

Planning Guide for Temporary Events and Food Markets

*This document contains many links to relevant documents and information. The document is best viewed by **downloading the pdf file directly to your device and then opening it in a file viewer on your phone, tablet or PC/MAC**, so that the links do not open in the same window as the guide. Alternatively, your browser settings can be set to only open the links in a new window or tab.

Health reviews by Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) are necessary to minimize public health risks for events and markets. THIS GUIDE is intended to help organizers of events and markets understand their responsibilities, describe the steps needed to acquire health approval, and provide resources to facilitate the review/approval process. Importantly, **Temporary Events** and **Temporary Food Markets** have their own definitions, and the different activities that are permitted for each are specifically defined:

What is a Temporary Event?

Temporary events are time-limited **public** gatherings such as fairs, festivals, seasonal holiday events, tradeshows, and fundraising events. Examples include:

- Fundraisers
- Music Festivals
- Richmond Night Market
- PNE
- Tattoo shows
- Christmas Markets

These events have activities regulated by the health authority under the Public Health Act, including:

- Food vending
- Personal services
- Potable water systems and wastewater systems
- Activities that could result in the spread of communicable diseases

The person responsible for an event is an **Event Coordinator**, who is often required to submit an **Event Coordinator Application Package**. **Home-prepared foods are not allowed** at temporary events.

Activities exempt from regulations and guidelines:

- Family functions
- Workplace BBQs
- Club or society private gatherings in which food is prepared or served by voluntary caterers, limited to members of their own organization and invited guests.

What is a Temporary Food Market?

Temporary Food Markets are farmers' markets whose vendors grow, make, bake, raise, or wild harvest the products they sell at temporary venues. The sale of whole fruits or vegetables, or prepackaged non-potentially hazardous foods are allowed. **Foods prepared at home are limited** to lower risk foods as defined in the **Provincial Guidelines for Sale of Foods at Temporary Food Markets**.

A **Market Manager** is required at markets. They must have a comprehensive understanding of the Provincial Guideline. A **Market Manager** ensures:

- Food vendors have obtained approval from the local health authority.
- Vendors do not sell higher risk foods (i.e. higher risk food prepared at an approved or permitted facility, shell eggs, raw meat etc.) unless they provide a valid Letter of Confirmation or a valid copy of their Permit to Operate or a recent inspection report.
- Vendors who process food on site or offer higher risk food samples for tasting must submit a Temporary Food Services Application for approval. **NOTE:** Lower risk food sampling at farmer's markets does not require an application but must meet the requirements in the **Guidelines** linked above.

Responsibilities of Event Coordinators and Market Managers

- Contact the Environmental Health Officer (EHO) well in advance of event to review health requirements. The larger your event/market, the earlier you should be in contact with the EHO. Events and Markets in areas without infrastructure will require advance planning. For instance, plans to provide potable water to a site where there is none involves significant consultation with the EHO.
- Download the [Event Coordinator Application](#) form or the [Market Manager Application form](#).
- Complete the Coordinator or Market Manager Application and collect all vendor applications.
- Provide the EHO with all details specific to the event and/or market.
- Provide guidance and assistance to vendors with health requirements, and provide them with or direct them to the correct application documents.
- Ensure all vendors that process food on site or provide food samples for tasting submit a [Temporary Food Services Application](#) for approval.
- Identify the types of food premises or activities (including any personal services, petting zoos, pony rides, etc.) offered at the event/market. The organizer is required to gather contact information from all those providing services to the public at the event/market.
- Complete a site plan detailing location of all vendors, wash stations, storage facilities, etc. along with a corresponding vendor list or spreadsheet.
- Submit all documents at least 14 days before your event.
- Note that administration fees will be charged to the vendors for incomplete applications or those submitted after the 14-day deadline. Applications received late may be denied.
- Arrange a time for the opening inspection and inform vendors to be ready.
- Retain a copy of the Coordinator or Market Manager Application as a pre-inspection checklist for opening day.
- A **Market Manager** has additional responsibilities. They must ensure all requirements listed on Page 6 of the [Provincial Guidelines for Sale of Foods at Temporary Food Markets](#) are fulfilled.
- Contact your Municipal or Regional District offices for any zoning, permits and business licence issues to ensure compliance with their requirements. This is an integral part of the approval process.

What should be included in the application package?

An **Event Coordinator** must submit at least 14 calendar days prior to the event:

- An [Event Coordinator Application Form](#)
- All [Temporary Food Service Application Forms](#) or [Food Services Application Forms for a Single Event over 14 days](#) from each food premises vendor. Review forms for completeness.
- All [Temporary PSE Forms](#) (if applicable).
- An electronic spreadsheet listing all food vendors (temporary and mobile) & PSE vendors participating at the event ([See Event Coordinator Example](#)).
- Detailed site plan and/or floor plans, including primary and alternative power sources as well as any camping areas and drinking water bottle filling stations.
- A site Sanitation Plan, including details for liquid and solid waste disposal, and schedule for cleaning of portable toilet facilities.

A **Market Manager** must submit at least 14 calendar days prior to the market:

- A [Market Manager Application Form](#)
- All [Temporary Food Service Application Forms](#) or [Food Services Application Forms for a Single Event over 14 days](#) from each food service vendor. Review forms for completeness.
- All collected [Letters of Confirmation](#), copies of the health approval from the local health authority or copies of the Permit to Operate from the higher risk food vendors.
- An electronic spreadsheet listing all food vendors (temporary and mobile) & PSE vendors participating at the event ([See Market Manager Example](#)). List all vendors who sell lower or higher risk food. Identify any vendors who offer sampling or onsite food processing.
- A detailed site plan and/or floor plans, including primary and alternative power sources as well as any camping areas and drinking water bottle filling stations.
- A Site Sanitation Plan, including details for liquid and solid waste disposal, and schedule for cleaning of public toilet facilities.

What are the types of services the Event Coordinator & Market Manager should identify at the event/market?

Temporary Food Service Booths



- A temporary operation, where food is **processed** then served or dispensed to the public and intended for immediate consumption.
- Includes but is not limited to food booths, small plated food items, and cooking demonstrations where foods are sampled by the public.
- Includes food booths in an event or a market in which food products are portioned onsite for tasting.
- The vendor is responsible for completing a [VCH Temporary Food Service Application](#).
- A Temporary Permit to Operate must be issued before food can be served to the public.

Temporary Food Product Booths



- A food booth in which food products are **not** processed or portioned.
- For vendors with no open food or sampling of food (e.g. trade shows that sell or give away pre-packaged food and drink, or any vendors with health approval for their business that sell their food as a pre-packaged product)
- A Temporary Food Service Application form is not required, however, a list of these vendors, their food products and the location of their approved commercial kitchen must be provided.
- Any potentially hazardous foods kept at 4 degrees Celsius or less.

Temporary Food Market Booths



A food booth operated in a fixed location in connection with a farmers market. This includes:

- **Lower risk food** that may be sampled or dispensed in accordance with page 5 of the [Guideline for Sale of Foods at Temporary Markets](#).
- **Higher risk food**, such as shell eggs, frozen raw meats and seafood, or processed food products. Sale of higher risk food requires submitting approval documents in accordance with this Guideline as well.

Refer to the [Temporary Event and Food Market Approval Interactive Tool](#) for additional details.

“**Process**” means to make raw food ready to eat and includes washing, rinsing, cooking, smoking, salting, canning, freezing, pasteurizing and reprocessing of previously processed food

Food Premises Regulation B.C. Reg. 223/2015

What are the types of services the Event Coordinator & Market Manager should identify at the event/market?



Mobile Food Premises

Any vehicle, cart or other self-contained movable structure from which food intended for public consumption is prepared, processed, served and/or provided to the public. The operator must possess a valid Permit to Operate or health approval issued by a BC Health Authority and must operate under the conditions of that permit/approval. Submission of an application for these vendors is not required. Proof of health approval is required.



Water Features and Misting Stations

Any vendors showcasing equipment that can generate water aerosols, such as recreational or physical therapy tubs, cooling equipment, water features, plumbing fixtures, see [VCH's Legionnaires' Disease Guide at Temporary Events and Tradeshows](#).



Extreme Heat Concerns

For events during heat events, organizers may need to consider mitigation measures to help protect against heat-related illnesses, including: signage, cooling shelters, misting and water fill station stations or other measures.

Resources can be found on our website for [Extreme Heat](#).



Animal Areas

Any place where the public may have contact with animals and their environment such as petting zoos, animal exhibits, farms, country fairs, amusement parks, shopping malls, and animal rides. These areas shall be operated in accordance with the [BCCDC Guidelines for Prevention of Zoonotic Diseases from Petting Zoos and Open Farms](#).



Personal Services

Any establishment in which a person provides a service to or on the body of another person, and includes a barber shop, beauty parlor, health spa, massage parlor, tattoo shop, sauna and steam bath. Vendors must submit an [Application for Personal Services at an Event](#).



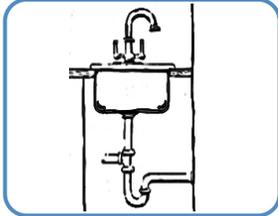
Smoking/Vaping

Take this opportunity to designate your outdoor event as smoke and vape-free. Contact the VCH Tobacco and Vapour Products Reduction Program at 604-675- 3800 or email smokefree@vch.ca for more information and to obtain free signage. Information is also available at [Tobacco and Vapour Products Protection](#). Check with your local government regarding smoking bylaws.

Consider what facilities and utilities are necessary at the venue:

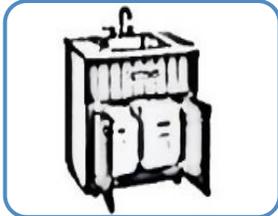
Hand Wash Stations:

Hand washing is required to reduce the risk of communicable disease transmission by service providers. Hand wash stations need to be close to where food is handled and must be fully functional before the start of food handling. The number of stations needed will require consultation with the EHO. Include the location and type of hand wash station on the venue site map. A hand wash station is for hand washing only and includes:



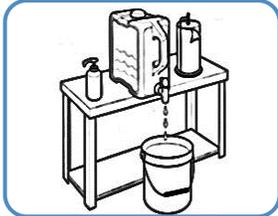
Plumbed Sinks

- Supplied with hot and cold water under pressure.
- Equipped with liquid soap and single-use paper towel in dispensers.
- Connected to potable water supply system and approved wastewater disposal system.



Portable Sinks

- Supplied with hot and cold water under pressure using a water pump.
- Connected to potable water and grey water storage tanks.
- Equipped with liquid soap and single-use paper towel in dispensers.



Temporary Hand Wash Stations

- Supplied with warm water dispensed by continuous flow spigot.
- Grey water is captured in a bucket and disposed into sanitary sewer.
- Equipped with liquid soap and single-use paper towel in dispensers.
- Only suitable for low-risk/minimal food handling with health review and approval.

Potable Water Supply:



Venues with an approved water supply system

- Most venues will have a local approved water supply system.
- Vendors must use drinking water/food grade hoses when connecting to an approved water supply system.
- Backflow protection will also be required.



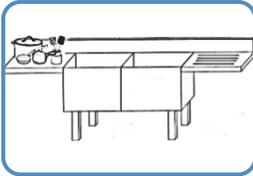
Venues without an approved water supply system

- In areas of VCH where there is no approved water supply system, contact the Drinking Water Officer through the local health protection office for more information.
- Contract a permitted drinking water hauler, if applicable.
- An application for a [Water Supply System Construction Permit](#) may be required.

Consider what facilities and utilities are necessary at the venue:

Dishwashing & Sanitizing Stations:

Equipment and utensils used for food preparation and service require proper cleaning and sanitizing. The number of common area sinks must be sufficient to meet the needs of vendors at the event/market.



2-Compartment Sink

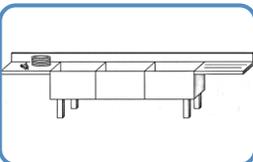
- For operations using cooking utensils and equipment ONLY, a 2-compartment sink is needed, including tables or drain boards on each side of the station to serve as bussing and drying areas.
- Detergent for washing and a sanitizer solution for sanitizing are required.

If **reusable dishes** for the public are used, a dishwashing service may be acceptable or use one of the following on site:



On-site Commercial Dishwasher

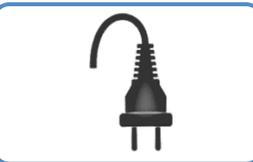
- Connected to a source of potable water.
- Plumbed to a sanitary sewer.
- Machine must be operated according to manufacturer's specifications.



3-Compartment Sink

- Supplied with hot and cold running water under pressure.
- Grey water containment system that can be emptied into sanitary sewer.
- Detergent for washing and a sanitizer solution (e.g. bleach) for sanitizing are required.

Power Supply:



Venue Power Supply

- Whether the venue is inside or outside, an adequate power supply must be provided.
- Event/market may not be allowed to operate without a functioning power supply.
- Power to be set up prior to vendors' arrival.



Temporary Power Supplies

- When temporary power supplies are provided, a back-up source of power should also be provided.
- Temporary power supplies should be continuous and include overnight power for refrigerated/frozen storage areas.



Restrictions

If there are any restrictions to what power supply can be used, vendors and the EHO need to be advised. For example, in certain Municipalities, gas generators are not allowed. This is critical in reviewing applications that may rely on the restricted power supply to operate safely.

Consider what facilities and utilities are necessary at the venue:

Sanitation:



Garbage/Recycling Collection and Removal

- Garbage must be collected and disposed of in a sanitary manner.
- If there are no waste removal facilities on site, arrangements must be made to remove garbage or deep fry oils.
- Adequately sized, leak proof bins appropriate for the expected use must be provided on site for the booth(s) and for the public.
- Containers for green waste and recyclables need to be provided to collect and manage recycling properly.



Wastewater Collection and Removal

- Wastewater, including grey water from sinks, must be disposed of in a sanitary manner and not drained to ground or storm drains. Coordinator ensures food trucks return to their base of operation to empty wastewater or will provide wastewater tanks or waste removal service for the trucks and/or booths.
- Advise vendors and your EHO of on-site wastewater dumping stations, which may be a mop sink/sanitary sewer location or holding tank and any temporary sewer connections.
- If wastewater cannot be gravity fed to holding tanks, water pumps may be required.



Sanitary Facilities

- For very large events or venues without plumbed toilet facilities, portable toilets are needed.
- Contact your local municipality or regional district offices for their requirements.
- Provide hand sanitizer or hand wash stations wherever portable sanitary facilities are used.

Booth Construction:



Tents, Canopies and Flooring

- For outdoor venues, all food storage, preparation and service areas must have suitable overhead protection.
- Flooring may be required. If set-up is on grass, gravel or dirt, acceptable flooring includes plywood.
- Area needs to be properly graded to prevent flooding/ponding if it rains.
- Contact your municipal Fire Prevention Officer for information concerning cooking equipment under canopies.

Consider what facilities and utilities are necessary at the venue:

Food Handling and Storage:



Food Storage Facilities

- Large or multi-day events may require centralized cold and/or dry storage facilities adequately sized to meet the needs of the vendors.
- All potentially hazardous cold foods must be kept at 4°C (40°F) or less.
- All food storage facilities must be pest-proof and secured.



Ice Supply

- Ice is considered a food item. It must be obtained from an approved source and stored properly to prevent contamination.
- The name of your ice supplier to be provided to the EHO with your application.

When will the EHO provide approval?

Submit completed applications on time. When the application package is complete, coordinators or market managers should contact the EHO to review the plans for the event or the market. The EHO will approve the plans or give approval with amendments to ensure health requirements are met. Prior to the event or the market, a final inspection may be conducted to verify that it is set up according to the application and plans as submitted. The coordinator or market manager should be available to meet on-site with the EHO to address deficiencies.

Health Protection Offices

Bella Bella / Bella Coola
North Shore / Central Coast
Powell River
Richmond
Sechelt
Squamish
Vancouver
Whistler

Tel 604-983-6700
Tel 604-485-3310
Tel 604-233-3147
Tel 604-885-5164
Tel 604-892-2293
Tel 604-675-3800
Tel 604-932-3202

Contact the North Shore office
Email: healthprotectionns@vch.ca
Fax: 604-485-3305
Email: healthprotectionRH@vch.ca
Fax: 604-885-9725
Fax: 604-892-2327
Email: temporaryevents@vch.ca
Fax: 604-932-6953