



Mariposa County Environmental Health



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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Catering Operation Packet

A caterer is any person/entity who supplies food and beverages and/or related services to any off premise public or private function. Per the California Retail Food Code, caterers are required to have a valid health permit. If you are catering without a health permit, you must cease all food preparation until a valid health permit has been obtained.

A "cook for hire" is not required to have a valid health permit. A "cook for hire" is any person hired to prepare and/or serve food at a private function. No food or utensils may be stored, prepared or handled at the private home of the "cook for hire".

The following requirements must be complied with to operate under a catering operation permit:

- Complete and submit Health Application for Permit to Operate
- Complete and submit a valid Commissary Application
- Complete and submit sample Menu/Procedure list
- Submit a copy of a valid food manager certification
- Understand and comply with the Catering Operation Requirements outlined in this packet
- Pay annual permit fees

A catering operation may only take place from a permitted food establishment (private homes cannot be permitted). Caterers shall provide a detailed sample Menu/Procedure List to be completed once a year, and each time the menu changes. A specialist from environmental health will review and approve the Menu/Procedure List completed by the caterer. The specialist will verify that the food is obtained from approved sources and an approved facility is provided for: transportation, food and equipment storage, equipment/multi-use utensil cleaning and sanitizing, refuse disposal, food packaging, and food preparation. A current food safety certification is required.

Catering Operation Requirements

Please Note: All caterers, catering employees and volunteers MUST comply with the following requirements during preparation and all hours of operation. All catering operations are subject to inspection by the Environmental Health Division.

A. Food Preparation

1. **Use of food prepared or stored at home is prohibited at a catered function**
2. All food handling and preparation related to the catering operation shall take place within the approved commissary, unless otherwise approved by the Environmental Management Department. Commissary locations are subject to bi-annual inspection by the Environmental Management Division. Commissary locations and catering operations are subject to and must be in compliance with all pertinent sections of the California Retail Food Code.

B. Temperature Control – Adequate temperature control shall be provided for all perishable (potentially hazardous) foods. Provide a metal probe thermometer to check temperatures during the catered event.

1. **Cold foods** – maintain food temperatures at **41° Fahrenheit** or below.
2. **Hot foods** – maintain food temperatures at **135° Fahrenheit** or above.
NOTE: This will require sufficient equipment to maintain required temperatures for all perishable food at a catering site (e.g. steam tables, chafing dishes, refrigerators, coolers).
3. **Cooking Temperatures** – Minimum internal_cooking temperatures of potentially hazardous foods (PHF) are as follows:

ground beef	157°F
poultry, stuffed food	165°F
eggs	145°F
pork	145°F
4. Food in transit must be protected from contamination and must meet the temperature requirements noted above. Catering vehicles shall be maintained in a clean, sanitary condition.

C. Food Handlers

1. Food Handlers must be clean and in good health.
2. Food Handlers shall wash their hands and arms with soap and warm water prior to the start of food preparation activities, after handling raw meats, after using the restroom and as necessary to prevent food contamination. If the catered event is held at a site where no hand wash facilities are available, the caterer is responsible for bringing their own.
3. Clean aprons and outer garments must be worn and hair must be restrained.
4. Sanitary food handling techniques must be practiced at all times. Whenever practical, food handlers shall use tongs, disposable plastic gloves or single use tissue when handling food.

D. Ice – Ice used for refrigeration at a catering event cannot be used for consumption.

E. Condiments – Condiment containers used at a catering event shall be the pump type, squeeze containers, or have self-closing covers or lids for content protection. Single service packets are recommended.

F. Toilet Facilities

G. Smoking – Smoking is prohibited during the preparation and serving of food at a catered event.

H. Storage/Service

1. All food, beverage, utensils, and related equipment shall be stored displayed and served so as to be protected from contamination.
2. All foods, beverages, utensils and related equipment must be stored at least 6 inches off of the floor.
3. During the catered event, an area separate from food preparation and food storage must be provided for the storage of employee clothing or personal belongs.