

OUTDOOR COOKING REQUIREMENTS

The following guidelines are for use in food establishments regulated by the department. Food establishments may market products by cooking, food outside their permitted building. For the purpose of this document, outdoor cooking operation refers to a repeated, routine frequency of occurrence at a fixed outdoor site/location.

According to the most recent round of published data by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), between 1988 and 1992 the most commonly reported contributing factors related to foodborne diseases were improper holding temperatures, poor personal hygiene, inadequate cooking, contaminated equipment, and food from unsafe sources. Regardless of whether food is prepared outdoors or indoors, these factors must be controlled in order to ensure the safety of the foods being prepared and served.

Outdoor cooking operations (OCOs) present unique challenges associated with the type of cooking equipment and infrastructure proposed to be utilized outdoors, including adequate access to utilities at the outdoor site. Nevertheless, outdoor cooking operations can, be done safely when performed in accordance with well-defined regulatory standards that are established to control and minimize the contributing factors of foodborne disease identified above. All laws and rules, that are applicable to inside food service in food establishments, must be adhered to at all times. Some items allowed by code will be prohibited at an OCO as the physical structure/equipment is limited. The minimum guidelines set forth in this document, for cooking foods outdoors, are extracted from the requirements of the U.S. Public Health Service Food Code (hereafter referred to as the Food Code), Chapter 500, Florida Statutes and Chapter 5K-4, Florida Administrative Code (FAC). These documents provide the basis for the regulatory authority to allow outdoor cooking operations in conjunction with a properly permitted, fixed food establishment. In addition, OCOs must meet all applicable local codes such as building, plumbing, fire, and electrical codes.

- **Food Establishment Support Services**

Each OCO must be operated in conjunction with a permitted, fixed food establishment that will provide “support services” for the outdoor cooking location. Ownership of the permitted facility and the OCO must be the same. The permitted food establishment shall be a fixed, permanent facility only – not a temporary, prepackaged only or mobile type establishment. Support services *must* include a variety of services such as the supply of *hot and cold* potable water; adequate plumbing and waste disposal; *3-compartment warewashing sink, hand sinks*, food storage, food products, utensils, equipment, or other supplies and personnel resources.

The permitted food establishment must be of such size and scope as to accommodate its own operation, as well as support all the needs of the OCO.

A Certified Food Manager must be on premise during all hours of outdoor cooking operations. No handling of money will be permitted at the outdoor cooking area.



- **Cooking Operations**

Outside preparation is limited to cooking, seasoning and/or basting such as sauces, etc. There will be no assembling, or plating of food product. Cooking is limited to items such as: large roasts, ribs, poultry, and fish including hotdogs and hamburgers that are returned into the Support Services facility area for hot holding, assembling and sale.

- **Location of Outdoor Cooking Operation**

The OCO must be located in an area that allows convenient access to the support services provided by the permitted, permanent food establishment. The OCO shall be located on the physical premises of the fixed permitted support food establishment as defined in the Food Code. "Premises" is defined in paragraph 1-201.10(B)(67)(a), Food Code as follows:

“Premises” means:

- (a) The physical facility, its contents, and the contiguous land or property under the control of the permit holder

Public parks, playgrounds, parking lots, or other similar locations, not under the control of the permit holder, will not qualify for approval as an OCO.

- **Servicing By Support Base Food Establishment**

The scope, *intentions* and *requirements* for the support services *and the OCO* should be determined at the time of the initial request for a OCO and *be* based on the type of menu *items*, *amount* and the frequency of the outdoor cooking operation.

- **Structural Components for Outdoor Cooking**

All usual and customary public health risks must be evaluated when assessing an outdoor cooking operation with the stringent, additional consideration of exterior environmental factors. The Department will assess the environmental factors to determine the extent of protection necessary. The following are minimum standards:

- **Floors**

Floor surfaces in an OCO will be in accordance with Chapter 5K-4 FAC, and the *Food Code* requirements for food establishments. The Food Code language *is* subparagraph 6-201.11, 12, 13, and 14. *Characteristics must be* smooth, non-absorbent and easily cleanable.

- **Walls**

Consideration must be made for protection against vermin and of environmental conditions to provide adequate food protection. This will be accomplished by solid walls at a minimum of 3 feet in height followed by, a minimum of 16 mesh per inch screening to the ceiling.

- **Overhead Protection/ Ventilation and Fire Protection**

All outdoor cooking areas must have overhead protection and be in accordance with Chapter 5K-4, FAC, and the Food Code, sub-paragraphs 6-201.16, 17 and 18. State and local fire codes may dictate the types of overhead protection acceptable to be installed over cooking equipment. Each individual piece of cooking equipment must be separately covered.

Local regulations shall govern ventilation and fire protection requirements at outdoor cooking sites. (Subpart 6-304, Food Code).

- **Lighting**

Adequate lighting by artificial or natural means is to be provided. The lighting shall be in accordance with the standards of section 6-202.11 and 6-303.11, Food Code.

- **Equipment / Utilities for Outdoor Cooking**

Construction, maintenance, and cleaning of all equipment pieces shall be in accordance with Chapter 4, Food Code. Equipment pieces do not have to be permanent or fixed but may be moveable. *Clean in Place (CIP) equipment must meet subparagraph 4-202.12, Food Code.*

- **Handwashing**

Handwash facilities must be located in all OCOs. Potable hot and cold running water under pressure with suitable hand cleaner, dispensed paper towels and waste receptacle must be provided. Handwashing must be performed in conformance with Food Code.

- **Temperature Measuring Devices**

Temperature measuring devices, appropriate to the operation, must be used for monitoring the types of potentially hazardous foods prepared in the OCO.

- **Food Contact Surfaces**

All food contact surfaces used in an outdoor cooking operation shall be designed, constructed, and maintained in accordance with Food Code requirements. Surfaces shall be smooth, easily cleaned, free of rust, dents or pitting, and durable under normal outdoor use conditions.

- **Cooking**

A continuous heat source such as electric or gas is preferred in a permanent operation. Charcoal is acceptable if consistent temperatures are achieved and/or maintained in accordance with Chapter 3, Food Code.

- **Temporary Hot Holding**

May be done only within the cooking equipment, such as an upper grate that is farther away from the immediate heat source. All other hot holding will be accomplished within the permitted Support Service in accordance with the Food Code.

- **Plumbing / Water / Sewer (Wastewater) Facilities**

No warewashing is permitted outdoors. Wastewater must be disposed of in accordance with Chapter 5, Food Code.

- **Garbage / Refuse Disposal**

An adequate number of non-absorbent, easily cleaned, lidded waste receptacles shall be provided at each outdoor cooking site. (Part 5-5, Food Code)

- **Food**

All foods must be obtained from an approved source in accordance with the Food Code. There shall be no home canned, cooked, or prepared foods offered at an outdoor cooking site. (Part 3-2, Food Code)

- **Food Storage**

Food items shall not be stored at an outdoor cooking site, except for immediate working containers with food at appropriate temperatures and protection in accordance with the Food Code.

- **Food Transport**

Foods, cooked or raw, shall be kept covered and protected during transport between, cooking site and support facility site. Safe and protected transportation of food, equipment, utensils, etc. from the permitted, permanent food establishment used for support services to the OCO must be evaluated.

- **Food Preparation and Display**

Employees may not contact exposed, ready-to-eat food with their bare hands and shall use suitable utensils such as deli paper, spatulas, tongs, single-use gloves or other dispensing equipment. The cooking area shall be protected from contamination and shall be segregated from the public. Patrons must be prevented from accessing areas of the outdoor site where food, food contact surfaces, or equipment are located. All food shall be protected from customer handling, coughing, sneezing, or other contamination by wrapping, the use of food shields, sneeze guards, or other effective barriers. (Part 3-3, Food Code)

- **Food Protection**

Open or uncovered containers of food are not allowed -- except for immediate use, i.e., to load and unload grill. Condiments; *if used are maintained in the Support Service area of the fixed facility and* must be dispensed in single-service type packaging, in pump style containers, or in protected squeeze bottles, shakers, or similar dispensers which minimize contamination of food items by food workers, patrons, vermin, environmental conditions, or other sources.

- **Personal Hygiene Requirements**

Follow requirements of Chapter 2, Food Code.

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