



**Municipality of Anchorage  
Health Department**

Environmental Health Services, Food Safety & Sanitation Program

825 L Street

343-4200 [www.muni.org/health](http://www.muni.org/health)



## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **How can I contact the Food Safety & Sanitation Program?**

Customer Service Hours: Monday - Friday, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm

Telephone number: 907-343-4200 FAX: 907-343-4786

Location: 825 L Street, 3rd Floor, Customer Service Counter

Mailing Address: Food Safety & Sanitation, PO Box 196650, Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6650

On the internet: <http://www.muni.org/food>

### **Who needs a Health Permit?**

As a general rule, if you are offering food to the public, regardless of whether a fee is charged, you will need a permit. However, some activities may be exempt from permit.

#### **Exemptions include:**

- A business that sells only pre-packaged, non-potentially hazardous foods from an approved source.
- A bake sale. **NO items may contain potentially hazardous food filling or topping such as meringue, whipped cream or custard.**
- A facility distributing or selling only popcorn, cotton candy, prepackaged ice cream novelties, black coffee with single service items, or coffee offered with nondairy creamers and served with single service utensils.
- A facility selling raw, whole vegetables and fruit at a farmers market, a roadside stand or a seasonal event such as a fair, if the vegetables and fruit are offered in their natural state or after rinsing, trimming of unnecessary parts, or separating greens from roots. Sampling is allowed if done safely. However some activities may require a permit.
- Food served in conjunction with the following activities, if the food is prepared or provided by and for members of the group and their invited guests:
- A private event as defined in Anchorage Municipal Code 16.60\*; or
  - A free, community picnic held by a community council, which may be open to the public.
- The occasional food preparation as a part of a curriculum in a school or child care center.

\*Private event means an event held for, advertised, and limited to members and invited guests of a person, club, company, religious, political, advocacy, or similar organizations. Examples of private events include church potlucks, club or company picnics, weddings, and block parties limited to the residents of a specific neighborhood.

**Not exempt: fundraisers, promotional events, or gatherings that are advertised or open to the public, if food is provided, with or without charge:**

### **How long is the permit valid?**

Annual permits expire on December 31<sup>st</sup> of the year in which they are issued. However, seasonal permits are available for operations operating for part of a year. Temporary permits are valid for the duration of the specific event(s) as specified on the application and permit. See the *Temporary and Seasonal Food Establishment Operators* document for more information on temporary events.

### **Are permits transferable to other locations or individuals?**

**No.** Permits are not transferable to other locations **or** to other individuals. You must provide the department with plans and have them approved prior to moving to a new location. If you sell the facility to another individual, a change of ownership application must be provided to the department not less than **7 days prior** to the sale.

### **What do I need to do to apply for a permit?**

- **New or remodeled facilities.** Submit plans for review and have them approved prior to beginning construction. See *Plan Review General Information and Guidelines for Plan Review for a Food Service Establishment* document
- **Change of ownership.** When 50% or more of the value of the assets of a food facility changes hands a new permit must be applied for prior to operation of the facility.
- **Submit completed application and pay fee** to Food Safety and Sanitation customer service counter prior to operating. Applications are available at [www.muni.org/food](http://www.muni.org/food) or in the office at 825 L Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.
- **Submit documentation of food manager certification.** The operator of a risk type 2 or risk type 3 food service establishment, mobile unit, or child care facility must have at least one certified food protection manager. See *Food Manager Certification Information* document.
- **Mobile Units.** Submit the application along with a copy of the menu, documentation of freshwater and wastewater sources and transport, and a copy of the most recent water sample test results from within the last 12 months.

### **What is food manager certification? Do I need it?**

The owner or manager of a food facility must demonstrate knowledge of food safety and foodborne illness. All facilities classified as a risk type 2 or risk type 3 facility must have at least one certified food protection manager. An individual will be considered a certified food protection manager when they provide documentation that they have successfully completed an approved food protection manager certification examination. Anyone may challenge the training course by completing a written test through one of the approved third party testing companies. Certificates are valid for five years. See *Food Manager Certification Information* document.

### **What is a food worker card? Do I need one?**

While facilities that are Risk Type 2 or Risk Type 3 must have a certified food protection manager, all food workers at all facilities, regardless of Risk Type, must have a current food worker card. Each food worker must be trained in basic food safety and have a current food worker card from an approved program. This card must be obtained within 21 days of hire. The food worker card is valid for 3 years. Anyone who works with unpackaged food, potentially hazardous food, or food contact surfaces such as clean dishes must have a food worker card. To obtain a food worker card, food workers must take the food worker card training and testing that is provided online through the following link at <http://www.muni.org/foodcard>. Food workers who have completed a AHD approved 8 hour certified food protection manager program (ServSafe, for example) and have passed the exam within the last 5 years have met the food worker card requirement, and do not need to obtain a separate food worker

card. Submit a copy of the certified food protection manager certificate along with your permit application.

**Is another permit required for operations outside the Municipality of Anchorage?**

Possibly. The AHD Food Service Establishment Health Permit is valid only for operations within the corporate limits of the Municipality of Anchorage. Food facility operators in other areas of Alaska should contact the State of Alaska, Department of Environmental Conservation in Anchorage at 269-7501 for more information.

**Does my permit cover any food service operation off my permanent premises?**

No, any preparation or service of food offsite of a permitted facility requires a catering permit in addition to the facility's regular food establishment permit. Food prepared for a sale at an event such as the Weekend Market will require a temporary permit or a seasonal permit even if a facility has a catering permit. See the catering FAQ for additional information on catering.

**If I buy food from a local supplier, do I need a permit to sell or give away that food?**

Yes, unless the foods sold are exempt from permit requirements - see number 2 above.

**Can homemade foods be sold or given away at a permitted food facility?**

No. Food prepared in a private home may not be used or offered for human consumption in a permitted food facility.

**Are cottage foods made at home allowed to be sold to the public?**

Yes, a cottage food license is available for \$25/year. Only limited foods made in a home kitchen may be directly sold to a consumer. Only foods that do not require refrigeration, and do not contain meat may be approved for sale. All cottage food items must be approved by the department prior to sale, and may require product testing to assure the products are safe prior to approval. Please see the Cottage Food License information sheet for more details on this subject and for a list of examples of cottage foods.

**What are the minimum cooking temperatures for potentially hazardous foods?**

Minimum Cooking Temperatures

<b>Roasts</b>	130°F for 112 minutes or 135°F for 36 minutes or 145°F for 12 minutes or other time/temp in table*
<b>Pork &amp; inspected game meat</b>	145°F for 15 seconds
<b>Fish</b>	145°F for 15 seconds
<b>Eggs for immediate service</b>	145°F for 15 seconds
<b>Intact beef steak (not pinned)</b>	145°F on surface
<b>Eggs that are not for immediate service (Quiche)</b>	155°F for 15 seconds
<b>Ground beef (Hamburgers)</b>	155°F or 15 seconds or 150°F for 1 minute or other time/temp in table*
<b>Poultry (Chicken, Duck)</b>	165°F for 15 seconds

\*See 3-401.11 of the 2005 FDA Food Code

### **What are approved methods for cooling foods?**

Potentially hazardous food that requires cooling or cold-holding after preparation or processing must be cooled from a temperature of 135° F (or 130° F for rare beef) to 70° F or below within two hours, and from a temperature of 70° F or below to 41° F or below within four additional hours as follows:

- Using containers to facilitate heat transfer.
- Separate the food into smaller or thinner portions and refrigerate;
- Place the food in a shallow pan, refrigerate, stirring occasionally if needed;
- Use rapid chilling equipment;
- Modify the recipe by adding ice or cold water in final stages of preparation; or
- Use another approved method that will result in compliance with code requirements.

### **What are required temperatures for holding hot foods hot and cold foods cold?**

The temperature for hot holding potentially hazardous foods is 135°F or above.

The temperature for cold holding potentially hazardous foods is 41°F or below.

### **What other agencies might I need to contact?**

*Permanent: Development Services*

4700 Elmore (off Tudor)

343-8301

343-8347

*Mobile/Carts: Municipal Clerk's Office*

632 W 6th Ave.; Room 250

343-4316

343-4311

*Mobile/Carts: See Approved Water Source document.*

### **How long will it take to get a permit?**

Applications need to be submitted a minimum of thirty days before opening an establishment or a minimum of seven days before a change of ownership. Once the application, fee and documentation of food manager certification have been received, an inspection will be scheduled. A permit will be issued only after it has been determined that the application and facility meets the requirements of AMC16.60.

If you have concerns that are not addressed here, please contact us at (907) 343-4200.