

**CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT**

**DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH (DEH)**



**GUIDELINES FOR FOOD SAFETY  
AT  
OUTDOOR EVENTS**

Revised May 2013

# GUIDELINES FOR FOOD SAFETY AT OUTDOOR EVENTS

Outdoor events can present a number of challenges to vendors when it comes to practicing proper food safety and hygiene procedures. Poor hygiene procedures can put customers at risk from food borne illness. Harmful bacteria that cause food poisoning can spread easily and lead to serious illness, it can also be life threatening to the very young, the very old and people with weakened immune systems.

Food handlers preparing, handling and selling food have a responsibility to ensure that the food they produce is safe to eat.

Organisers of events will expect food vendors to comply with food hygiene requirements at all times and are likely to be asked to stop trading if poor practices or conditions are found by DEH Environmental Health Officers during inspection.

Food Vendors that are catering at a 'one-off' event, and do not cater on a regular basis should understand the importance of food safety and the risk to the public's health from poor food safety practices.

## KEEPING FOOD SAFE

There are five main defences against the growth and spread of bacteria.

### 1. Prevent cross-contamination by safe food handling

Cross-contamination is one of the major causes of food poisoning. It is very easy for cross-contamination to happen. Cross-contamination is the transfer of bacteria from foods (usually raw) to cooked or ready-to-eat foods. Bacteria can be transferred directly when one food touches or drips onto another, or indirectly, for example from hands, equipment, work surfaces, or knives and other utensils.

These are some of the most common causes:

- storing raw and ready-to-eat food together
- not washing hands after touching raw food
- using the same chopping board or knife for raw and ready-to-eat food

To make sure that food is safe you must follow good hygiene at every stage of food handling, from purchasing food to serving the food.

### In Storage

You must store food correctly to keep it safe. In particular, make sure you:

- Store raw meat in sealable containers at the bottom of the fridge/insulated cool boxes, so it can't touch or drip onto ready-to-eat food
- Don't overload fridges/insulated cool boxes because this will hinder the circulation of cool air and might mean the food is not kept cold enough
- Check food with a short shelf-life to make sure it is still within the "use by" date. Never use food after the "use by" date, since it might not be safe to eat.
- Follow any storage instructions on the product label or packaging.

- Do not place foodstuffs directly on to the ground; they must be protected from risk of contamination.
- Cover food or drink on display on open serving counter tops.

### Food Preparation

Food can become contaminated very easily during preparation. You should:

- observe good personal hygiene
- use different chopping boards/work surfaces for raw food and ready-to-eat food
- use different equipment and utensils for raw and ready-to-eat food wherever possible
- clean equipment and surfaces thoroughly before and after use
- avoid unnecessary handling of food – use clean tongs, plates or trays instead
- keep chilled food out of the fridge for the shortest time possible during preparation
- wash fresh fruit, vegetables and salad vegetables, such as lettuce, if they are being served raw.
- check all foods to ensure they are within their date code e.g. its “use by” date.



Use separate cutting boards for raw and ready-to-eat foods

## 2. Cook foods thoroughly to kill harmful bacteria

Proper cooking kills food poisoning bacteria such as *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter*, *E. coli* O157 and *Listeria*. It is important to cook food thoroughly, especially meat.



- When you cook poultry, pork, and minced/chopped meat (for example burgers and sausages), you should make sure that the centre of the meat is thoroughly cooked, with no pink bits and the juices run clear.
- When reheating food, especially meat, make sure it is piping hot all the way through and do not reheat it more than once.

The cooking of food should not take place on the front serving counters of stands unless suitable screens have been fitted to ensure both public safety and the protection of food against risk of contamination.

Unless it is to be kept hot until serving, food should be cooled as quickly as possible after cooking. You can speed up the cooling process by dividing food into smaller amounts and placing it in shallow dishes. Do not put foods in the fridge when they are still hot, because this could warm up other foods. Ensure foods are not exposed to risk of contamination whilst cooling.

## 3. Ensure strict adherence to temperature controls

Good temperature control is essential to keep certain foods safe. Foods containing meats, poultry, fish and shellfish, cooked rice/pasta and those containing eggs and dairy products are at risk from

excessive bacterial growth if subjected to poor temperature control. Harmful bacteria could grow or toxins (poisons) could form in the food and make you ill.

You must have sufficient equipment on site to ensure that these temperatures can be maintained throughout the course of the event.

**Cold foods must be stored at or below 5°C/41°F.** This can be achieved in a refrigerator or by storing food in ice. If using ice, have a plentiful supply and ensure that the food sits in the ice and not on top of it. Ice used for refrigeration cannot be used for consumption.

**Hot food must be stored above 63°C/145°F.** If you are using flammable gel burners ensure that you have plenty in supply and use at least two burners per chafing pan. Hot food can be stirred regularly to ensure that heat is dispersed evenly throughout the food.



Use a probe thermometer regularly to ensure foods are being held at the correct temperature.

These requirements apply to food on display as well as for food being stored for service later.

**REMEMBER:**  
**KEEP HOT FOODS HOT**  
**(above 63°C/145°F)**  
**and**  
**COLD FOODS COLD**  
**(below 5°C)**

#### 4. Ensure good standards of personal hygiene are maintained

Food can be contaminated easily when it is handled. Therefore it is essential that you maintain good standards of personal hygiene at all times to ensure that food does not get contaminated with harmful bacteria, dirt or 'foreign bodies'.

You should wash and dry your hands regularly when handling food, in particular:

- before preparing food
- before handling ready-to-eat food
- after touching raw food, especially raw meat or poultry
- after going to the toilet.

##### WASHING HANDS EFFECTIVELY

*To wash hands thoroughly, use warm water and a liquid soap. Work up a good lather and make sure you wash your wrists, hands, fingers, thumbs, fingernails, and in between your fingers. Rinse the soap off your hands and dry them thoroughly using disposable paper towels (not on your apron).*



In addition, use gloves wherever possible and make sure you have plenty of hand sanitizer available at all times for food handlers to use.

Persons suffering from food poisoning symptoms such as diarrhoea and/or vomiting should not be handling and preparing food. They should immediately notify the person in charge of the food business.

Persons engaged in the handling of open food should wear clean and washable overclothing.

Suitable and sufficient bandages and waterproof dressings should be provided at each stall, stand or catering unit. Ensure wounds are suitably covered to prevent risk of contamination of food.

Do not eat whilst handling food, and ensure smoking is prohibited in the food area.

## **5. Keep all food areas clean**

You must make sure that all equipment and surfaces that come into contact with food are kept clean and, where necessary, disinfected. While you are working, it is a good idea to clean as you go, mopping up any spills as they happen and cleaning work surfaces, equipment and floors frequently so that waste and dirt do not build up.

Remember to keep cleaning equipment, including cleaning cloths, clean. Use disposable cloths as much as possible.

Adequate supplies of approved disinfectants or sanitising agents should be available for the regular disinfection of equipment and work surfaces.

## **SUMMARY**

- **Prevent the risk of cross-contamination by safe food handling**
- **Cook foods thoroughly to kill harmful bacteria**
- **Ensure strict adherence to temperature controls**
- **Ensure good standards of personal hygiene are maintained**
- **Keep all food areas clean**

# GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR FOOD STANDS

All equipment intended to be used in connection with food operations must be kept in a clean, safe and sound condition. Wooden chopping boards/blocks and wooden handled utensils should be avoided as they are difficult to clean and disinfect. Alternatives constructed from synthetic materials should be provided.

A potable water supply must be available, ideally from a mains water supply. Where this is not possible tanked supplies may be used or sealed containers. Containers must be kept clean and disinfected regularly and should be labelled correctly.

Wherever possible, provide a five (5) gallon water container with a dispensing valve, a waste water receptacle, soap dispenser and paper towels for hygienic handwashing within the food booth.

Adequate arrangements should be made for the provision of artificial lighting, together with sufficient electric power socket outlets for electric equipment etc.

Ensure suitable garbage facilities are provided for the temporary storage of waste and regularly emptied. You should keep a stock of garbage bags available for use. Garbage must be removed regularly and properly disposed of.

## TRAINING OF FOOD HANDLERS

It is essential that all food handlers engaged in your food business are supervised, instructed and/or trained in food hygiene matters to a level appropriate to their work activity. At least one person in charge of the food operation must be trained on the DEH Basic Food Hygiene Course. Call 949 6696 to find out the dates of available courses.

## PLANNING FOR THE EVENT

Prior to attending the outdoor event it is essential that you check you have sufficient equipment to run your food operation safely. This may include:

- equipment for cold food holding e.g. insulated cool boxes, fridges
- ice for storage of cold foods
- equipment for hot holding e.g. chafing pans with lids, flammable gel burners, LPG gas burners
- protective clothing e.g. gloves, aprons, hair net
- handwashing facilities including an insulated container with dispensing tap, bucket for waste water, liquid anti-bacterial soap and paper towels
- sanitizer hand gel
- cutting boards for raw/ready-to-eat foods
- probe thermometer
- garbage bags

## TRANSPORTATION OF FOOD

Food must be protected from contamination during transportation to the event. Food containers must be in good condition and have close fitting lids.

The vehicle must be cleaned and disinfected prior to transportation and other items not associated with the handling of food or the food operation must be removed prior to the vehicle being used for transport.

You must have equipment capable of keeping food at the required temperatures to prevent excessive bacterial growth during transportation e.g. insulated boxes.

*For further food safety information contact DEH at the following addresses:*

GRAND CAYMAN  
Department of Environmental Health  
Cayman Islands Environmental Centre  
580 North Sound Road  
PO BOX 1820, Grand Cayman  
Cayman Islands KY1-1109  
Tel: (345) 949 6696

CAYMAN BRAC & LITTLE CAYMAN  
Department of Environmental Health  
PO BOX 212 Stake Bay, Cayman Brac  
Cayman Islands KY2-2101  
Tel: (345) 948 2321

Revised May 2013