The Top Six Causes of Food Poisoning

From past experience the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention list these six circumstances as the ones most likely to lead to illnesses. Check through the list to make sure your event has covered these common causes of foodborne disease:

☐ ***Inadequate Cooling and Cold Holding***

More than half of all food poisonings are due to keeping foods out at room temperature for more than 2-4 hours.

☐ ***Preparing Food Too Far Ahead of Service***

Food prepared 12 or more hours before service increases the risk of temperature abuse.

☐ ***Poor Personal Hygiene and Infected Personnel***

Poor handwashing habits and foodhandlers working while ill are implicated in 1 out of every 4 food poisonings.

☐ ***Inadequate Reheating***

When leftovers are not reheated to above 165°F, illness often results.

☐ ***Inadequate Hot Holding***

Cooked foods not held at above 140°F until served can become highly contaminated.

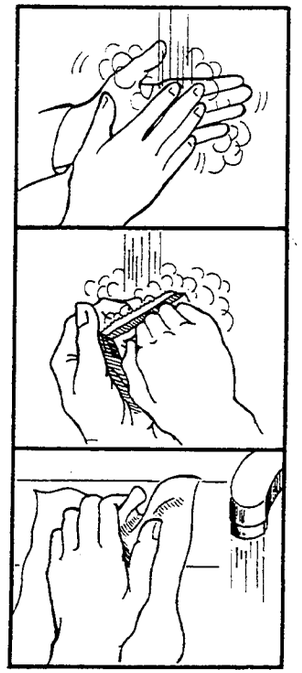
☐ ***Contaminated Raw Foods & Ingredients***

Serving raw shellfish or raw milk that is contaminated, or using contaminated raw eggs in sauces and dressings, has often led to outbreaks of foodborne disease. It is always safer to use pasteurized products.

Remember: When in doubt, *throw it out!*

Clean Hands For Clean Foods

Since the staff at temporary food service events may not be professional food workers, it is important that they be thoroughly instructed in the proper method of washing their hands. The following may serve as a guide:



☐ Use soap and water.

☐ Rub your hands vigorously as you wash them.

☐ Wash ALL surfaces, including:
-back of hands
-wrists
-between fingers
-under finger nails using a good brush.

☐ Rinse your hands well.

☐ Dry hands with a paper towel.

☐ Turn off the water using paper towel instead of your bare hands.

Wash your hands in this fashion before you begin work and frequently during the day, especially after performing any of these activities:

- Using the toilet
- Handling raw food.
- Coughing or sneezing.
- Touching hair, face or body.
- Smoking.
- Handling soiled items.
- Scraping tableware.
- Disposing of garbage.

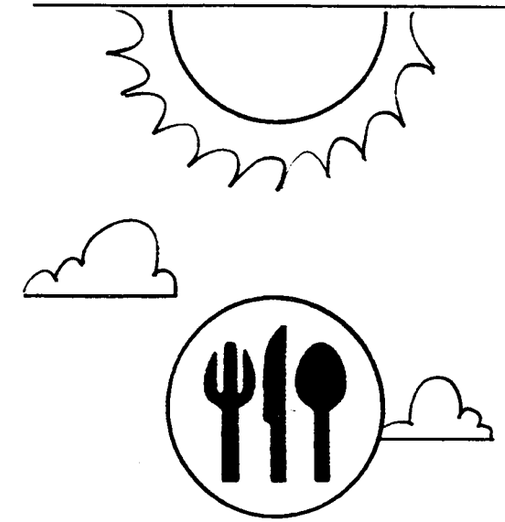
Published by:
The Food Sanitation
Professional Development Group
International Association of
Milk, Food & Environmental Sanitarians
200 W Merle Hay Center
6200 Aurora Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50322
1-800-369-6337

For further information contact:

South Dakota Department of Health
Office of Health Protection
600 East Capitol
Pierre, South Dakota 57501

Phone (605)773-3364
Fax (605)773-5904

FOOD SAFETY AT TEMPORARY EVENTS



Are your hot foods hot?
Cold foods cold?
Equipment and utensils clean?

14 Steps to

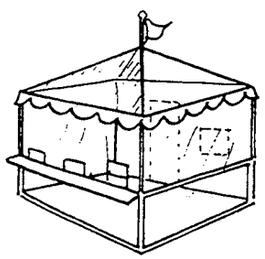
Safe and Sanitary Food Service Events

Church suppers, street fairs, civic celebrations and other similar events call for food service outlets to be set up out-of-doors or in locations where keeping foods safe and sanitary becomes a real challenge. This 14-step guide will help you keep your temporary event free of the risk of food poisoning.

1 Permits. Check with your local government agency about permits and code requirements. Be prepared to tell the department where you will hold the event, what you plan to serve, where the food will come from, how you will prepare and transport it, and the precautions you will take to prevent contamination.

In the event of a foodborne illness, it will help if you can show you ran your event "by the book."

2 Booth. Design your booth with food safety in mind. The ideal booth will have an overhead covering, be entirely enclosed except for the serving window and have only one door or flap for entry. Clear plastic or light colored screening on side walls will aid visibility. Only food workers may be permitted inside the food preparation area; animals must be excluded.

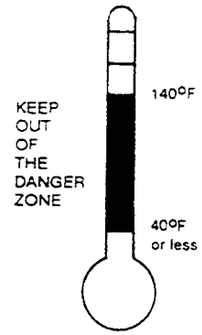


The more your food is exposed to outsiders, the greater the likelihood of contamination.

3 Menu. Keep your menu simple, and keep potentially hazardous foods (meats, eggs, dairy products, potato salad, cut fruits and vegetables, etc.) to a minimum. Avoid using precooked foods or leftovers. Cook to order, so as to avoid the potential for bacterial contamination. Use only foods from approved sources, avoiding foods that have been prepared at home.

Complete control over your food, from source to service, is the key to safe, sanitary food service.

4 Cooking. Use a food thermometer to check on cooking and cold holding temperatures of potentially hazardous foods. Hamburgers and other ground beef should be cooked to 155° Fahrenheit or until juices run clear; poultry parts, to 165°; pork and other meats to 150°.



Most illnesses from temporary events can be traced back to lapses in temperature control.

5 Re-heating. Heat foods to above 165°F within 30 minutes. Do not attempt to heat foods in crock pots, steam tables or other hot holding devices, or over sterno.

Slow-cooking mechanisms may activate bacteria and never reach killing temperatures.

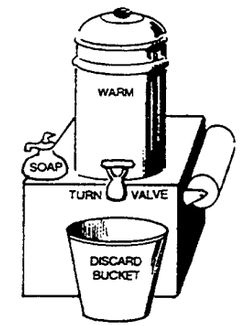
6 Cooling and cold storage. Foods that require refrigeration must be cooled to 40°F as quickly as possible and held at that temperature until ready to serve. To cool foods down quickly, use an ice water bath (60% ice to 40% water), stirring the product frequently, or place the food in shallow pans no more than 4 inches deep and refrigerate. Pans should not be stored one atop the other and lids should be off or ajar until the food is completely cooled. Check the temperature periodically to see if the food is cooling properly.

Allowing hazardous foods to remain unrefrigerated for too long has been the cause of many episodes of food poisoning.

7 Transportation. If food needs to be transported from one location to another, keep it well covered and provide adequate temperature controls. Use refrigerated trucks or insulated containers to keep hot foods hot (above 140°F) and cold foods cold (below 40°F).

Neglecting transportation can undo all the good of your other measures to prevent contamination.

8 Hand Washing. Provision must be made for an adequate hand washing facility. In a pinch, a large urn full of water, a soap dispenser, a roll of paper towels and a bucket to collect waste water may do the trick.



The use of disposable gloves can provide an additional barrier to contamination, but gloves are no substitute for hand washing. Frequent and thorough hand washing remains the first line of defense in preventing foodborne disease.

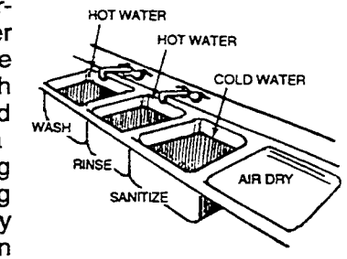
9 Health & Hygiene. Only healthy workers should prepare and serve food. Any who show symptoms of a disease – cramps, nausea, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, jaundice, etc. – or who have open sores or infected cuts on the hands should not be allowed in the food booth. Workers should wear clean outer garments and should not smoke in the booth.

Ill or unclean personnel are the frequent cause of foodborne diseases. Smoking, besides being unhealthful and aesthetically unappealing in food preparation, contributes to the contamination of workers' hands.

10 Food Handling. Avoid hand contact with raw, ready-to-serve foods and food contact surfaces. Use disposable gloves, tongs, napkins or other tools to handle food.

Touching food with bare hands transfers germs to the food.

11 Dish Washing. Use disposable utensils for food service. Keep your hands away from food contact surfaces, and never reuse disposable ware. Wash equipment and utensils in a 4-step sanitizing process: washing in hot, soapy water; rinsing in hot water; chemical sanitizing; and air drying.

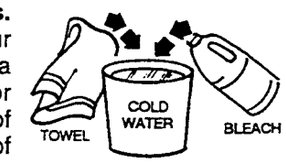


Clean utensils provide protection against the transfer of harmful germs.

12 Ice. Ice used to cool cans and bottles should not be used in cup beverages and should be stored separately. Use a scoop to dispense ice, never the hands.

Ice can become contaminated with bacteria and viruses and cause foodborne illness.

13 Wiping cloths. Rinse and store your wiping cloths in a bucket of sanitizer (for example, 1 capful of bleach in 2 gallons of water). Change the solution every 2 hours.



Well sanitized work surfaces prevent cross contamination and discourage flies.

14 Insect Control & Wastes. Keep foods covered to protect them from insects. Store pesticides away from food. When you apply them, follow the label directions, avoiding contamination of food, equipment or other food contact surfaces. Place garbage and paper wastes in a refuse container with a tight-fitting lid. Dispose of waste water in a sewer or public toilet.

Flies and other insects are carriers of foodborne diseases. The chemicals used to kill them can be toxic to humans.