



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Gateway National
Recreation Area

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Guidelines for Providing Safe Samples at Events

Vendors may provide food samples using the following guidelines. Critical practices to avoid foodborne illness are good personal hygiene and proper temperature control of potentially hazardous foods (meat, milk, eggs, cut melons, cut tomatoes, etc.) Vendors operating within National Parks will be inspected using the FDA Food Code. The most recent FDA Food Code is available at the link below:

<http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodSafety/RetailFoodProtection/FoodCode/FoodCode2009/>

Processed Food Sampling

Processed foods include bakery items, jams, jellies, canned items, etc. The best practice is to prepare samples at an approved, licensed facility prior to arriving at the market. For example, a vendor that operates a licensed bakery can cut baked goods into pieces at that bakery, place them on a tray, insert a toothpick in each piece, and keep the tray covered with plastic wrap. Similar preparation may be done for cheese and other items. Canned items (i.e., jelly, salsa, etc.) may be opened one jar at a time and supplied with a disposable utensil for customers to use. Generally, use toothpicks, wax paper, paper sampling cups, or disposable utensils to distribute samples. Temperature control must be maintained on items needing refrigeration after opening. **Home-canned and home-prepared foods are not allowed.**

The next best practice is to bring several clean, sanitized knives and cutting boards in protective plastic containers or food storage bags, wrapped in plastic wrap, etc. Use clean equipment to cut product, taking care to store in-use items so they are protected from contamination. Replace soiled knives, cutting boards, etc. with clean items every two hours. Use single service items whenever possible. Take soiled items with you at the end of the day. Should on-site utensil and equipment washing be necessary, set up and operate as shown in warewashing section on page 4.

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Sampling

Due to quality concerns, preparation of most fruit and vegetable samples requiring cutting or slicing needs to be done on-site, immediately prior to consumption. Samples prepared ahead of time must be prepared in a licensed kitchen. No home prepared food samples are allowed.

For preparation at the farmers' market, the best practice is to bring several clean knives and cutting boards in protective plastic containers or food storage bags, wrapped in plastic wrap, etc. Use clean equipment to cut product, taking care to store in-use items so they are

protected from contamination. Replace soiled knives, cutting boards, etc. with clean items every two hours. Use single service items whenever possible. Store soiled items in a closed bag or container to avoid attracting insects. Take soiled items with you at the end of the day. Should on-site utensil and equipment washing be necessary, set up and operate as shown in warewashing section on page five.

All fruits and vegetables must be rinsed thoroughly in clean water. You are required to set up a potable water source onsite. Rinsing melons in a 200 parts per million chlorine solution prior to slicing is recommended. Fruit and vegetable sample servings must be protected from contamination at all times. **Serving must be done in a manner protecting the sample from any bare hand contact.** Utilizing disposable gloves, single service utensils, napkins or tissues, or toothpicks are all adequate methods to avoid handling prepared samples.

If preparing some samples ahead of time, wrap cut product samples in plastic wrap. Melons and tomatoes must be stored at 41°F or below, once cut. These items have been associated with foodborne disease outbreaks in recent years. Mechanical refrigeration is recommended. Any ice used for cooling must be continuously drained to avoid wrapped items soaking in melted ice water.

Meat Sampling

All meats must come from inspected approved sources. Vendors must be able to show proof of the approved source. Home-canned and home-prepared foods are not allowed.

Meat items may be served directly from a covered grill using sanitary methods, such as toothpicks or tissues. If foods are cooked and held, the meat must be held at 135°F or above. Foods must be protected from environmental contamination and insects at all times. Provide condiments in single service packets, unless the condiment is an item being offered as a sample. The best practice is to provide meats in pre-formed patties, or pre-cut portions not requiring on-site preparation. Should on-site utensil and equipment washing be necessary, set up and operate as shown in warewashing section. The serving of full meal size portions requires a temporary food establishment approval from your NPS Public Health Consultant. Please see the contact information for the NPS Office of Public Health for more information regarding temporary food establishments.

Personal Hygiene

The following practices will help assure food safety:

Avoid Bare Hand Contact With Ready-To-Eat Food: Food employees may not have contact with exposed ready-to-eat food with their bare hands. Suitable utensils, such as deli paper, spatulas, tongs, dispensing equipment, or gloves shall be used.

Practice Good Personal Hygiene: Food employees shall maintain a high degree of personal cleanliness and shall conform to good hygienic practices during all working periods. Food employees shall have clean outer garments and wear effective hair restraints (i.e., baseball cap). Smoking, eating, and drinking are not allowed by food employees when preparing or serving samples.

Wash Hands Frequently: Food employees must wash their hands and exposed portions of the arms after touching bare human body parts, using the toilet room, handling animals, coughing/sneezing, using a handkerchief, using tobacco, eating/drinking, handling soiled equipment/utensils, as often as necessary to prevent cross-contamination, when switching between raw and ready-to-eat food, and after engaging in other activities that contaminate the hands.

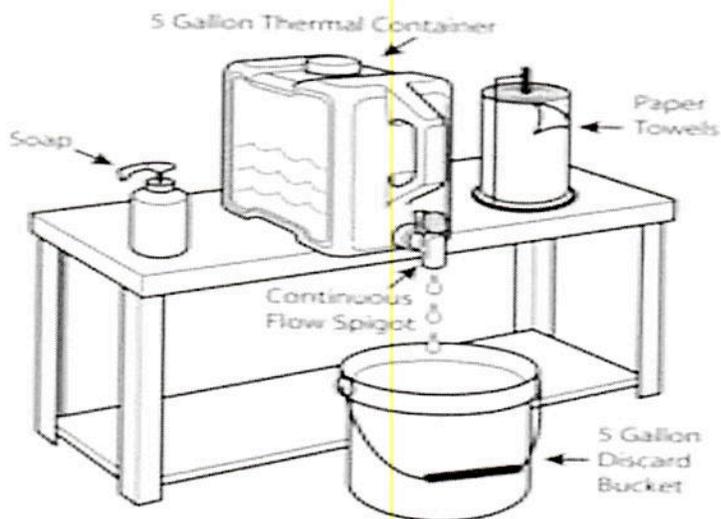
Wash Hands Properly: Food employees shall clean their hands and exposed portions of the arms in a properly equipped handwashing facility by vigorously rubbing together the surfaces of the lathered hands and arms and thoroughly rinsing with clean water. Employees shall pay particular attention to the areas underneath the fingernails and between the fingers. To avoid recontaminating hands, food employees may use disposable paper towels or similar barriers when touching surfaces such as faucet handles.

Provide Proper Handwashing Facilities

When cutting or handling exposed ready to eat food, use either handwash facilities provided in your space or located in close proximity to your space.

Each vendor must have their own approved handwash facility onsite that includes:

- 1. **Potable water** (in a 5 gallon container) with a **hands-free spigot, pump dispensed hand soap, paper towels, a catch basin, and a trash can.**



Your NPS Public Health Consultant is available to help you determine the best handwash facility for your operation and location. Contact information is available at the end of this document.

Exclude Sick or Ill Employees From Work: The person in charge must exclude employees who have the following conditions: Symptoms such as diarrhea, fever, vomiting, jaundice, sore throat with fever. A food employee with vomiting or diarrhea must be free of symptoms for at least 24 hours. Illnesses such as Salmonella Typhi, Shigella, Eschericia coli 0157:H7, Hepatitis A, or Norovirus must be reported to the local health authority.

Temperature Control of Foods

Potentially hazardous food (foods that require temperature control for safety such as meat, milk, eggs, cut melons, cut tomatoes, etc.) must be maintained at proper temperature to prevent the growth of disease causing organisms.

Hot Holding: 135°F or higher.

Cold Holding: 41°F or below.

Cooking Temperatures for potentially hazardous food are: 15 seconds @: chicken-165°F, Ground beef -155°F, wild game - 165° F. All other raw animal foods – 145°F. Partial cooking of potentially hazardous foods is prohibited.

A thermocouple or metal stem thermometer shall be provided to check internal temperatures of potentially hazardous hot and cold food items. Metal stemmed thermometers accurate to within $\pm 2^\circ\text{F}$ must be provided to monitor temperatures.

Food Protection

All food shall be protected from customer handling, coughing, sneezing, or other contamination by wrapping, the use of sneeze guards, or other effective barriers. Preparation of samples must be done using smooth, cleanable surfaces (i.e. tables) that are protected from customer traffic. Slicing must be done on cutting boards. **Avoid such practices as using vehicle tailgates and pocket knives.** Display food samples on disposable plates or trays, unless approved warewashing facilities are provided on-site or unless clean sanitized display trays are brought to the site from a licensed food establishment.

When transporting pre-prepared samples, protect from contamination and maintain temperature control of potentially hazardous foods.

Warewashing

When on-site warewashing is necessary it must done as follows. Either a commercial dishwasher or a three-compartment sink set-up must be utilized to wash, rinse, and sanitize equipment and utensils coming into contact with food. The minimum requirements for a utensil washing set-up to wash/rinse/sanitize should consist of three basins that are large enough for immersion of the utensils, a potable hot water supply, and an adequate disposal method for the wastewater. In-use equipment and utensils must be cleaned and sanitized at least every four hours.

Sanitizing

An approved sanitizer must be provided for sanitizing food contact surfaces. Sanitizers must be used at appropriate strengths as specified by manufacturer. Three common sanitizers, and the typical concentrations required by manufacturers, are: Chlorine solution = 50 ppm; Iodine solution = 12.5 to 25 ppm; or Quaternary ammonium compound = 200 ppm. Soak clean, rinsed items in sanitizing solution for at least 15 seconds and then air dry. An approved test kit to measure sanitizer concentrations must be available and used.

Overhead Protection

Outdoor booths which offer food samples must be covered with a canopy or other type of overhead protection unless the food items offered are pre-packaged. Overhead protection is not required over outdoor cooking devices.

Floors

Flooring is necessary when located on dirt, gravel or a surface that can allow dust or mud to be generated and contaminate food samples. When temporary flooring is provided, it should be constructed of materials such as non-absorbent matting, tight wood or removable platforms that minimize dust and mud.

Insect Control

When flying insects and other pests are absent due to the location of the establishment, the weather, or other limiting conditions, no insect protection is required. When insects are present, any exposed food samples must be protected by providing walls, screens, doors, etc. designed to prevent the entry of pests.

Contact NPS for Assistance

NPS Public Health Consultants are available to discuss specific questions you may have. Contact your inspector by calling: **718-354-4629**

Or visit our website below:

http://www.nps.gov/public_health/index.htm

Any vendor that serves full meals must obtain approval for a temporary food event license from the Office of Public Health.