

ANDOVER HEALTH DIVISION FOOD PERMIT INFORMATION

Introduction

The Board of Health and Health Division are required by state regulation to ensure food safety in Andover. This document is intended to provide guidance to assist residents and groups in complying with those requirements. In any case, THE HEALTH DIVISION has the right to review and DENY MENU APPROVAL based on the best interests of the public.

Cooking for a few family members and friends is very different from cooking for the general public. When we prepare food for a larger number of persons, we increase the opportunity for something to go wrong. The general public expects that it will be protected from illness.

Food-borne illness is prevalent throughout the United States, and results in millions of hours in lost productivity, and sometimes can result in death. No one ever intends to make someone ill on purpose, yet it happens. It is our goal to prevent this through good planning, training, and enforcement. Compliance with the code assumes that we are doing everything possible to protect our friends and neighbors.

Bake Sales

Bake sales do not require a permit from the Board of Health. HOWEVER, the following guidelines are important:

- Bakers should prepackage items into separate baggies to keep the product fresh, and to limit bare hand contact with the food.
- If there are nuts of any kind in the product, it should be labeled clearly.
- Products with custards, raw egg products, or soft cheeses must never be sold as they require refrigeration.
- Products requiring heating or refrigeration are not allowed.

Classroom Parties

Birthday cakes, cupcakes, and other treats for classroom consumption do not need a permit, although they do require permission of the individual schools.

Sports Boosters

Booster Clubs selling food at sporting events MUST OBTAIN A PERMIT prior to selling. Prepackaged snacks are encouraged, and hot dogs and pizza (purchased from a pizza shop) are allowed. Homemade Chili is EXPRESSLY PROHIBITED. If you wish to sell anything else, you must work out of an approved and licensed Food Establishment (no home cooking), and there must be a Certified Food Handler (See below) in charge of the operation. You must submit a proposed menu along with a copy of the Serve Safe and Allergen Awareness Certificate for approval, and meet with an inspector prior to permit issuance.

Pot Luck Suppers

Provided that there is no admission price, Pot Luck Suppers are allowed for a small distinct group and do not require a permit. Pot Luck Suppers are when each participant brings a dish to share with the others.

Organizers are advised that the meal should be served at the beginning of the function, and that food left out longer than two hours should be discarded. Keep hot foods hot using crock pots and warming trays, keep cold foods cold using ice baths and coolers.

Church (Fellowship) Meals

State Regulations regarding food service require that so-called “Fellowship” or fundraising meals be licensed by the Board of Health. There are two ways to handle it:

1. License the hosting house of worship annually.
2. Issue one day temporary licenses, up to 14 in one year.

While not required, both options work best and are safest when a Certified Food Handler (See below) is designated. Food, with the exception of baked deserts, may only be prepared in a licensed kitchen (not at home).

Block Parties

Block Parties occur when neighborhoods get together to celebrate as neighbors. The typical party results in cooking being done by the residents. A permit is not required for this, provided that no entrance fee is charged (shared costs do not constitute an entrance fee) and that it is not open to the general public.

Catered Events

Events catered by a licensed caterer do not require any special permit, but the caterer is required to register with the Health Division. By state regulation, catering must be based from a licensed facility (not from a home). To register, the Caterer must complete a Temporary Food Service Application available from the Health Division, file a copy of their Catering Permit, Serve Safe Certificate, and Allergen Awareness Certificate for the onsite food manager.

Catering From Your Home

Catering from your home is EXPRESSLY PROHIBITED by the code. The code sets standards for food safety, and residential cooking does not meet those standards.

Business Open Houses

Many businesses host open houses, or occasionally provide snacks for their patrons. Allowing fresh fruit or cheese platters prepared at licensed restaurants does not require a permit from the Board of Health. If alcohol is to be served, it is assumed that more substantial food options will be served, and either a temporary food permit or a catering registration must be filed with the Board of Health. When a permit is required, a Certified Food Handler must be designated along with an Allergen Awareness Certificate.

Group Cooking Demonstrations

Group Cooking Demonstrations do not require a permit. These are not intended to feed a meal to participants, but instead to show how certain meals are prepared. These demonstrations are not to provide complete meals or meals to go.

Personal Chefs

Personal Chefs are persons hired to prepare a meal in the client's home using the client's kitchen equipment. They are not licensed by the Health Division.

Prepared Meals

Prepared meals for sale may only be prepared in a facility licensed by the Board of Health. This may not occur out of a residential kitchen.

Pizza Parties

Pizza purchased through licensed establishments may be served without a permit provided no fee is charged and the intended audience is limited. Organizers are advised that gloves or another barrier to bare hand contact should be worn during serving, and that leftovers should be discarded after 2 hours.

Ice Cream Socials

These events do not require a permit, provided that no entrance fee is charged and that the intended audience is limited (for example, open only to a school, Scouts, etc...). Single-use spoons and containers must be used.

Home Canning

Under no circumstances will home canned foods be sold.

Farmers Markets

The sale of whole, uncut produce by the persons who grew it does not require a permit. The sale of cut fruit and produce or any other processed food requires a permit and may require special handling considerations.

Events on Municipal Property

All events in the Town House, Schools, Town Common, and other municipally owned properties must be licensed by the Board of Health. This includes PTO dinners, cast parties, and scouting dinners. In order to be licensed, a Certified Food Handler (see below) must be identified and must take responsibility for ensuring food is prepared, handled, and served properly. This is a Town Policy and is intended to protect all participants from illness and the Town from potential liability. Events being held in the schools may have the opportunity to employ kitchen staff holding the required certification. Pizza parties and ice cream socials are exempt.

Certified Food Handler and Allergen Awareness Certificate:

A Certified Food Handler is a person who has completed training in food safety, and holds a certificate stating so from a private vendor. The generally accepted certifications include ServeSafe programs, and they are constantly being offered in the area. Information on companies providing training programs is available from the Health Division.

PERMITS AT A GLANCE – SEE NARRATIVE FOR DETAILS

	<u>Permit Required</u>	<u>Food Handler & Allergen Required</u>	<u>Special Notes</u>
Bake Sales	N	N	No foods needing refrigeration; wrapped individually; label products with nuts.
Classroom Parties	N	N	Cakes and treats only; requires permission of school
Sports Boosters	Y	Depends	Requires permit; anything more than prepackaged foods, hot dogs, & pizzas requires Certified Food handler.
Pot Luck Suppers	N	N	Keep hot food hot, cold foods cold, discard leftovers after two hours.
Church Meals	Y	N	Certified Food Handler Encouraged
Block Parties	N	N	Not open to general public; no admission price.
Catered Events	N	Y	Catering Registration is required.
Catering From Home	NOT ALLOWED		
Business Open Houses	N*	N*	Light finger foods such as donuts or prepared fruit and cheese plates are OK; *more substantial food requires permit and certified person.*
Group Cooking Demonstrations	N	N	
Personal Chefs	N	N	
Prepared Meals	Y	Y	
Pizza Parties	N	N	No fee charged; limited participants; use gloves for serving; discard leftovers after 2 hours.
Ice Cream Socials	N	N	No fee charged; limited participants; use gloves for serving; discard leftovers after 2 hours.
Home Canning	NOT ALLOWED		
Farmers Markets	N	N	Whole, uncut produce only; prepared foods require permit and certified person.
Events on Municipal Property	Y	Y	