Food Stand Operations
—What you need to know

Who’s in charge?
A person knowledgeable about food preparation and service should coordinate and supervise the food stand. Ideally this person has completed a certification course in food safety, such as the ServSafe® program of the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (see page 4 for details).

What permits are required?
Most food stands qualify as a temporary food establishment because they store, prepare, package, serve, or provide food for human consumption for 14 consecutive days or less in conjunction with a single event or celebration. Iowa Code requires temporary food establishments to hold a permit (currently $25).

Temporary foodservice establishments require regulatory oversight because many people may be served. Event food stands at VEISHEA and RAGBRAI require this permit and are subject to inspection. For more information, contact your local health inspector or the Department of Inspections and Appeals (see page 4).

Concession stands affiliated with public school districts and located on school property are covered under the district’s foodservice establishment permit.

Are there any types of food stands that do not require permits?
Permits are not required for stands that only serve bottled water or cans of soda, or for produce stands that sell only whole, uncut fresh fruits or vegetables.

Establishments that serve only prepackaged foods are not required to have a permit if the foods served are not potentially hazardous.

Non-profit organizations that are registered with the state of Iowa, serve food only once per week, and not on two consecutive days do not need a permit.

What about bake sales?
• Bake sales are not required to have a permit or prior health approval. However, they may represent a concern.
• Organizers and sponsors should follow good sanitary practices when planning, organizing, and holding a bake sale. Items that are potentially hazardous should not be sold (see list on page 2).
• Products typically suggested for bake sales include breads, cakes, buns, rolls, cookies, bars, and pies (except meat, custard, and cream pies).
• Bake sale products should be packaged and have a label listing the common name of the product, ingredients used, and name and address of the food preparer.
What are potentially hazardous foods?
Foods that support rapid growth of infectious or toxic microorganisms are more likely to cause foodborne illness. Examples of potentially hazardous foods include
• raw or cooked food from animals (meat, eggs, poultry, etc.),
• foods having raw seed sprouts,
• cut melons,
• garlic and oil mixtures,
• dairy products, and
• custard and cream pies.

Planning tips
• Products that have not been processed in a state-inspected facility are prohibited from sale to the public. Examples include home-canned salsa and meats.

• Potentially hazardous foods should be prepared in a licensed kitchen or cooked at the service site to avoid improper holding time and temperature. Be sure there is adequate storage space for hot and cold foods.

• To maintain good product quality, plan food preparation so hot, potentially hazardous foods are served as soon as possible after cooking.

• Consider using pre-cooked, potentially hazardous foods—such as ground beef crumbles—to avoid temperature abuse and risk of cross-contamination.

• Separate work areas should be provided for foods that are prepared from raw ingredients (such as meat) and for foods that are ready to eat (such as bread, produce items, and desserts).

• Pre-chill any ingredients to be used in cold food menu items.

What are potentially hazardous foods?
What other types of food should not be sold?
Choose menu items that are food stand friendly. For example, coconut cream pie requires constant refrigeration so apple pie would be a better choice.

Potentially hazardous foods should not be sold unless you can guarantee that they will be handled and stored safely at correct hot (above 140°F) and cold (below 41°F) temperatures. Consider the types and amounts of storage space, cooking equipment, and other utilities that will be available.

What utilities are needed?
The amount of on-site cooking and the types of foods served at a food stand will dictate what utilities are needed.

A source of drinkable water is required unless only prepackaged food and beverages are sold. A water source is needed if handling any foods or beverages, even coffee.

• Use proper equipment. For example, metal containers should not be used for beverages that are acidic, such as punch or fruit juice.

• Schedule work assignments to include enough time for orientation and training about proper handwashing, food handling and service, and cleaning practices. Allow time for questions so all volunteers understand what they are to do and why it is important to follow the guidelines.

• Portable handwashing stations can be purchased for about $400 or rented for a nominal fee.

• Provide volunteers with the proper supplies for cleaning. This includes a drinkable water supply, cleaning agents, cloths for counters, mops for floors, aprons for staff, etc.

• Use temperature gauges and accurate thermometers (available for less than $10) to ensure accurate measurements of food temperatures and temperatures inside storage units (such as coolers).

• All food supplies should come from an approved source, such as a wholesale or retail outlet.

• Remind contributors that foods should be tightly wrapped or sealed and transported in clean vehicles at proper temperatures. Foods should not be transported in open containers along with family pets.

• Maintain a list of contributors. Include name, address, telephone number, name or type of food donated, list of ingredients used, and dates food was prepared and accepted.
Food Stand Operations
What is done at home may not be acceptable when serving large groups. Everyone working in the food stand should receive training in basic guidelines related to
• worker health and hygiene,
• food preparation and handling practices, and
• proper cleaning procedures.

Worker Health and Hygiene
• Individuals should not work on days when they have a fever, nausea, diarrhea, or have been infected with Norovirus, 
  \textit{E. Coli} \textit{0157:H7}, hepatitis \textit{A} virus, \textit{Salmonella}, and \textit{Shigella}.

• Remind workers to wash their hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds
  • when entering the work area,
  • after touching any part of their face or body (no finger licking),
  • after touching money or other unclean surfaces,
  • after using the toilet,
  • before handling food,
  • before putting on gloves, and
  • after taking out garbage.

• Plastic gloves should be changed frequently and worn over clean hands.

• Clean aprons should be worn while in the food stand and removed when leaving the food stand.

• Hair must be effectively restrained.

• Jewelry (except a watch and plain ring band) should not be worn because it can contaminate food or fall into food products. For the same reason, fingernail polish and fake nails should not be worn.

Food Preparation and Handling
• Keep raw ingredients separate from foods that won’t receive additional cooking.

• Work tasks should be organized to reduce cross-contamination risks. For example, an individual who is working with raw foods should not also be handling cooked and ready-to-eat foods at the same time. Individuals who are handling soiled dishware and garbage should not also be serving food at the same time.

• Meats and casseroles must be cooked to proper temperatures—ground beef to 160°F and casseroles to 165°F—as shown by an accurate thermometer.

• Keep hot foods hot (above 140°F) and cold foods cold (below 41°F). Avoid the “Temperature Danger Zone” (TDZ) between 41° and 140°F. Use thermometers to check food and internal temperature gauges to check storage units every two hours.

• Discard any potentially hazardous food item if not served within four hours after cooking. Cook food at staggered times so fresh batches are available throughout the serving period.

• Limit time between preparation and service as much as possible. Set out small amounts of product at a time to minimize time in the TDZ.

• Use plastic gloves or utensils to avoid bare hand contact with foods. Change gloves with each new task.

Cleaning and Sanitizing
• Work counters and equipment should be cleaned and sanitized thoroughly and regularly.

• Both dishwashing detergent and hand soap should be available.

• A surface looks clean if there is no visible debris. But invisible, harmful bacteria can be present. When serving large groups, it is necessary to practice an extra level of care.

• Non-scented chlorine bleach is an effective and inexpensive over-the-counter sanitizing agent. One tablespoon mixed with one gallon of warm water will make an effective sanitizer that can be used on visibly clean surfaces. New batches should be mixed periodically because chlorine is broken down by food particles and other organic materials. Buckets and spray bottles can be used but should be clearly labeled.

• Cloths and buckets should be used only for cleaning or sanitizing purposes and not have any contact with food or ice. A drinkable water supply with both hot and cold water is needed for cleaning.

• Surfaces and items should be washed and rinsed before the sanitizer is applied. Otherwise, the sanitizer’s effectiveness is minimized by the food particles, other debris, or the detergent residue.
Where can I get more information?

Regulations
Questions about the regulations for foodservice establishments and food stands should be directed to the health inspector in your area or to:

Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals
Lucas State Office Building
Des Moines, IA  50319
(515) 281-6538
www.state.ia.us/government/dia/

(Also ask about their publication: Temporary Food Establishment Rules.)

Publications
The following free publications are available from:

• Local Iowa State University Extension offices

• Extension Distribution Center
  www.extension.iastate.edu/store
  Click on topic “Food, Nutrition and Health” then on sub-topic “Food and Nutrition-Food Safety”

5 Myths of Handwashing, N 3503a
Clean Hands for Healthy Living, N 3461
Handle Food Safely, PM 1442
Safe Food-It’s in Your Hands, PM 1406
Wash Your Hands, N 3503b

The following is available from USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service:
Cooking for Groups: A Volunteer’s Guide to Food Safety
www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Cooking_For_Groups_Index/index.asp

On-line training
For when-you-need-it information—including videos, podcasts, and short lessons—visit the Iowa State University Extension Food Safety Project Web site at:
  www.iowafoodsafety.org/

Face-to-face training
Registration information for these two programs is available from local Iowa State University Extension offices and from
  www.iowafoodsafety.org/
  (click on food safety training on left).

• ServSafe®
  This nationally recognized certification program is recommended for the person in charge of the food stand. The day-long course is taught at various locations throughout the state and includes a textbook and sitting fee for the certification exam. The cost is about $125 per person.

• SafeFood® Program
  This two- to four-hour program covers basic information related to food handling practices and avoiding contamination. It can be taught on site and tailored to fit the group’s needs. Participants receive educational handouts and a thermometer or other useful tools to ensure food safety in operations. The registration fee is about $30 per person.

General questions
If you have questions related to other aspects of food safety when serving food to the public, contact
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Ames, Iowa
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Local Iowa State University Extension offices—
To find the one closest to you, check this map:
www.extension.iastate.edu/ouroffices.htm

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