



Spokane Regional Health District’s (SRHD) Food Safety program works with representatives from school clubs, organizations, and special events to ensure food offered to the public is prepared and served as safely as possible. In fact, any person wishing to serve or distribute food to the public in Spokane County must obtain approval or a permit to operate issued by SRHD, whether or not there is a charge for the food (Chapter 246-215 WAC).

In order to allow us ample time to work with the applicant and process the permits, permit applications must be submitted at least fourteen days prior to the projected date of opening. If this doesn’t occur, a penalty fee of 100% of the permit fee will be assessed.

Examples of clubs, organizations, and events that may need a permit:

- DECA clubs
- Concession stands
- Fundraisers
- Coffee carts

Not sure?

Call 324-1560, ext. 2 and ask!

The type of food you intend to serve and the proposed preparation steps will determine whether or not a permit is required and the steps involved. The different permit categories, requirements and steps you need to take to obtain approval are described below and in the Frequently Asked Questions on the next page.

Food Service Category	Description of Food Service Category	Steps to Obtain a Permit/Approval
Exempt from Rules	Foods that are offered to the general public are limited to exempt food items. Examples include: bagged chips, candy, bottled pop and bottled water. A complete list can be found on the Exempt from Rules handout: https://srhd.org/media/documents/ExemptfromRulesJune20161.pdf	No permit is required. You are not required to contact the Food Safety program, however, food safety tips and resources can be found here: https://srhd.org/programs-and-services/food-establishment-permits/regulations-resources
Exempt from Permit with Local (SRHD) Approval	Foods that are offered to the general public are limited to a preset list of food items. Examples include: popcorn, kettle corn, cotton candy, and pre-packaged ice cream bars. A complete list can be found on the Exempt from Permit page: https://srhd.org/programs-and-services/temporary-food-establishment-permits/exemptions	An “Exempt from Permit with Local Approval” application and \$25.00 application fee are required. The application* can be found here: https://srhd.org/media/documents/Application-for-Exemption-from-Permit.pdf
Temporary Food Establishment	Operates at a fixed location, with a fixed menu, for not more than twenty-one consecutive days in conjunction with a single event or celebration, such as a fair or festival; or operating not more than three days a week at a fixed location, with a fixed menu, in conjunction with an approved, recurring, organized event, such as a farmer’s market. Example menu items include: hot dogs and hamburgers.	A permit is required. You must submit a TFE application*, pay permit fee (ranging from \$100 to \$480, depending on foods served and number of days operating) and complete an interview with Food Program staff. The application can be found in the blue side bar here: https://srhd.org/media/documents/TFE-Application.pdf
Annual Permit	A fixed establishment such as a concession stand, espresso bar, or student store, unless their menu is limited to exempt items.	A permit is required. A plan review and pre-opening inspection are required prior to operating. Information on the plan review process* and associated fees can be found at: https://srhd.org/programs-and-services/food-establishment-permits
Existing Permit	A permanent facility with an annual permit that is already inspected by SRHD Food Safety program, for example the school cafeteria.	Check with your school cafeteria and SRHD to determine if existing permit can cover your event. You must submit information* to SRHD. See FAQ’s.

*Note: permit applications and fee must be submitted at least 14 days prior to the event or penalty fee of 100% of the permit fee will be assessed.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I use the school cafeteria's permit for my event?

Events may be covered under the existing school cafeteria permit if the food is produced out of the cafeteria kitchen and the school provides written authorization of approval for the group to operate. You will be required to submit menu/preparation steps if not already an approved menu item.

Do we need a permit if we are going to be having a bake sale?

That will depend on the foods you plan on serving at the bake sale. If you plan to serve non-potentially hazardous baked goods** (examples include: cookies, cakes, and breads that don't require refrigeration) prepared and wrapped in a sanitary manner for sale or service by your school, this will qualify as "Exempt from Rules" and no permit is required. You will however, be required to inform the consumer by posting a clearly visible placard at the sales or service location stating that the foods are prepared in a kitchen that is not inspected by the regulatory authority (SRHD). When in doubt contact the Food Safety program at 324-1560, ext. 2 and someone will be able to assist you.

**Note: a non-potentially hazardous food is one that does not need to be held hot or cold in order to be safe to eat. A chocolate chip cookie for example, is non-potentially hazardous; however, a cream pie needs refrigeration so does not meet the definition.

Do we need a permit if we are having a private event?

No, if your event/ gathering falls under the definition of a private event. A private event is limited to members and guests of members of a family, organization, or club, where the event is not open to the general public and where food is provided without compensation. Examples of private events include Scout meetings or student club meetings where only students and their family members are invited and there is no charge for the food. If an event is advertised to the general public or if there is a charge for the food, it is *not* considered a private event

Do we need to have a permit if we are having a potluck at school?

No, if the people attending the potluck are expected to bring food to share and there is no charge for any food or beverage provided at the event.

Do we need to have a permit if we will be having a tailgate BBQ before our homecoming football game?

Yes, if the food will be available to the general public and/or there is a charge for the food. Applications must be submitted at least 14 days prior to the event or a double permit fee will be required. Contact the Food Safety program at 324-1560, ext. 2 to determine the permit category you will need.

Do we need a permit for birthday parties in classrooms?

No, a permit is not required, as long as this meets the definition of a private event (see FAQ question regarding the definition of private events). Please follow school protocol for notification of parents regarding food allergens.

Does our home ec/consumer science class need to have a permit?

If the food that is prepared in the home ec/consumer science class is only for the students of that class, then no permit is required. If the home ec/consumer science students are making foods that will be sold or distributed to other students, then a permit MAY be required; contact the Food Safety program at 324-1560, ext. 2 to determine if a permit is required.

We are here to provide you with assistance and help your event go smoothly. For more information contact Spokane Regional Health District's Food Safety program at 324.1560, ext. 2, email with questions and concerns:

foodsafetyprogram@srhd.org or visit <https://srhd.org/programs-and-services/food-establishment-permits>.