

AUSTIN ISD TEMPORARY FOOD EVENT PERMIT FAQs

What is a Temporary Food Event (TFE)?

TFEs are events of up to 14 days at which food is served. They may include fairs and carnivals, multicultural celebrations, special interest fundraisers (*e.g.*, booster clubs, school clubs, PTAs), and other gatherings that feature food for consumption, sale, or distribution to the public.

What's the big deal about serving some food?

Anytime food is handled there is a possibility of contamination. Many TFEs require the cooking and advanced preparation of food prior to service. Anytime food is handled there is a possibility of contamination. Some foods, such as raw meats and poultry, can be contaminated when purchased, and should be handled by someone trained in safe food handling procedures. It is estimated that 76,000,000 cases of food borne illnesses occur every year. Emerging illnesses and drug-resistant bacteria increase the hazards. ***No one wants to make anyone ill.***

So what can we do?

Austin ISD and the Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department have partnered to ensure that all food at TFEs at Austin ISD campuses is prepared and served in a safe manner. Additionally, the Health Department has agreed to waive the \$35 per permit fee for all school groups and non-profit school support groups (*e.g.*, PTAs, booster clubs, etc.).

In addition to filling out the building use application (if needed), you'll be asked to complete a Temporary Food Event Information Form, on which you'll list any food that will be served and explain how you plan to handle the food. The Office of Food Services, in partnership with the Health Department, has established procedures to assist with the advanced planning and management of TFEs, and can assist you in determining the best arrangements for your event.

Do we really have to get a TFE Permit?

YES. Individuals and/or organizations who sponsor events at which food will be served, sold, or offered to the public are ***legally required*** to obtain temporary food service permits. Remember, however, that the Health Department has waived the permit fee for all school groups and non-profit school support groups.

Aren't there any exceptions?

There are a few. If you will be using a school cafeteria kitchen under the direction of the Cafeteria Manager, your event is not a public event, or food at your event will be served only by vendors with mobile food establishment permits (*e.g.*, caterers and other commercial entities), you may not need to obtain a TFE permit for your event. Additionally, certain foods considered safe by the Health Department may be served without a TFE permit. ***Do not assume that your event does not require a TFE permit—check with the Office of Food Services.***

How do we know if our event is a “public event?”

There is no hard-and-fast rule. Most events held during the school day will not be public events. The exception to this is when the public is specifically invited to an event held during the school day. For events held outside the school day, if the general public is invited to the event, you have advertised the event to the public, and/or you have sold tickets to the general public, your event is probably a public

If you have additional questions, please contact the Office of Food Services at 512-414-0251.

event. Note, however, that the Health Department has indicated that an event that has a specific, limited audience within the campus community (*e.g.*, the intended audience includes only students, parents, and staff, but not usually the general public) will not be considered a public event. ***If there is any doubt, please check with the Department of Food Services.***

What about ongoing or repeated events?

A TFE permit covers events that last up to 14 days. If your organization is going to serve the same foods at an ongoing or repeated event that covers a period of more than 14 days (*e.g.*, concessions run at student sporting events over a period of six weeks), you will need to obtain one permit per 14-day period. If you know the dates in advance, you can submit the forms for the permits at the same time; the only information that will be different is the dates. If more than one organization will be responsible for serving food, the organizations must each obtain their own permits.

Is there anything we can serve without a TFE permit?

You can serve foods that the Health Department considers “non-potentially hazardous.” Common examples include:

- Prepackaged items, which will generally be items that are individually wrapped (*e.g.*, cans of soda, individual bags of chips or crackers, wrapped candies);
- Whole, uncut produce (*e.g.*, apples, bananas, oranges);
- Coffee (no creamers requiring refrigeration);
- Doughnuts (no doughnuts or kolaches with meat, cheese, or cream filling); and
- Popcorn.

If you plan to serve something that you think may be a “non-potentially hazardous” food, please check with the Office of Food Services. Also, please keep in mind that you must still observe basic food safety standards (*e.g.*, food handlers should wear gloves when handling food) even when you are not required to obtain a permit.

Can we make our own food?

No. Home-prepared foods may not be served or offered at a public event, unless they are: (1) baked goods (*e.g.*, cookies, brownies, cakes); or (2) foods prepared by parents and grandparents for children at a school-designated function.

So how do we make sure that our food is handled according to permitting and food safety standards?

The following is a brief list of food handling requirements; more detail is provided in the Temporary Food Service Requirements document (available from the Office of Food Services or online). Additional requirements may apply to your event. Check with the Office of Food Services and/or the Cafeteria Manager at your campus to determine specific requirements for your event.

- Hand washing and ware washing facilities must be provided.
- All foods must be cooked to required temperatures (check with the Office of Food Services about specific foods)
- Hot foods must be held at 135°F or above
- Cold foods held at 41°F or below
- All foods must be kept covered
- Overhead and floor covering must be provided.

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