



Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency

"Healthy People, Healthy Communities"

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Reponse to 2011 Grand Jury Report "Are We Having Fun Yet?"

Subject:

Recommendation number 2: Establish uniformity in their permit process and requirements.

Recommendation number 6: Record temporary permits electronically.

Narrative:

Environmental Health issues **community event** and **temporary food facility** permits per the California Retail Food Code [sections 113789 (a) & (b)]. These permits are for events located in the incorporated cities of Mendocino County and for events in the unincorporated areas of Mendocino County.

For those events that require county use or administrative permits, Environmental Health receives application referrals from Planning and Building Services to make comment and for placement of conditions as applicable codes require. Conditions, when made, are to maintain the safety of the events' participants by meeting code requirements. Other events may occur on commercially zoned properties which may not require use or administrative permits. Commercially zoned property examples are events at the Redwood Empire Fairgrounds or the Mendocino County Fairgrounds. Still other events in Mendocino County occur within the limits of an incorporated city and need to meet applicable city requirements.

For events that provide no food to the attendees, no community event permits would be required by Environmental Health. For events that provide no food *and* require use or administrative permits, Environmental Health may place conditions on the use or administrative permits.

Conditions, when made, would address one or more of the following items: providing for potable water, approved methods for collecting solid waste (trash/garbage/recycling) and its removal, restroom facilities, bathing facilities for longer term events with onsite camping and approved methods for containing liquid waste and its removal and/or approved dispersal method(s). Conditions placed may vary dependent upon the site used for the event and existing physical and operational infrastructures. For example, a fairground typically has a connection to a public water system for potable water, existing buildings that contain restrooms, an existing connection to a public sewer system and trash/garbage receptacles and proper removal of generated solid waste. Some fairgrounds also have camping and bathing facilities. An event site without similar comparable infrastructures would need to provide the necessary infrastructures for the event.

For events providing food to the public, community event permits and temporary food facility permits are required. This is to ensure safety of the food available at the event.

The community event permit addresses the same infrastructure concerns as events without food. The community event organizer also has to show the infrastructures necessary to support the food vendors. These requirements include providing potable water to the vendors' food booths, a sufficient number of restrooms in close proximity to food booths for food workers use, and provisions to collect and remove both solid and liquid waste generated at food vendor booths. The event organizer is required to submit a community event permit application addressing the aforementioned items and to include a list of the food vendors who will participate at the event.

Food vendors who will participate at the event are required to obtain temporary food vendor permits. This is to ensure the vendors are complying with the California Retail Food Code and serving safe food to event attendees.

Response to Recommendations:

Recommendation number 2. Environmental Health has uniform requirements for community events. The requirements are explained in our instructional letter that accompanies the packets provided to community event organizers. The packets contain a community event permit application and a number of individual event-temporary food facility permit applications. The number of food vendor applications is proportionate to the proposed number of food vendors. Food vendor permits vary by whether the food served is a potentially hazardous food (PHF) or not. PHF requires a greater level of safe food practices compared to food that is not a PHF. In addition, different permit categories are based on the time needed to review applications and/or conduct inspections. Environmental Health will continue to work with relevant agencies to improve broader uniformity.

Recommendation number 6. Environmental Health has recorded and does record both community events and temporary food facility permits electronically in our database. For the year 2010 there were:

Community event permits:

- 42 with less than fifteen food vendors
- 8 with fifteen or more food vendors
- No late community event permits received

Temporary food vendors serving potentially hazardous food:

- 29 permits for three or more events
- 83 individual event permits
- 14 late individual event application permits.

Temporary food vendors serving non-potentially hazardous food:

- 18 permits for three or more events
- 29 individual event permits
- 6 late individual event application permits

Environmental Health inspectors and support office staff have and continue to be willing and able to answer questions that event organizers and food vendors may have.