

Food for thought

Spring 2024

A newsletter for Fairfax County food establishment owners and operators and their employees

OUTDOOR DINING Zoning Ordinance Amendment

On Tuesday, Feb. 6, the Board of Supervisors amended the Zoning Ordinance to allow accessory outdoor dining associated with food establishments, such as restaurants and craft beverage production establishments. The new regulations are in effect now with a grace period until April 30, 2024, to allow existing outdoor dining areas to come into compliance with the new standards. Read the story here: bit.ly/4a9laDV

Important: This information only applies to establishments in Fairfax County and not to the cities or towns of Vienna, Clifton, and Herndon. If your facility is in the cities of Fairfax, Falls Church or the Towns of Vienna, Clifton and Herndon please, contact your local zoning department.

Key Highlights of the Approved Amendment

The new definition classifies outdoor dining as an accessory use intended for the consumption of food and beverages, served by an adjoining food establishment. All tables, chairs, umbrellas, lighting, and other accessories associated with the outdoor dining must be temporary and removable.

Permitted Zoning Districts: Allows outdoor dining in all zoning districts where a food establishment is

permitted as an accessory use, unless expressly prohibited by any applicable proffered condition, development condition, or special permit or special exception approval.

Size: Continues to allow outdoor dining on impervious areas, with a cap of 50 percent of the indoor dining floor area.

Access: Ensures outdoor dining areas do not obstruct emergency egress, ADA accessibility, building entrances/exits or pedestrian passages.

Permit Requirement: Requires an Administrative Permit for outdoor dining in parking lots, subject to a one-time application fee of \$205.

Hours of Operation: Aligns outdoor dining hours with the business hours of the principal use.

Parking: No additional parking requirements for outdoor dining.

Tents: Any tent proposed in the outdoor dining area is required to comply with the Fire Code, which requires that any single tent larger than 900 square feet or multiple tents separated by less than 12 feet and exceeding a combined area larger than 900 square feet obtain a permit from the Office of the Fire Marshal.

For more information, visit the Outdoor Dining—Zoning Ordinance page:

www.bit.ly/43JEV2s

STAMP OF APPROVAL



The Fairfax County Health Department strives to protect, promote and improve health and quality of life for all who live in our community. One way that the Consumer Protection Program aims to achieve this goal is through the STAMP program (Safely Through Actively Managing Practice). The STAMP program is an active managerial control (AMC) voluntary program whose participants exhibit exceptional practices and procedures that reduce the risk of foodborne illness within the establishment. Some requirements of the program are a history of at least 3 routine inspections or risk factor assessments conducted, a maximum total of 2 critical violations and total of 6 non-critical violations within the past 3 inspections conducted. These facilities implement food safety training for all employees and have established standard operating procedures in place. The facility that gets our “STAMP of approval” this season is the Chick-fil-A Chantilly Air and Space location. Congratulations on your enrollment and continued efforts to promote food safety!



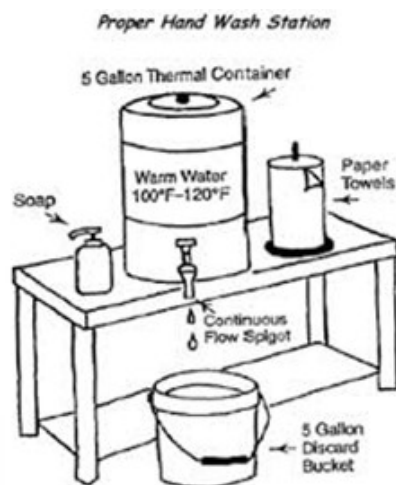
Permanent Answers to Your Temporary Food Event Questions

It's about that time again! As the weather gets warmer, the temporary food events get cooler. Everybody enjoys a fair or festival, but not many know how to submit an application or what the requirements for a vendor booth are. Allow us to answer some frequently asked questions. The application process for both a temporary food establishment permit and temporary food event permit, both begin in our online PLUS portal. The steps can be found under "How To Apply" at the following link:

www.bit.ly/3xh5EHu

Here is a brief list of requirements for your vendor set up:

- A copy of the Fairfax County Health Department Permit must be displayed at the stand/booth while in operation.
- All foods must be obtained from approved sources. Food items must be prepared at the stand/booth the day of the event OR at an approved commissary and then transported at proper temperatures to the stand/booth.
- No ill employees are allowed to handle food or work at the stand/booth.
- A proper hand wash station must be available at each stand/booth. This includes a container of potable, clean water with a spigot, liquid hand soap, paper towels, and a wastewater collection bin. Hand sanitizer, chemical treated hand wipes, and single-use gloves are not a substitute for handwashing. These can only be used/applied after handwashing.
- No bare hand contact of ready to eat foods is allowed. Instead use tongs, tissue paper, gloves, etc.
- Food items must be maintained at proper temperatures at all times (cold foods at 41°F or less, and hot foods at 135°F or above) including while in transport to the event. You must have a calibrated thermometer available at your stand/booth to check food temperatures.
- Perishable foods not at proper temperatures are subject to being discarded.
- Three containers of adequate size should be provided and set up to wash, rinse, and sanitize food contact surfaces of equipment and utensils. Appropriate test strips should be provided to verify proper sanitizer solution strengths (chlorine = 50 – 200 PPM; quaternary ammonium compound = 200-400 PPM).
- Stands/booths must have overhead protection and a cleanable floor surface (i.e., concrete, asphalt, plywood, or tarp). Do not place your stand/booth directly on soil, loose gravel, or grass.
- All food items and ingredients must be stored off the ground or floor surface.
- Sneeze guards or shielding must be provided to protect unpackaged/uncovered food items from contamination by the public.



It's Getting Hot in Here!



As the weather heats up outside, so does the temperature inside of a kitchen facility in a restaurant. Not only can it be summertime temperatures outside, but summertime temperatures inside. It is important that food establishments are aware that rising temperatures can affect the cold holding abilities of refrigeration units. Being mindful of closing doors and lids of units that are not in-use, keeping up with routine maintenance from licensed technicians, as well as reducing over stockage of food items inside units, are just a few ways to facilitate optimal operation of refrigeration units. Since food temperatures are required to cold hold at 41°F or below, refrigeration unit temperatures will aid in meeting these requirements if operating at ambient temperatures between 34°F and 38°F — too cool to be hot! ■



Reggie and Cody invite you to check out the food inspection reports!

www.bit.ly/3YakPvx

For more information about Temporary Food Events and Temporary Food Establishments, please visit the webpage here: www.bit.ly/3xh5EHu ■

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