



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DIVISION - FOOD SAFETY

Food Event Planner Guide

This guide assists event planners in Whitman County with ensuring food vendors at their event are permitted properly.

Who needs a permit to serve food?

All individuals and businesses, whether permanent or temporary, need a permit to sell, prepare, distribute, and/or serve food. While some food items are exempt from permit, individuals must have an Exemption Permit. More information on this can be found below.

What permit types are allowed for events?

In Whitman County, four permit types are approved for events:

1. Temporary Food Establishments Permits
2. Catering Permits
3. Mobile Unit Permits
4. Exemption Permits

Permits must be issued by Whitman County Public Health and are not accepted from other counties. Vendors should be able to show proof of their permit upon request. Permits should also be kept on-site by vendors at each event they attend.

Information about Temporary Food Establishment Permits

Temporary Food Establishment (TFE) Permits are obtained on an event-by-event basis, meaning the vendor must obtain a new TFE Permit for each event they attend. The event name and date that the permit has been approved for is shown on the permit. One TFE Permit covers up to 21 days of a multi-day event, such as the Palouse Empire Fair or Farmer's Market.

Information about Catering Permits

Catering Permits can be obtained by either 1) individual catering businesses or 2) food establishments as an add-on to their Food Establishment Permit. Permits will either say "Catering Only Permit" or "Additional Catering Permit." Permits are valid for a year, so one permit will cover many events.

Information about Mobile Unit Permits

Mobile Unit Permits are issued to food trucks and trailers in Whitman County. These permits are valid for a year, so one permit will cover many events.

Note: Food trucks must also be permitted by L&I to operate in Washington. Proof of this certification must be provided during the application process. More information is available on our website.



What if a vendor says they are exempt from being permitted?

While it is true that some food items do not need a permit to be sold and/or served, Whitman County requires food vendors to apply for an Exemption Permit. These permits must be obtained for each event they attend in Whitman County. Vendors should be able to show proof of an Exemption Permit for the event they plan to attend if they have been granted an exemption.

Are there other requirements vendors must follow at events?

For a detailed summary of event requirements, such as handwashing and glove usage, vendors should review the Temporary Food Establishment Information handout on our website.

What if a vendor doesn't have a permit during the time of the event?

Food vendors found to be operating without a valid permit at an event may be asked to cease operations by WCPH.

Who should I contact with questions about a vendor and their permit?

If you have questions about a vendor or permit requirements in general, please contact our office at (509) 332-6752 or email EH@whitmancounty.gov to reach a Health Inspector. Food vendors with questions about the permitting process can also be directed here.

For more information about our Food Safety Program, please visit our website at WhitmanCountyPublicHealth.org under "Environmental Health," then "Food Safety."