



Food Service at Special Events

SC Department of Health & Environmental Control
Division of Food Protection, Columbia, SC

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A food service unit as a special event shall comply with all provisions of Regulation 61-25, Retail Food Establishments, which are applicable to its operation. The health authority may augment such requirements when needed to ensure the service of safe food; may prohibit the sale of certain potentially hazardous food; and may modify specific requirements for physical facilities when in the opinion of the health authority no health hazard will result.

Due to the nature, location, and variety of conditions surrounding the operation of a food service unit at a community celebration, festival, special promotion, or similar event, it is frequently impractical to provide certain physical facilities required for permanent establishments. To ensure adequate protection of food served by food service units which are unable to completely meet the requirements of Regulation 61-25, it may be necessary for the health authority to restrict food sold or the method by which served, and/or modify requirements for procedures and facilities.

Excerpts from South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control's Regulation 61-25 Retail Food Establishments

Food preparation and service may be permitted for a period of time not to exceed three consecutive days at community celebrations, festivals, special promotions, or similar events. Food preparation and service units shall comply with all applicable sections of Regulation 61-25 except as outlined in chapter XII. The health authority may augment such requirements when needed to ensure the service of safe food, may prohibit the sale of certain potentially hazardous food, and may modify specific requirements for physical facilities when in the opinion of the health authority no health hazard will result. Establishments engaged only in the dispensing of non-potentially hazardous beverages or non-potentially hazardous prepackaged food are exempt from this regulation.

A. Food Supplies

- All food shall be from sources approved or considered satisfactory by the health authority.
- All food shall be properly labeled; free from spoilage, adulteration, and other contamination, and shall be safe for human consumption.

B. Food Protection

All food items must be protected from contamination during storage, cooking, display, and service.

C. Food Storage, Display, Service, and Transportation

- Potentially hazardous food shall be held at 45°F (7.2°C) or below, or 130°F (54°C) or above at all times.
- Food not subject to further washing or cooking before serving shall be stored in a way that protects it against cross-contamination from food requiring further preparation.
- Packaged food, except for pressurized containers, shall not be stored in contact with water or undrained ice.
- Unless the identity is unmistakable, bulk food such as cooking oil, syrup, salt, sugar, or flour shall be stored in a container identifying the food by common name.

D. Food Preparation

1. General

All food must arrive ready to be served or ready to be cooked, and when cooked, must require minimal preparation to be served, unless the food service activity is conducted in an approved, enclosed facility.

2. Raw fruits and raw vegetables

Raw fruits and raw vegetables shall be thoroughly washed with potable water before being cooked or served.

3. Cooking Potentially Hazardous Food

Potentially hazardous food requiring cooking shall be cooked to heat all parts of the food to a temperature of at least 145°F (63°C), except that:

- a. Poultry, poultry stuffings, stuffed meats, stuffed pasta, and stuffings containing meat shall be cooked to heat all parts of the food to at least 165°F (74°C) with no interruption of the cooking process.
 - b. Ground beef and any food containing ground beef shall be cooked to heat all parts of the food to at least 155°F (68°C).
 - c. Pork and any food containing pork, game animals, and comminuted fish and meat shall be cooked to heat all parts of the food to at least 155°F (68°C).
 - d. Roast beef shall be cooked to a surface temperature of at least 155°F (68°C).
 - e. Beef steak shall be cooked to a surface temperature of 155°F (68°C) unless otherwise ordered by the immediate consumer.
 - f. Raw animal products cooked in a microwave oven shall be rotated during cooking to compensate for uneven heat distribution.
4. Whole eggs, and egg products
Shell eggs that are broken and prepared shall be cooked to 145°F (63°C) unless otherwise ordered by the immediate consumer.

E. Food Dispensing

1. Ice
 - Ice shall be obtained from an approved source in closed single service bags or approved covered containers and shall be protected from contamination. Styrofoam containers are prohibited.
 - Ice for consumer use shall be dispensed with scoops, tongs, or other ice-dispensing utensils, or through automatic self-service ice dispensing equipment. Ice-dispensing utensils shall be stored on a clean surface, in the ice with the handle extended out of the ice, or by other approved methods. Between uses, ice transfer receptacles shall be stored in a way that protects them from contamination.
2. Dispensing utensils
 - Utensils and single-service articles shall be clean, protected during storage, and in sufficient quantities to conduct the activity.
 - To avoid unnecessary manual contact with food, dispensing utensils with handles shall be used by employees or provided to consumers who serve themselves.
3. Re-service
Once served to a consumer, portions of leftover food shall not be served again, except that packaged food, other than potentially hazardous food, that is still packaged and is still in sound condition, may be re-served.
4. Display equipment
Adequate hot or cold food facilities shall be provided to maintain potentially hazardous food on display at 45°F (7.2°C) or below or 130°F (54°C) or above.

F. Personnel

1. Employee health
Persons with boils, infected wounds, respiratory infections accompanied by fever, or other communicable disease shall not handle food or be employed in an area where food is prepared. Persons coughing or sneezing without fever shall be restricted from food preparation activities.
2. Personal cleanliness
 - Employees shall thoroughly wash their hands and the exposed portions of their arms with soap and warm water in an approved handwashing facility before starting work, during work as often as is necessary to keep them clean, and after coughing, sneezing, handling soiled utensils or equipment, smoking, eating, drinking, or using the toilet.
 - Disposable gloves and hand sanitizers may be used in addition to proper handwashing. Disposable gloves must be discarded after any possible contamination.
 - Employees shall maintain a high degree of personal cleanliness.
3. Clothing
The clothing of all employees shall be clean.

4. Employee practices

- Employees shall use tobacco only in approved designated areas.
- Employees shall conform to good hygienic practices during all working periods in the food service unit.
- Employees shall not eat or drink in food preparation, or service areas; except that an employee may drink from a covered beverage container, provided the container is handled in a manner that prevents contamination.

G. Equipment and utensils

1. General

Multi-use equipment and utensils shall be constructed and repaired with safe materials, including finishing materials; shall be corrosion resistant and nonabsorbent; and shall be smooth, easily cleanable, and durable under conditions of normal use. Single-service and single-use articles shall be made from clean, sanitary, safe materials. Equipment, utensils, single-service and single-use articles shall not impart odor, color, taste, or contribute to the contamination of food.

2. Single-service and single-use articles

- Single-service and single-use articles shall be handled, and dispensed in a manner that prevents contamination of surfaces which may come in contact with food or with the mouth of the user.
- Unless single-service knives, forks, and spoons are prewrapped or prepackaged, holders shall be provided to protect these items from contamination and present the handle of the utensil to the employee or consumer.
- Reuse of single-service and single-use articles is prohibited.

H. Design and Fabrication

1. General

All equipment and utensils, including plastic ware, shall be designed and fabricated for durability under conditions of normal use and shall be resistant to denting, buckling, pitting, chipping, and crazing. Plastic, rubber, and rubber-like utensils used for heating or cooking food shall be designed specifically for that purpose. All equipment and utensils shall be maintained in good repair.

2. Thermometers

Indicating thermometers required for immersion into food shall be of metal stem-type construction, numerically scaled, accurate to $\pm 3^{\circ}\text{F}$ ($\pm 1.7^{\circ}\text{C}$), capable of measuring from 45°F (7.2°C) to 165°F (74°C), shall be provided and used if the menu includes potentially hazardous food.

I. Equipment Installation

Equipment shall be installed in a manner that allows it to be maintained in a sanitary condition.

J. Equipment and Utensil Handling and Storage

Cleaned and sanitized equipment and utensils shall be handled in a way that protects them from contamination. Spoons, knives, and forks shall be touched only by their handles.

K. Water Supply

- The water supply shall be adequate, safe and from a source approved by the health authority.
- Water supply hoses shall be clearly identified, kept clean, and used for no other purpose.

L. Hot Water

Hot water requirements are waived from special events.

M. Sewage

- Liquid waste which is not directly discharged into an approved sewage system shall be kept in a closed container and discharged into an approved sewage disposal system.
- Used cooking oil shall be disposed of in an approved manner.
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N. Toilet and Service Sink Facilities

Toilet and service sink facilities are not required in a food service unit at a special event.

O. Lavatory Facilities

Adequate methods must be taken to ensure clean hands. When a handwashing lavatory is not available, a container of water with a spigot, soap and disposable towels shall be provided. Use of disposable food-handling gloves, moist-type single service towels, and hand sanitizers is encouraged in addition to handwashing.

P. Garbage and Refuse

- Garbage and refuse shall be kept in durable, easily cleanable, insect proof, and rodent-proof containers that do not leak and do not absorb liquids. Plastic bags and wet-strength paper bags may be used to line these containers.
- There shall be sufficient number of containers to hold all the garbage and refuse that accumulates.

Q. Insect and Rodent Control

The presence of rodents, flies, cockroaches, and other insects on the premises shall be effectively controlled. The premises shall be kept in such condition as to prevent the harborage or feeding of insects or rodents.

R. Construction and Maintenance of Physical Facilities

Floors, walls, ceilings, screening or other structural requirements to control insects and blowing contamination may be waived or modified only when adequate measures for food protection are provided.

S. Ventilation

Mechanical ventilation of cooking equipment is not required.

T. Poisonous or Toxic Materials**1. Materials permitted**

Only those poisonous or toxic materials that are required for operation and maintenance shall be allowed in a food service unit.

2. Labeling

Containers of poisonous or toxic materials shall be prominently and distinctly marked or labeled for easy identification of contents.

3. Storage

Poisonous or toxic materials shall be stored so that they shall not contaminate food, equipment, utensils, linens, single-service, and single-use articles.

4. Use

Poisonous and toxic materials shall not be used in a way that contaminates food, equipment, utensils, linens, single-service and single-use articles, or in a way that constitutes a hazard to employees or other persons, or in a way other than in full compliance with the manufacturer's labeling.

5. Containers

A container previously used to store poisonous or toxic materials may not be used to store, transport, or dispense food.

U. Premises

Food service units and all parts of property used in connection with their operations shall be kept free of litter and equipment that is non-functional.

The preceding excerpts from Regulation 61-25 must be met prior to the issuance of a temporary permit by the health department for food service at a community celebration, festival, special promotion, or similar event. The enforcement provisions shall be based on Regulation 61-25 as set forth in Chapter XIV, Compliance Procedures.