

Public health guidelines for food safety at special events

This guidance document is intended for special event organizers and food vendors participating in a special event.

This information has been compiled by Peel Public Health. It includes advice for special event organizers and vendors to prepare for safe special events in our community, subject to direction from the Province of Ontario as per [O. Reg. 493/17: FOOD PREMISES Regulation \(ontario.ca\)](#) under the [Health Protection and Promotion Act](#), and should not be construed as legal advice or to replace specific instructions that may be issued by Peel Public Health or the Province of Ontario.

The guidance noted in this document does not replace the requirement for organizers to ensure that all local and municipal permits or application processes for an event are completed as required.

When food, petting zoos and personal services are at public events, people may be at a greater risk of food borne illnesses and communicable diseases.

In order to reduce the risk, special event organizers must complete and submit a:

- [special event organizer application](#) at least **30 days** before the event.
- [special event food vendors application](#) at least **15 days** before the event.

Learn about other public health risks and how to prevent them:

- For personal services (such as tattoos, ear/body piercing, manicure/pedicure, etc.), see [Guidelines for personal services at special events](#).
- For petting zoos, see the [Ministry of Health's recommendations to prevent illness at petting zoos](#).

A Peel Public Health Inspector will review your application and will contact you to discuss safe food handling practices specific to the foods you are planning to serve. In the event of a foodborne illness, it will help if you demonstrate responsible precautionary measures.

Important:

- ✓ All food must be obtained from an approved source.
- ✓ All food must be prepared in an inspected and licensed food premises.
- ✓ Home prepared foods are not allowed, unless the home where food is prepared has been inspected by a public health inspector.
- ✓ Unpasteurized food products and/or beverages are not permitted. They cannot be sold or given away as samples.
- ✓ If a public health inspector finds contaminated food or temperatures in the danger zone, they will discard the food.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Peel Public Health at 905-791-7800, toll-free from Caledon at 905-584-2216, and ask to speak to a Public Health Inspector, or by email, peelhealth@peelregion.ca. You can also visit our [Special events page](#) for more information.

General food safety definitions

Cross contamination

Cross-contamination occurs when safe-to-eat food has become contaminated with pathogenic bacteria, chemicals, or unwanted items. Prepared food items can become unsafe when they come in contact with surfaces, utensils, hands, equipment, and other food items that are dirty.

Hazardous food

Hazardous food consists in whole or in part of milk or milk products, eggs, meat, poultry, fish, shellfish, or other products that can support the growth of disease-causing bacteria. Examples are deli meats, all raw meats, poultry, sausage, fish, eggs, cheese, cream-filled pastries, etc. meringue and other desserts containing dairy products. Hazardous food must be stored at 4°C or less.

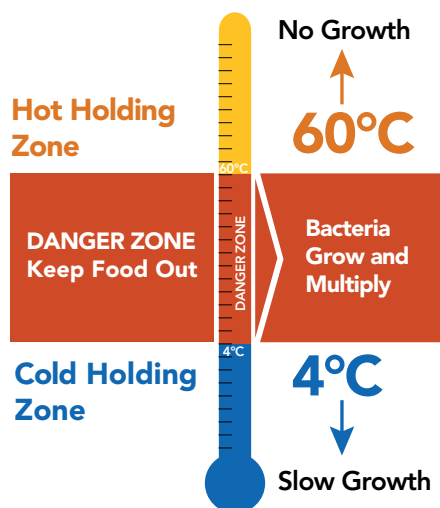
Fruits and vegetables, which are generally considered low risk foods, can still become contaminated through improper food handling or production processes. Be sure to follow safe food handling practices and thoroughly wash fresh fruits and vegetables before preparation.

Non-hazardous food

These foods do not normally support the growth of disease-causing organisms and do not usually need to be refrigerated. Examples are cookies, breads, cakes, potato chips, popcorn, and nuts.

Danger zone

The temperature zone where bacteria multiply is called the “danger zone”. This temperature range is between 4°C and 60°C (40°F to 140°F). If food items are kept within this temperature range, bacteria will multiply and double every 20 minutes. Therefore, it is important to keep the food cold or hot, and out of the danger zone to stop bacteria from growing. An accurate probe thermometer should be used to check the internal temperatures of hazardous food. As well, all temperature-controlled compartments, such as a cooler or hot holding unit must be equipped with a thermometer.



Food handlers

- There must be at least one certified food handler on site at all times at each vendor while the event is open to the public.
- Have photo identification and a copy of the certificate on site.
- For more details about food handler certification, see peelregion.ca
- If food handlers are ill with a cold, the flu, diarrhea, vomiting, or any communicable disease, or have sores/cuts, do not handle food. These food handlers are encouraged to stay home and not attend the event.
- Clean outerwear is required when handling food.
- Hair must be adequately confined while handling food.
- Glove use is not mandatory unless the food handler has a cut or burn. Gloves must be changed in between tasks. Hands must be washed before putting new gloves on and after taking off dirty gloves.

Smoking/Vaping

- Smoking/vaping is not permitted within the booth or wherever food is stored, prepared, and served. Food handlers must adhere to the [Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017](#) and Peel Region's [Outdoor No Smoking or No Vaping By-Law](#).

Booths

- Design your booth with food safety in mind. All food must be protected from contamination. **Ensure barriers are in place to ensure food is protected.** This includes sneeze guards, physical barriers, plastic wrap etc.
- If your event is outdoors, you must provide an overhead covering.

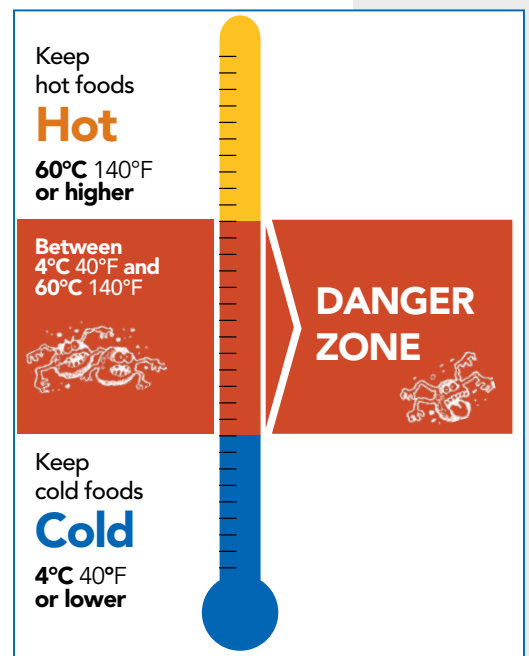
- Only food handlers may be permitted inside the food preparation area. Children and animals are not allowed in your booth. The more your food is exposed to people, the greater the likelihood of contamination.

Food source

- No home prepared food is allowed to be sold or distributed unless the home has been inspected by a public health department and proof has been obtained of the inspection. Your public health inspector may require and ask for receipts or proof of the premises in which the food was prepared. The public health inspector can ask for this information on site. If you are unable to show proof of the source of your food items, a public health inspector may force you to close your booth and/or discard any questionable food.
- Keep your menu simple, and keep hazardous foods (e.g., meat, eggs, dairy products, cut fruit and vegetables, etc.) to a minimum.
- Meat, poultry, dairy products, and eggs must be obtained from an approved inspected source and not directly from the farm. Selling unpasteurized milk and ungraded eggs is illegal.

Food safety








- Have and use an internal probe thermometer to check the internal temperatures of hazardous foods (meat, rice, eggs, dairy, etc).
- Hazardous foods should be cooked to at least 74°C, 165°F. See the [Cooking and reheating hazardous foods](#) poster.
- All food being stored, prepared, displayed or transported to the site must be protected against contamination from dust, insects and other sources. **Provide adequate protection by covering food entirely with a lid, food-grade plastic wrap, aluminum foil, sneeze guards and/ or other food grade material.**
- **Hazardous food must be transported, stored, and maintained at required temperatures. Cold foods must be kept at 4°C, 40°F or less, hot foods at 60°C, 140°F or more and frozen foods must be kept frozen.** See the [Safe food temperatures](#) poster.
- Many foodborne illnesses happen after people eat hazardous foods that have been left out at room temperature for 2 hours or more – in the “danger zone”.
- Hazardous food in the danger zone, from 4°C, 40°F to 60°C, 140°F, supports the growth of harmful bacteria which can multiply and cause food spoilage and foodborne illness.





- Thermometers must be provided in all coolers/ refrigerators and hot holding units to ensure safe food temperatures.
- Use cold or hot packs in thermal insulated containers, coolers, or mechanical refrigerator units to transport and store food at the event. This will ensure your food remains at the required temperatures during the duration of the event.
- **Store food in fully enclosed plastic containers which are insect, rodent and waterproof and have a tight-fitting lid.**
- **Plan for a possible power failure by having a backup generator and/or extra coolers, ice, sternos, chafing dishes etc.**
- See the [Temperatures for cooking and reheating hazardous foods](#) poster.

Temperatures for cooking and reheating hazardous foods

An accurate food thermometer is required to measure the internal temperature of hazardous foods. Internal temperature must reach the **minimum temperature listed for at least 15 seconds**.
The reheating process for hazardous foods should not take more than two hours.

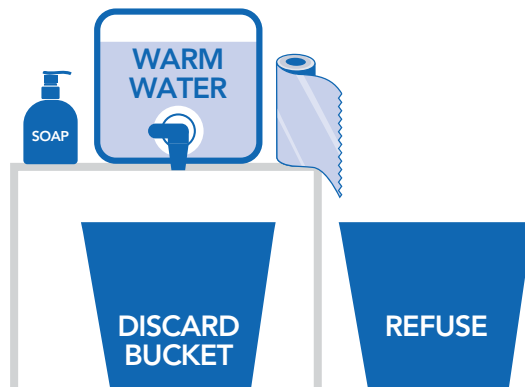
	Whole Poultry Cook: internal temperature of 82°C, 180°F Reheat: internal temperature of 74°C, 165°F
	Chicken pieces, ground poultry and all parts of ground meat that contain poultry Cook: internal temperature of 74°C, 165°F Reheat: internal temperature of 74°C, 165°F
	Food mixtures containing poultry, eggs, meat, fish or other hazardous foods Cook: internal temperature of 74°C, 165°F in all parts of the mixture Reheat: internal temperature of 74°C, 165°F in all parts of the mixture
	Pork and pork products Cook: internal temperature of 71°C, 160°F Reheat: internal temperature of 71°C, 160°F
	Ground meat, other than ground meat containing poultry (e.g., ground beef or pork) Cook: internal temperature of 71°C, 160°F Reheat: internal temperature of 71°C, 160°F
	Fish Cook: internal temperature of 70°C, 158°F Reheat: internal temperature of 70°C, 158°F
	Other hazardous foods such as roast beef, lamb or goat Cook: internal temperature of 60°C, 140°F Reheat: internal temperature of 60°C, 140°F

For more information visit peelregion.ca or call Peel Public Health 905-799-7700, Caledon residents call 905-584-2216, and ask to speak with a Public Health Inspector.

  Region of Peel
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Handwashing

- A designated handwashing station with running hot and cold potable water must be available for each booth.
- The handwashing station must be kept inside the booth, close to food handling and be accessible to food handlers while preparing food.
- If a proper sink with plumbing is not available, a large container of warm water with a spigot (e.g., a coffee urn with a spigot), a liquid soap dispenser, a roll of paper towels and a bucket to collect wastewater must be available for use while preparing and serving food.



- Dispose wastewater in a public toilet. Do not dispose it in a storm sewer, or in a river or creek. This water is untreated and goes directly into the creek, river and ultimately our drinking water source, the lake. This is against the law.

Any booth that does not have a proper handwashing station will be closed and not allowed to operate.

- The use of gloves does not replace handwashing.
- All food handlers must wash their hands with clean warm water and liquid soap before starting work, after each visit to the toilet, after smoking, handling garbage, handling cash and as frequently as possible to maintain clean hands.
- Hands must be thoroughly washed especially when they become contaminated by touching raw meat and poultry and before handling ready-to-eat food.

Alcohol based sanitizers are not permitted as a substitute for hand washing.

Cooking hazardous food

- Use a food thermometer to check internal cooking temperatures for hazardous foods (for a minimum of 15 seconds).
- The food must be cooked to the following minimum internal temperatures:

– Chicken (whole)	82°C, 180°F
– Chicken pieces (wings, legs, breast)	74°C, 165°F
– Pork	71°C, 160°F
– Hamburger	71°C, 160°F
– Fish	70°C, 158°F
– Other (e.g., lamb, steak)	60°C, 140°F



Re-heating previously cooked food

- **If you are bringing food to the event that has already been cooked, you must reheat the food to 74°C, 165°F before placing it in the chafing dish or other hot holding unit.**
- **When reheating, ensure proper equipment is on site. For example, a microwave, burner or BBQ.**
- Use an internal probe thermometer to ensure the proper temperature has been reached after being reheated.

Displaying and serving food

- Since people may cough, spit or touch your food (potentially causing a foodborne illness), have a physical barrier to protect your food.
- Cover your food at all times by using a lid, food-grade plastic wrap, aluminum foil, sneeze guards and/or other food grade material.
- Condiments must be offered in individual packages or dispensed from containers that protect the condiments from contamination (for example, squeeze bottle, pump).
- Hazardous foods must be held at a minimum of 60°C, 140°F.
- Food must be stored in their original containers or in food grade containers. Cardboard boxes, garbage bags, reused plastic buckets or pails are not acceptable.
- Food and related items such as cutting boards and serving utensils should not be stored directly on the floor or ground.
- Do not mix old food with new food when replenishing service pans or chafing dishes.

Food handling

- Use separate worktables and/or cutting boards to cut raw and ready-to-eat foods to prevent cross-contamination.
- Use utensils (e.g., tongs, ladles, forks, spoons) to minimize direct contact with food.
- When gloves are used, they must be changed in between tasks and hands must be washed before putting on a new pair and after taking off a dirty pair. Washing gloves is not acceptable.
- Gloves are single use only. Once you take them off, they must be put into the garbage and not be used again.
- Ensure that proper hand washing procedure is followed (see the [Handwashing](#) poster).

Food utensils and equipment

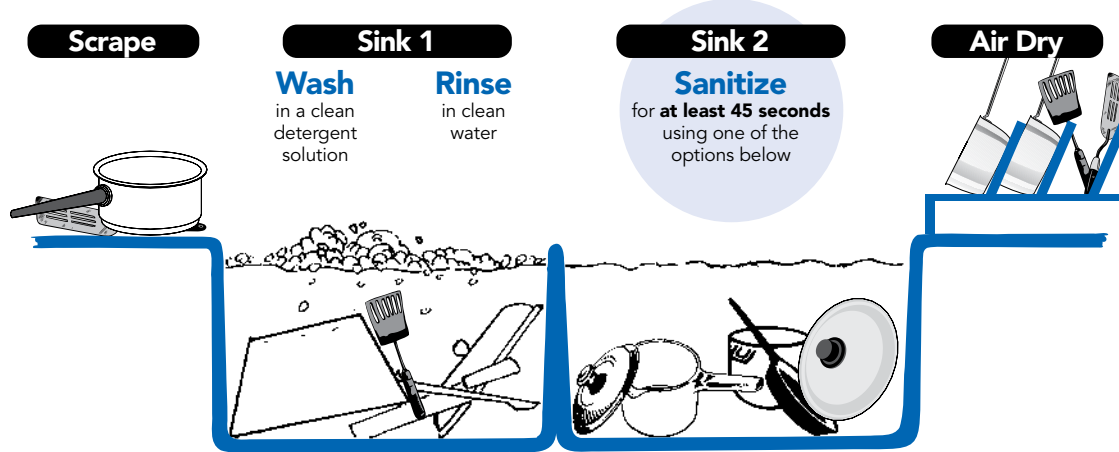
Cleaning and sanitizing

- Where only serving utensils are used, a [two-compartment sink](#) is required. Equipment is to be washed and rinsed in the first sink and sanitized in the second. See next page or access the above link for the poster.



Cleaning and Sanitizing in 2 sinks

Instructions for pots, pans and cooking / preparation utensils



Choose one of these ways to sanitize in Sink 2:

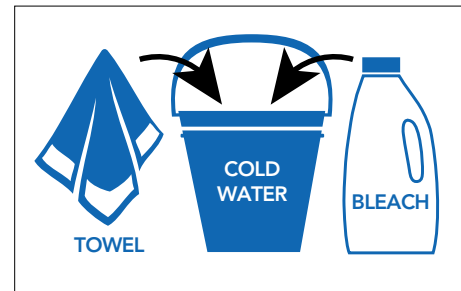
- Use clean hot water at least **77°C, 170°F**, or
- Use clean warm water mixed with a sanitizer such as 5.25% chlorine, 100 parts per million (ppm); quaternary ammonium (200 ppm) or iodine, 25 ppm.

- If a 2-compartment sink is not available for washing and sanitizing utensils (spoons, tongs, ladles, ice cream scoops), have a sufficient number of clean back-up utensils in case the original utensils get contaminated. Do not use utensils that have fallen on the ground.
- Where multi-use utensils (i.e., reusable dishes served to patrons) are used, a 3-compartment sink is needed. Utensils are to be washed in the first sink, rinsed in the second sink with clean water, and sanitized in the third sink.
- A sanitizing solution of 100ppm chlorine bleach (2 ml, half a teaspoon of chlorine per 1L water, 4.23 cups), 200ppm quaternary ammonium or 25ppm iodine is needed. Immerse utensils for at least 45 seconds. Air dry or wipe dry with a disposable towel.
- Change the wash, rinse and sanitizer water frequently. Use sanitizer test strips to check sanitizer concentration.
- Other sanitizers may be used if approved by Peel Public Health. Follow the manufacturers' instructions, with the sanitizer having the proper concentration.
- Ensure all containers (bucket/spray bottle) of soap or sanitizer solutions are properly labelled and kept away from food.
- Water must be from an approved safe supply.

- You may use tubs or basins as a temporary method if sinks are not available during the event. Consult with your public health inspector before incorporating this temporary method.
- Dispose of wastewater in a sanitary manner. Organizers must ensure there is an area for proper disposal of wastewater from hand wash basins and cleaning equipment sinks.
- Single service eating utensils such as plastic knives, forks, spoons, paper plates and cups should be provided.

Food contact surfaces

- Wiping cloths or sponges for cleaning and sanitizing food contact surfaces must be stored in a sanitizing solution between uses. A sanitizing solution of 100ppm chlorine bleach (2 ml, half a teaspoon of chlorine per 1L water, 4.23 cups), 200ppm quaternary ammonium or 25ppm iodine is needed.
- A sanitizer in spray form or a sanitizing bucket must always be available to sanitize work surface areas throughout the time of the event. During an inspection, an inspector will check to see if you have sanitizer. They will also check the sanitizer's concentration levels.



Water source

- All water used throughout the event, including water used for hand washing, preparation of foods, cleaning and making ice, must be potable/drinkable and from an approved source. Accepted supplies are a municipal water source or commercially bottled water.
- Potable (safe) water under pressure or gravity fed must be used, with sufficient supply for hand washing, food preparation and equipment cleaning the entire time that the event is operating.
- When a sink or hand wash basin is not available, a clean water container must be used (e.g., plastic jug with spigot).

Ice

- All ice must be made from potable (safe) water and/or from an approved source.
- Ice must be transported, stored and handled in a sanitary manner.
- Ice used in coolers to keep items cold must not be used in beverages or other foods.
- Ice must be stored in closed containers or bags to prevent contamination.

- Tongs and scoops used to dispense ice must not be stored directly inside the ice container. Store them in a clean container beside the ice.
- Never let your hands come into direct contact with ice.
- Ice is considered a ready-to-eat food product and can become contaminated with bacteria and viruses which may cause food-borne illness.

Health and Hygiene

- If you are sick, do NOT work with food.
- If you have a fever, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, or jaundice (yellowing of the skin) or if you have open sores or infected cuts on your hands, you must not handle, prepare or serve food. Hands can be protected from minor cuts with gloves.
- Clean outerwear is required.
- Hair restraints (e.g., hairnet or cap) must be worn when handling food.
- Smoking is not permitted in your food preparation area at any time.

Waste Disposal and Washroom Facilities

- Garbage is to be stored in bins of durable, water/rodent proof material and covered with a tight-fitting lid.
- Grease from fryers must be stored in a covered, non-flammable and durable container.
- Wastewater shall be stored in a covered, durable container.
- All wastes must be disposed of in an approved and sanitary manner.
- Organizer must ensure there is a plan for waste disposal and washroom facilities.

Organizer:

- Washroom facilities for use by the public shall be provided in sufficient numbers, conveniently located, and maintained in a sanitary manner.
- Organizers should also consider the availability of accessible washrooms.
- Handwashing stations must have a constant supply of hot and cold or warm potable water, liquid soap in a dispenser, and single use paper towels during the event.
- It is not adequate to only have hand sanitizer at washroom facilities

Mobile food trucks/Street food vending carts

- Mobile food trucks/carts with a fixed address in Peel are required to have one inspection prior to operating their vehicle.
- Public health inspectors check for all the same food safety features in a mobile food truck as they would in a permanent facility. Water supplies, temperature control, dishwashing, prevention of contamination and many other food safety measures are monitored by public health inspectors. Mobile food trucks also require an annual inspection and licencing.
- If food prep happens outside of the food truck, a handwashing sink is required in that area as well. Hot and cold running water for handwashing, cleaning and sanitizing is necessary.

These are the specific requirements for street food vending carts:

- Customers must use only single use items such as disposable forks, knives and spoons.
- Overhead canopy: While in operation, must be completely covered by an overhead canopy of corrosion-resistant, non-absorbent and readily cleanable material.
- Clean water: Must have adequate clean water to allow for sanitary operation and hand washing. The water supply tank must be equipped with an easily readable gauge for determining the water level in the tank.
- Waste water: Must have a waste water holding tank with an easily readable gauge to collect waste generated during the operation of the street food vending cart.

Municipal permits

Check with your local municipality for license and/or permit requirements for your special event. They will have specific requirements for fire prevention and wastewater/garbage collection.

[City of Mississauga](#)

[City of Brampton](#)

[Town of Caledon](#)

Peel Public Health contact information

For more information about food safety and personal services, call Peel Public Health at 905-799-7700, toll-free from Caledon at 905-584-2216, and ask to speak to a public health inspector, or by email, peelhealth@peelregion.ca.

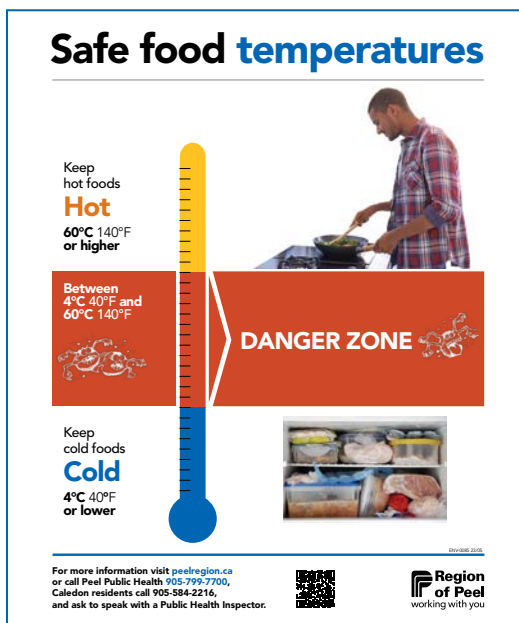
Additional resources

Handwashing poster



Note: this poster may be posted at food vendor booths. Available to [print](#).

Keep food at a safe temperature poster



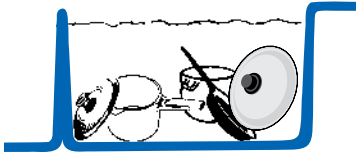
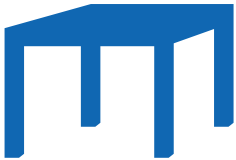




[Keep food at a safe temperature](#) poster. Available to print.

How to mix a bleach (chlorine) solution for sanitizing

You will need:

- ordinary 5.25% household bleach
- measuring spoon for teaspoon
- measuring cup
- spray bottle labelled "bleach sanitizer"


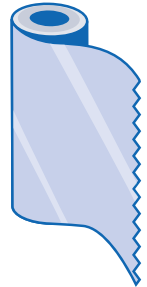



Sanitizing	How to mix	Solution strength
<p>Utensils e.g. cutting boards, knives, cooking utensils</p> 	<p>Mix 2 ml (½ tsp) of bleach with 1 litre (4 cups) of water. After cleaning with soap and water, immerse utensil in solution for 45 seconds.</p> 	<p>100 ppm chlorine solution</p> 
<p>Large food contact surfaces e.g. coolers, tables</p> 	<p>Mix 2 ml (½ tsp) of bleach with 1 litre (4 cups) of water.</p> 	<p>100 ppm chlorine solution</p> 

Remember:

- Make a new sanitizing solution at the start of your event.
- Mix with clean cold water.
- Do NOT mix bleach with detergent.
- Use chlorine test strips to check the strength of your solution.
- Throw away sanitizing solution every 3 hours or as needed. The strength of the solution will be weaker at the end of the day.

Temporary handwashing station

You will need:

				
Liquid soap	Paper towels	Container with spigot	Table	Bucket for waste water

The temporary handwashing station shall consist of, at least, a container with spigot that provides a continuous flow of running water, liquid soap, paper towels, and a bucket to collect wastewater. There must be potable water and supplies at all times at the handwashing station and the wastewater is to be discarded as often as necessary.

Any booth that does not have a proper handwashing station will be closed and not allowed to operate.

Hand sanitizers do not replace the need for a temporary handwashing station.



Special events checklist

Food vendor checklist

Food handlers

- ☐ food handler certificate(s) available for review by public health inspector
- ☐ hair restraints
- ☐ aprons

Handwashing station

- ☐ warm and safe water supply
- ☐ water container with dispensing valve
- ☐ liquid soap
- ☐ paper towel
- ☐ wastewater container

Food safety management

- ☐ probe thermometer
- ☐ thermometer for cooler/hot holding units
- ☐ ice/ice packs
- ☐ cooler unit
- ☐ food storage container and coverings

Utensils and equipment

- ☐ secure booth (in good repair)
- ☐ overhead canopy
- ☐ tables/shelves/racks
- ☐ disposable eating utensils
- ☐ 4 sets of wrapped cooking utensils
- ☐ cooking equipment

Waste disposal

- ☐ garbage bags/container
- ☐ wastewater container
- ☐ grease container

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