# Catering

FOOD SAFETY DURING PREPARATION, TRANSPORT AND SERVICE

## Licensing

Food catering means food that is prepared for service under contract for an event such as a reception, party, luncheon, conference, ceremony, or trade show. All caterers operating in Minnesota must operate in compliance with the Minnesota food code and other ordinances, such as zoning, building and liquor.

Food and beverage establishments in Minnesota are licensed by different agencies. The establishment's menu and location of operation determines which agency is responsible for plan review and licensing. To find out which agency is responsible, see the Licensing website. Contact the appropriate agency to discuss plan review and licensing requirements, and to obtain applications.

## Certification

Minnesota food code requires one Minnesota certified food protection manager (CFPM) in most food establishments. To find out more about CFPM requirements, training and certification see the Minnesota Certified Food Protection Manager (CFPM) website.

## Menu, food flow and equipment

Menu and food flow determine the type of equipment you are required to have. Menu changes may affect equipment requirements. Food flow includes all receiving, storage, preparation and serving steps.

Use food grade containers capable of maintaining food at safe temperatures and in a sanitary manner.

## Keeping food safe

A food establishment doing catering is responsible for maintaining control of and ensuring the safety of the food from preparation to service to the consumer. Protect food during storage, preparation, transportation, and serving to prevent cross-contamination and contamination by dust, insects or other sources. Keep equipment and vehicles clean.

When food is prepared for a catering event, the following five factors can increase the risk of a foodborne illness outbreak:

- Poor employee health and hygiene
- Improper cooking temperatures and times
- Food from unsafe sources
- Improper hot and cold holding temperatures and times
- Cross-contamination and contaminated equipment

Five effective control measures to reduce the risk of a foodborne illness outbreak are:

- Exclude ill employees, wash hands properly, and prevent bare hand contact with ready-to-eat food.
- Cook raw animal foods to the temperatures and times required in the Minnesota food code.
- Verify that all food is from approved sources, received at required temperatures and in good condition.
- Keep food out of the temperature danger zone (between 41°F and 135°F).
- Properly store food and wash, rinse, and sanitize food-contact surfaces.

The Food Business Fact Sheets website provides more information about Minnesota food code requirements, such as employee personal hygiene, temperature and time requirements for food, selling or serving locally grown produce in food facilities, cooling time/temperature control for safety food, and safe operation of a food establishment.

# Frequently asked questions

## Can more than one business operate out of the same location?

Yes. Any facility used for catering operations must meet standards appropriate to the menu and volume of food prepared in that kitchen. Each operator in a shared space must obtain a license to operate at that location.

## Can caterers cook and assemble food on site at contracted events?

Yes. Food may be cooked and assembled on site when control measures are followed to reduce the risk of foodborne illness. Each catering business is unique, and operators should discuss menu and food flow, volume and timing, equipment, cleaning and sanitizing, and utilities with their inspector or appropriate agency to determine specific requirements.

## Are there additional requirements a caterer needs to consider?

Yes. Caterers must meet safe operation requirements including water supply, sewage disposal, and utilities.

# Resources

Minnesota Department of Health Food Business Safety (www.health.state.mn.us/foodbizsafety)

Licensing (www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/food/license/index.html)

Minnesota Certified Food Protection Manager (CFPM) (www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/food/cfpm/index.html)

Food Business Fact Sheets (www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/food/fs.html)

Caterer's Permit with Alcohol, Minnesota Department of Public Safety (https://mn.gov/elicense/a-z/?id=1083-231125#/list/appId//filterType//filterValue//page/1/sort//order/)C

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JANUARY 2019

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