



Temporary Food Facilities FAQ

1. What is Temporary Food Facility (TFF)?

A TFF is a food facility operating out of temporary set up approved by the enforcement officer at a fixed location for a period of time not to exceed 25 days in any 90-day period and in conjunction with a community event.

2. Do I need a permit to sell food at a temporary event?

Yes, a permit is required to sell, give away, or sample food or drinks to the public.

3. How do I get a permit?

Contact the coordinator/organizer of the event. The coordinator will have [concessionaire applications](#) for you to complete and then you need to return the completed application to the coordinator. They are responsible to gather the all applications to submit to SFDPH.

4. What conditions are attached to the permit?

In order to qualify for a permit, the applicant must agree to operate in accordance with all applicable state laws and procedures needed to ensure compliance. [Checklists](#) are available to aid you in your efforts.

State law requires food to be handled and sold from a fully screened booth, unless the food is completely wrapped and remains so until sold. The booth must be equipped with facilities for washing hands, washing and sanitizing utensils, and equipment to keep potentially hazardous foods at a safe temperature. The full list of conditions can be found on the [TFF Operational Requirements](#) sheet.

5. My food is prepackaged... do I still need a permit?

Yes, a permit is still required. However, a fully screened booth will probably not be necessary and nor will hand washing and utensil washing facilities.

If you intend to open the packages or give samples, then the requirements change and you would need to comply with conditions in #4 above.

6. I am only selling drinks... do I still need a permit?

Yes. Beverages are considered food and a permit is required.

7. I am not selling any food or drink, but I will be giving away samples. Do I need a permit?

Yes. A permit is required to give food or drink to the public. If the samples of food/drink are open (not completely wrapped), a fully equipped booth is necessary.

8. My booth is only to raise money for our club... do I still need a permit?

Yes. A permit is required for all food vendors. The potential risk attached to handling and selling food is the same, no matter where the proceeds go.

9. Can I set up a temporary food facility outside a shopping mall or at my permitted food facility?

No. The temporary food facility must be in connection with a community event.

10. How much does a permit cost?

[Current TFF fees](#) can be found on our website.

After July 1, each year, the fees may be change to reflect departmental costs.

11. When is a permit not required?

If your organization is a non-profit and all of your food is donated by a *permitted food facility* (such as a local restaurant or a market) then the event is exempt from these requirements. This is known as the "[The Craven Act](#)". Problems or complaints about the event would then be the responsibility of the donor(s).

Craven Act forms are available at this office for both donors and recipients of food and should be completed for record purposes.

Note: donors need to be *permitted facilities* – individuals without a commercial kitchen/permit cannot donate food. Also, remember that no one is exempt from civil liability – you must still practice safe food handling.

12. What other permits do I need?

First, you need permission from the event coordinator to be a concessionaire at the event. You might also need approvals from [other city agencies](#) such as the fire department (open flame, generators, pressurized gas), public works (street or sidewalk use), California Alcoholic Beverage Control and local police (alcoholic beverages), body modification (tattoos), and the California Board of Equalization (for sales tax payments). Your event coordinator should be able to advise you or have already contacted these agencies on behalf of the event.

13. What are the responsibilities of the sponsor or coordinator of the event?

The coordinator is required to gather together all concessionaire applications (TFFs), compile a list all TFFs (indicate multiple booths), complete a Sponsor/Organizer application, provide a site map (indicating TFF, restroom locations, potable water source, etc.), and payment for associated SFDPH fees. After this information is gathered, arrange a time to meet with SFDPH to discuss the event and complete associated fees at least 14 days before the event.

The sponsor/coordinator must also ensure that all TFFs comply with the Health and Safety Code. In addition, they are responsible for shared facilities such as toilets, waste water, grease, recycling, and garbage disposal. They should ensure that concessionaires know where to find potable water and ice. A [checklist](#) is available for the sponsor/coordinator to aid their efforts.

14. Will SFDPH come to inspect my booth?

SFDPH will visit all food booths – usually early in the event, to make sure food is being handled safely. However, TFF operators are expected to follow safe food handling procedures throughout the event.

15. Will I be fined if I make a mistake at the event?

SFDPH cannot issue fines in the field. However, SFDPH will expect corrections to be made when necessary and may close your booth temporarily until the inspector considers it safe. Any inspection time more than twenty minutes may be billed for additional time and which is based on an hourly rate.

If your problems cannot be corrected, SFDPH may suspend your permit and you will have to close down. In extreme cases, SFDPH can issue a citation which means you would have to appear at a hearing.

16. Does the booth need to be enclosed?

The booth must have overhead protection, cleanable flooring, and needs to be fully screened on all sides if you are handling open food. If all food is *prepackaged* and the packages will be sold *unopened*, no screening is required, just overhead protection and cleanable flooring.

17. Do I need my own hand-washing facilities – even if I am right next to the public restrooms?

Yes. Hand washing facilities are always required in each booth where open foods or beverages are being handled. A TFF handling prepackaged food items that remain in the package until obtained by the public, is not required to set up a hand wash station.

18. Can I cook outside the booth?

Yes. BBQ and deep fat frying must be outside the booth, in an area fenced off to the public. All other cooking should be inside the booth. Always check with the fire department if you will be working with open flame, pressurized gas, or generators.

- 19. I have decided to join an event this coming weekend and I live far away. Can I still get a permit?**
Unfortunately, no, it is not possible to issue approval and permit at very short notice. It is better to apply through your coordinator in plenty of time. SFDPH requires, at minimum, 14 days notice.
- 20. I have a hot dog cart with an annual Permit to Operate in San Francisco. Do I need another permit to sell at a temporary event?**
No. If your annual permit is current and your cart has no outstanding health code violations, then no other SFDPH permits are necessary. This applies to SF permitted [mobile food facilities](#). Make sure that you have permission from the event coordinator to attend.
- 21. I have a hot dog cart with a permit to operate in another county. Does this permit cover me for a temporary event in San Francisco?**
No, the permit is valid in the county where it was issued.
You can complete an [application](#) to obtain a Temporary Food Facility Permit for San Francisco and return to the event coordinator.
- 22. I am organizing an event this summer. Can someone from the SFDPH come to one of our meetings, to explain requirements?**
SFDPH would be happy to attend your pre-event meeting. Please make sure that you give us plenty of notice so we can find a mutually convenient date.
- 23. I understand that restaurant operators in California need a [certificate in food safety](#). Do I need a certificate to sell food at a temporary event?**
No. This requirement does not apply to TFFs at this time. However, adequate knowledge of safe food handling practices is mandatory for all staff working inside the TFF.
- 24. I attend many events during the year. Can I get an annual TFF permit?**
An annual TFF permit is not available in San Francisco at this time.
- 25. I already have a permit for my restaurant in San Francisco. Does that permit cover me for temporary events?**
No. The Permit to Operate is location specific and is not transferable from the restaurant to other locations or events, *even if it is on the street outside your facility*.
A temporary food facility has to be set up in a specific way and will require an additional inspection by SFDPH, and therefore needs a separate permit. However, you may display samples of food from your window or serve food from this window or door as long as you keep your set up inside the restaurant. Then, no additional permit from SFDPH would be necessary.
- 26. Where is your office located?**
We are located in the Permit Center at 49 South Van Ness, Suite 600, San Francisco, CA 94103
- 27. Who can I call if I have a question?**
All questions should first be directed to the sponsor/coordinator of the event.
If the coordinator is unable to help, please call SFDPH at (415) 252-3800 and ask for the Temporary Food Facilities Coordinator.

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