



A Guide to Special Events with Food Vendors

Special Events are organized gatherings usually taking place outside. These events include but are not limited to farmer's markets, festivals, block parties, and fairs. Both event organizers and event vendors must obtain permits and/or licenses to be in compliance with city regulations. Each vendor handling food of any type must be individually approved by the Health Department and Department of Licenses & Inspections prior to selling goods to the public. Event organizers and all vendors must also have a Commercial Activity License - <http://tinyurl.com/phila-cal>.

The following guide outlines the compliance process for event sponsors/organizers and event vendors. It is important for event sponsors to familiarize themselves with all requirements to ensure that all participants are in compliance with city regulations. Contact information is at the end of the article if you have any additional questions.

Guide for Special Event Sponsors and Organizers

OFFICE OF SPECIAL EVENTS:

The Office of Special Events in the Managing Director's Office coordinates interdepartmentally and externally to encourage cooperation and collaboration around the city's special events. This office should be the first point of contact for organizers of special events that involve food, police, public streets or any other city department. As a first step, visit the Office of Special Events website (<http://www.phila.gov/mdo/Permits.html>) and submit the Special Event Application (http://www.phila.gov/mdo/pdfs/special_Event_Application.pdf) **at least 90 business days prior to the event**. If there will be food or beverage vending, sampling, or giveaways, you should also begin the approval process with the Health Department's Office of Food Protection at the same time (see below).

HEALTH DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF FOOD PROTECTION:

As the event sponsor, you share joint responsibility for food handling compliance with the vendors that participate in the event. Read the full description of regulations governing food establishments - http://www.phila.gov/health/pdfs/Food_Regulations.pdf. Event sponsors must arrange for support services to ensure proper food vendor operation, such as arranging for on-site availability of water, ice, refrigeration units, vending unit structures, waste disposal, cooking oil recycling or other necessary equipment to ensure successful food service for the event.

An event sponsor works directly with the Office of Food Protection (OFP) to facilitate the required approvals for the event. Contact the OFP as early as possible with the dates for the event and any questions about the process. An event sponsor can request a representative from the OFP to attend a meeting of event vendors to provide instructions and answer questions about the application process. This service depends on availability of the staff and can be requested by emailing the Sanitarian Supervisor Dawn Kiesewetter (Dawn.Kiesewetter@phila.gov) or Program Manager, George Van Note (George.VanNote@phila.gov) no less than sixty business days prior to the event.

The sponsor of a special event must complete and submit the following to the Office of Food Protection at least **30 business days prior to the date of the event**:

1. A Special Event Sponsor Application - [http://www.phila.gov/health/pdfs/Sponsor%20Special%20Event%20App%202012\[1\].pdf](http://www.phila.gov/health/pdfs/Sponsor%20Special%20Event%20App%202012[1].pdf)
2. A \$78.00 sponsor fee paid by money order or cashier's check made out to "Philadelphia Health Dept. – E.H.S."
3. A list of all event food operations, along with a plot plan showing the proposed location of each food operation.
4. Along with the list of vendors, the sponsor must submit a Temporary Special Event Food Operation Application - http://www.phila.gov/health/pdfs/Temporary_SpEvent.pdf and fees on behalf of **each** food operator/vendor participating in the event. These items should be submitted in one complete package at least 30 business days prior to the event. This application is a prerequisite to applying for the necessary food licenses from the Department of Licenses and Inspections.

Once the required information is reviewed and approved, the Health Department will issue the following for each approved vendor:

1. "Special Event Food Service Operation Eligibility Certificate" – this is proof that their operation has been approved by the department and should be displayed during the event.
2. "License Eligibility Report" – this document is the prerequisite to obtaining the Temporary Food License from the Department of Licenses & Inspections.

The event sponsor can pick up these documents for all vendors as a package from the Office of Food Protection, take them as a package to the Department of Licenses and Inspections to obtain the Temporary Food Licenses, and then distribute the certificates and licenses to the vendors.

On the day of the event, the Health Department must inspect each food vendor prior to the start of the food handling. Inspection costs incurred by the Health Department will be billed to the event sponsor through the Office of Special Events along with other event costs.

LICENSES & INSPECTIONS:

1. Commercial Activity License (formerly Business Privilege License) - <http://tinyurl.com/phila-cal>
Special Event Sponsors are required to obtain a Commercial Activity License unless they are registered with the Revenue Department as a nonprofit.

2. Farmer's Market License

This license is required of any person who organizes, manages and operates a farmers' market where growers and producers of horticultural, agricultural, baked goods or handmade products sell those products directly to the public on designated days and times in a designated Farmers' Market. The application is available on the Public Services Concourse of the Municipal Services Building.

3. Amusement License - <https://business.phila.gov/Documents/Licenses/amusement.pdf>

This form is required to obtain a license to operate a place of amusement. This includes but is not limited to a street fair or outdoor festival. Within this license are the sub categories of Amusement (annual), Amusement (device), Amusement (permit), Amusement (vehicular), Carnival, and Circus.

Guide for Vendors at Special Events

FOOD VENDORS

Each vendor selling, providing samples, or providing giveaways of food or beverages of any type must be individually approved by the Health Department, Office of Food Protection. Food Vendors must go through the special event sponsor to participate in an event. The event sponsor can provide information regarding deadlines, fees, or requirements for event participation. Any vendor application submitted to the Office of Food Protection requires the event sponsor's approval and signature.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT – Types of Food Vendors

1. Temporary Special Event Vendor - http://www.phila.gov/health/pdfs/Temporary_SpEvent.pdf

Fees: \$48 to \$150+ based on square footage of operation

The Temporary Food Operation Application is for a food handling operation conducting NO more than 3 events or celebrations in a calendar year. Participants are required to reapply for each event.

Participants who wish to operate at more than 3 events/celebrations within a year will be required to obtain a permanent license and meet permanent operation standards.

2. Permanent Special Event Vendor - http://www.phila.gov/health/pdfs/PermSpecial_Event.pdf

Fees: \$150

The Permanent Special Event Food Vendor Application is for operators who wish to operate as a Special Event vendor at 3 or more events within a calendar year. Applications must be submitted annually for approval. A Permanent Special Event Vendor must have food safety certification and commercial grade equipment.

3. Mobile Vendor

A mobile vendor can participate in a special event without applying as a Temporary Special Event Vendor if the mobile vendor is operating exactly as approved by the Office of Food Protection under their "Retail Food Non-Permanent Location" License. Any changes to operations or menu require an application as a Temporary Special Event Vendor. All mobile vendors participating in special events should go through the special event sponsor and make sure all licenses are current or renewed by the date of the event.

4. Restaurant/Bar

To participate in a special event, a restaurant or bar will need to submit a Temporary Special Event Vendor application (http://www.phila.gov/health/pdfs/Temporary_SpEvent.pdf) for any cooking, preparing, displaying, or storing of food outside of the restaurant's facility approved by the Office of Food Protection. The only change to operations that does not require a Temporary Special Event Vendor application and license is extending the dining area outside of the building for the special event. Please note, offering a temporary extended dining area may require approvals from the Streets Department, Right of Way Unit, 940 Municipal Services Building, Philadelphia, PA 19102, 215.686.5501.

DEPARTMENT OF LICENSES AND INSPECTIONS

Food and beverage vendors must get approval from the Health Department before applying for licenses through the Department of Licenses and Inspections. When approved, the Health Department issues a License Eligibility Report that must be taken to the Department of Licenses and Inspections within 5 business days to apply for necessary licenses. Temporary Food Vendors should go through an event sponsor for these approvals.

Vendors that are not selling food or beverages should go directly to the Department of Licenses and Inspections to apply for the required licenses. All vendors are required to have a Business Privilege License as a prerequisite to all other licenses. Here are the licenses most common to vendors.

Commercial Activity License (formerly Business Privilege License), Fee: \$300 Lifetime, (\$50 Annual)

Any business operating in the City of Philadelphia must apply for a Commercial Activity License and tax account number prior to all other licenses. <http://tinyurl.com/phila-cal>

Food Establishment, Retail Non-Permanent Location, Fee: \$150

This license is required to operate a retail food establishment that is not permanent. This includes vehicles, movable stands, carts, etc.

<https://business.phila.gov/Documents/Licenses/food.pdf>

Temporary Food License, Fee: \$150

This license is required for one day food sales at an event. (Example: festival, block party, fair)

<https://business.phila.gov/Documents/Licenses/food.pdf>

Pushcart Vendor License, Fee: \$300

This license required of those who offer merchandise for sale from a wagon, handcart, pushcart or stand. A license is required for any period from one day to one year. Food Establishment, Retail Non-Permanent Location is also required if food will be sold.

<http://tinyurl.com/phila-pushcartvendor>

Motor Vehicle Vendor License, Fee: \$300

This license is required to offer goods for sale from a wagon, vehicle or conveyance. A license is required for any period from one day to one year. Food Establishment, Retail Non-Permanent Location is also required if food will be sold.

<http://tinyurl.com/phila-motorvehiclevendor>

Scales License, Fee \$25

This license is required for the commercial use of a weighing or measuring device. There are four categories of scales. One license is issued for all scales at a location.

https://business.phila.gov/Documents/Licenses/scales_and_scanners.pdf

Contacts:

Managing Director's Office

Office of Special Events

Phone: 215-686-3496

www.phila.gov/mdo/Permits.html

Health Department

Office of Food Protection

321 University Avenue, 2nd floor

Philadelphia, PA 19104

<http://www.phila.gov/health/Environment/FoodProtection.html>

Phone: 215-685-7495

Walk-in Hours:

Monday through Friday, 9 am to 4 pm

Department of Licenses and Inspections

License Issuance Unit - PSC

1401 John F. Kennedy Boulevard

Concourse Level

Philadelphia, PA 19102

www.phila.gov/li

Phone: 311 or (215) 686-8686

Hours: Monday – Friday, 8:00am- 3:30pm

(Except for the last Wednesday of each month when the hours are 8:00am- 12:00pm)

For assistance in navigating the process:

Commerce Department

Office of Business Services

www.phila.gov/business

Phone: 215-683-2100

Email: business@phila.gov