

# Food for thought

Spring 2025

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

## Board of Supervisors Approves Zoning Updates for Special Events and Food Trucks

### Quick Summary

- New zoning rules make it easier to host special events and operate food trucks in Fairfax County, expanding community activities and dining options.
- Changes include simplified permits for short-term and long-term events, expanded food truck locations, and extended number of operating days for food trucks associated with uses like community pools, religious assemblies and private clubs that are located in residential districts.
- These updates support local businesses, enhance community engagement, and align with the county's strategic goals for economic growth and equity.

For more information, visit the Fairfax County News Center:  
[www.bit.ly/4cbwm4L](http://www.bit.ly/4cbwm4L). ■

## The Education of Donation!



With the observance of cultural holidays comes the need for understanding, consideration and food safety awareness.

One of the most observed practices during Ramadan is “zakat,” also known as charity. This is often done in the form of food donations. With the preparation of large amounts of food, in any scenario, comes the increased risk of food safety hazards, including donations. These could include improper food temperatures for cold holding, hot holding, cooking and reheating. ■

### JOB WELL DONE! Active Managerial Control Awardees Recognized:



As the year comes to a close, we would like to congratulate the food service operators who have been recognized with the Active Managerial Control award! During their recent inspections, there were no violations cited, and it was observed that good active managerial controls were in place at their establishments.

Congratulations to:

- Sebastian Cruz, Moby Dick House of Kabob, 1500 Cornerside Blvd, Vienna VA 22182

See pictures and read details about how they are reducing the risk of food-borne illness in their food establishment on the Health Department website:  
[www.bit.ly/AMC-Awardees](http://www.bit.ly/AMC-Awardees)

If you have questions on how to be nominated for an active managerial control award please speak to your area Environmental Health Specialist.



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

[www.bit.ly/3YakPvx](http://www.bit.ly/3YakPvx)



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## Do You Need an Intervention?

As a health inspector, there are multiple risk factors and public health interventions that we assess to prevent possible foodborne illness. The top five public health interventions that are often “frequent offender” violations on an inspection report include Poor Personal Hygiene, Improper Holding Temperatures, Improper Cooking Temperatures, Food from Unsafe Sources, and Contaminated Equipment/ Cross-Contamination.

These top five have also been deemed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to be the leading causes of foodborne illness outbreaks. Many foodborne illnesses have a fecal-to-oral mode of transmission and can be prevented merely by proper hand washing and appropriate glove usage. Food service staff should make personal hygiene a priority in the prevention of foodborne illness. Holding temperatures refers to

the cold holding and hot holding of potentially hazardous food items. As required by the FDA Food Code, cold foods shall maintain a temperature of 41°F or below, while hot foods shall maintain a temperature of 135°F or above. It is important that food service staff are trained on the Danger Zone to minimize temperature abuse. Raw animal products need to be cooked to the appropriate internal temperatures to kill possible pathogenic bacteria, based on the protein: poultry – 165°F; ground meat – 155°F; pork/fish/eggs – 145°F.

All foods that are prepared for sale to the public must be purchased from a safe, regulated source. Foods are not permitted to be prepared at home. Keeping equipment clean and safe from cross contamination is a never-ending challenge in food establishments. Designating equipment and utensils for raw animal products, while implementing adequate washing, rinsing and sanitizing procedures, helps to prevent possible cross-contamination. ■

## Not So Happy Hour

**True or False? I need to wash my hands when handling ready-to-eat foods?**

**Answer: True!**

Did you know that the garnishes for beverages at the bar are considered a ready-to-eat food item? What does that mean? A ready-to-eat food item, although simple in preparation, may not require a cook

step, but still requires proper handling and hand hygiene to prevent possible foodborne illness. Hand washing is the first line of defense for a food service staff member. The use of gloves, utensils, deli tissue and other forms of a barrier are required to prevent barehand contact. Foodborne illness can come from the simple slice of lemon placed on the rim of a glass, so don't be caught bare-handed! ■

## Picnic Anyone? Advice from a Health Inspector

As temperatures increase, so does our desire to share a meal outdoors. Keep in mind that it is still important to maintain proper cold holding temperatures of potentially hazardous food items during scenic outdoors activities.

Prepare food items in advance so they can achieve a cold-holding

temperature of 41°F as quickly as possible. Also consider freezing food so that it will remain cold for a longer period of time during transportation to the scenic site. The use of large coolers with lots of ice helps to keep food cold. You can also prepare foods that don't require refrigeration such as whole fruits and vegetables, prepackaged snacks and beverages. When preparing for your picnic, pack the blanket and basket and be sure foodborne illness is on guest list. ■

## Let the Health Department Know

If there has been a recent change of ownership, additions of new equipment, major changes in the menu, or an establishment name change, the Health Department must be notified in advance and appropriate application forms must be submitted in the PLUS system. All new equipment must be approved by the Health Department representative before installation and sometimes permits must be pulled from other agencies before installation. For more information, please contact the Health Department at [hdehd@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:hdehd@fairfaxcounty.gov) or visit our webpage at [www.bit.ly/3Cruvuz](http://www.bit.ly/3Cruvuz). ■



## Practice Managerial Control

Being aware of potential hazards can make for a smoother preparation process for the donator and a safer gift of “alms” for the receiver. Consider logging initial batch cooking temperatures, documenting cooling times and temperatures. Ensure the preparation facility has the appropriate amount of hot holding or cold holding equipment to maintain a cold holding temperature of 41°F or below or hot holding temperature of 135°F and above. Also keep in mind the proper transportation of food items to its designated destination. It is important that equipment such as hot boxes and coolers have the capability to maintain appropriate temperature ranges to prevent possible foodborne illness.

Cooking in large quantities can require much processing, but incorporating aspects of active managerial control can facilitate a safer process altogether [www.bit.ly/4l6CaAq](http://www.bit.ly/4l6CaAq). ■



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