or air quality management district shall require the enclosure of an open-air barbecue if the enforcement officer determines that the open-air barbecue meets all the requirements of Section 114143.

