



DO I NEED A FOOD PERMIT?

A Quick Guide for Food Vendors at Public Events

| Activity or Food Item | Permit Required? | Notes |
|---|------------------|--|
| Selling hot dogs, grilled items, salads, sandwiches, etc. | Yes | TCS (Time/Temperature Control for Safety) foods require full compliance |
| Offering food samples (ex. sliced fruit, sauces) | Yes | Any open/exposed food sampling requires a food permit |
| Operating a food truck or ice cream truck at an event | Yes | Must obtain a permit for each town |
| Serving food at a fundraiser | Yes | Food permit still required |
| Caterer serving food outside their base kitchen | Yes | Must notify LBOH of off-site service |
| Selling frozen or fresh beef/poultry | Depends | If unpackaged, portioned, or handles on site, then a food permit is required. If USDA labeled, pre-packaged, no on-site prep, and LBOH deems low risk, then no permit is required. |
| Selling whole, uncut fruits/vegetables only | No | Exempt unless cut or processed |
| Selling prepackaged, non-TCS foods (ex. candy, chips, bottled drinks) | No | Must remain unopened and shelf-stable |
| Selling unprocessed honey | No | Allowed if unprocessed, labeled, and sealed |
| Selling farm fresh eggs (stored ≤ 45°F) | No | Exempt if clean, properly stored and labeled |
| Potluck event for a non-profit or private group | No | Must disclose food/facilities at event are not inspected. See attached guidance. |
| Private, invite-only party (not open to the public) | No | Not considered a public food event |



- Selling raw milk or unpasteurized dairy is only allowed on certified farms per MDAR
- Additionally, applicable state laws allow vendors at Farmers Markets to sell three products that may not be sold at other temporary events: raw finfish, raw shellfish, and wine



SOURCE & DETAIL GUIDANCE VISIT:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/food-establishments-at-events-and-farmers-markets-questions-and-answers>

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/guidance-for-stakeholders-regarding-the-retail-food-code/download>



Potluck Events



SPONSORS

The event must be sponsored by a group of individuals or by a religious, charitable, or non-profit organization.



COST

No compensation may be provided for bringing food to the event. (i.e. paying for catering or take-out from a licensed food establishment).



ATTENDANCE

People must be gathered to share food at the event.



PROCEEDS

The event may not be conducted for commercial purposes but money may be collected to support religious, charitable, or non-profit organization.



INFORM GUEST

Participants at the event must be informed (using a sign or poster) that neither the food nor the facilities have been inspected by the State or by the Health Department



Source: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/potluck-events-advisory>