



**MOBILE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
FOOD & LODGING DEPARTMENT**

www.MCHD.org

251-690-8116

SPECIAL EVENTS - IMPORTANT FACTS

What is a special event?

- An advertised public event where food is sold or given away to the public. Public events include county fairs, traveling fairs, holiday fairs, city festivals, entertainment events, cook-offs, fundraising events, or any other event that is open to the public.

What role does the MCHD play at special events?

- Inspection of food vendors.
- Issuance of a temporary permit, food handling and sanitation survey.
- Promote public health in areas of food safety and sanitation.
- Prevent the occurrence of food-borne illness.

What is the purpose of a temporary permit?

- A temporary permit is issued on site after conducting an inspection of the facility. The inspection is intended to check areas of concern as it pertains to food safety. A temporary permit tells the public that the facility meets the minimum requirements for a temporary food establishment.

What does the MCHD look for when inspecting vendors?

- Approved food source.
- Food storage, handling and preparation.
- Proper handwashing and warewashing facilities.
- Proper establishment construction.
- Food handler hygienic practices.
- Utensil and equipment storage and sanitation.
- Water source and disposal.
- Approved food handler cards.

Special event vendor registration and fees?

- Vendors must contact the Food & Lodging Department at least five (5) business days prior to the special event for requirements and registration.
- Vendor can access special event requirements at www.MCDH.org, under Inspection Services.
- Special event fees per temporary establishment as of May 1, 2013:
 - 1-3 days \$175
 - 4-14 days \$200
 - Over 14 days \$400
- Fees must be delivered to the MCHD, Food and Lodging, Building #6.
- Acceptable payments are cash, money order or business check.



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Frequently asked questions:

- **Are there any temporary food event exemptions?**
Yes. Prepackaged and unopened non-perishable snacks and candy, canned and bottled soft-drinks and water in original container, canned and bottled pasteurized juices in original container, and whole produce are all exempt from permit.
- **Do I need a temporary food permit if I am giving food away?**
No. Food that is given away free of charge or consideration of any kind is exempt from the permitting requirement, unless it is given to a commercial food establishment. If you are not sure, it is best to contact an inspector of MCHD.
- **Can I prepare food for a Special event at home?**
No storage, slicing, dicing, marinating, cooking or any process related to food preparation for any food item, dressing, garnish or other is allowed at a private residence for items served to the general public at a Special Event.
- **If I register and pay for a temporary permit, does this mean that I am approved to operate?**
No. The registration is subject to review and food service operations must comply with regulations before operation.
- **Is there an annual permit to cover a full special event season?**
No. Temporary permits are issued for each event and can only be used at the event.
- **If I already have a permit for my restaurant or mobile food unit, do I need a temporary food permit?**
Yes. A permit is not transferable from person to person or place to place.
- **Can I prepare food for a Special Event ahead of time at an approved facility?**
Advanced preparation must be approved by the Health Department ahead of time. Menu items, storage, transport, time and temperature will all be considered before such approval is granted. Cooking and cooling food items prior to an event is usually not allowed.
- **Food and Lodging location and hours of operation?**
251 N. Bayou Street, Mobile Al., Building #6
Monday-Friday 7:30am - 4:30pm