



Environmental Health Division

CATERING GUIDELINES



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PURPOSE

The purpose of these guidelines is to clarify applicable terms, provide reference to applicable codes and to provide a set of criteria that will assist caterers conduct their operation in a safe manner and comply with the California Retail Food Code (CalCode)

DEFINITIONS

- A. Caterer:** Any person who operates from a permitted food facility and who supplies food and related services including, but not limited to, an off premises catered function.
- B. Catering Operations:** A food service that is conducted by a permanent food facility approved for food preparation where food is served, or limited food preparation is conducted, at a location other than its permitted location, in either of the following circumstances: (1) As part of a contracted offsite food service event. (2) When operating in conjunction with a host facility with direct food sales. (b) "catering operation" shall not include either of the following: (1) food ordered as takeout or delivery from a food facility, where the food is provided to the consumer for self-service. (2) A food facility that is participating as part of a community event. A catering operation shall meet the requirements of section 114328.
- C. Catering Vehicle:** A vehicle upon which food, beverages and related serving equipment are transported to a catered function.
- D. Cook-for-Hire:** Any person hired to prepare and/or serve food at a private function. All food prepared by a cook-for-hire is handled at the location of the private function. No food is stored, prepared, or handled at the private home of the cook-for-hire. No health permit is required since only food services, not food, are offered for sale.
- E. Community Event:** An event conducted for not more than 25 consecutive or nonconsecutive days in a 90-day period and that is of civic, political, public, or educational nature, including State and County fairs, city festivals, circuses, and other public gathering events approved by the local enforcement agency.
- F. Host Facility:** A facility located in a brewery, winery, commercial building, or another location as approved by the local enforcement agency, that meets applicable requirements to support a catering operation that provides food directly to individual consumers for a limited period of time, up to four hours, in any one 12-hour period and that has a permit

pursuant to Section 114328.1. "Host Facility" does not include the premises described in paragraph (5) of subdivision (c) of Section 113789. A Host Facility shall meet the requirements of section 114328.1.

- G. Off Premises Catering Function:** Any private or public function where a caterer provides food and related services for a person or persons at a location other than their permitted food facility. A function occurring on premises is not covered by these guidelines.

OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- A.** A caterer must have a valid health permit. At this time, a food facility with a valid Mendocino County Environmental Health Permit who wants to cater in Mendocino County does not have to obtain a separate catering permit, however the facility is required to submit a written operational plan to Mendocino County Environmental Health prior to commencing catering operations. (Sections 113789, 114328(c) and 114381)
- B.** In addition to submitting a written operation plan in (A) above, a permitted food facility may be required to obtain a temporary food permit to participate at a community event.
- C.** All food, prior to the function, shall be stored and prepared at the caterer's permitted food facility, or other approved food facility. (Sections 113980, 113984 and 114328)
All utensils and equipment shall be washed and stored at the caterer's permitted food facility. Prior to use, all utensils shall be sanitized according to Sections 114099 through 114125.
- D.** At all times that the caterer has control over the food, including periods of receiving, storage, preparation, transportation and service, all food shall be adequately protected so as to be maintained pure and free of contamination, adulteration, and spoilage. (Sections: 113967, 113980 through 113986, 114021, 114035, 114047 through 114051, 114060, 114123, 114397, and 114399). Utensils and equipment shall be protected from contamination. (Sections 114130, 114161, 114175 through 114179)
- E.** All potentially hazardous food shall be received, prepared and maintained at the appropriate temperatures specified in Sections 113996 through 114020, and 114037.
- F.** Records shall be kept for 90 days after the event which record the following and shall be available upon request:
- 1) Location, date, and time of offsite food service activity.
 - 2) Customer name and contact information, including address, email address, and phone number.

3) Whether food was delivered to a customer or served to a guest at a catered function or host facility.

4) Departure and arrival food temperature logs for transportation, and corrective action taken if the food arrived out of temperature.

5) Complete menu of food provided. (Section 114328)

- G.** The caterer shall not provide home prepared food at a catered function. (Sections 113789, 114021, 114285, 114286, 114381, and 114387)
- H.** All food handlers shall wash their hands and arms with cleanser and warm water before commencing work, immediately after using the toilet facilities, and as frequently as necessary to prevent contamination of food. Hands shall be washed in properly supplied and stocked hand wash sinks. (Sections 113952 through 113968, 114311, and 114314)
- I.** Toilet facilities shall be available within 200 feet of the catered function. (Sections 14328 and 114315)
- J.** At least one person shall have passed an ANSI accredited Food Protection Manager Certification exam and possess a valid certificate or card. (Sections 113947, 113947.1, through 113947.3 and 14328)
- K.** All food handlers who are not exempt must possess a valid California Food Handler Card. (Sections 113790 and 113948)