



COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE • COMMUNITY HEALTH AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN NO. 98-03A

DISTRICT ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DIVISION

CATERING GUIDELINES

WHAT IS A CATERING BUSINESS?

A catering business provides food for private events such as picnics, wedding receptions, and parties at a location other than a permitted restaurant. A catering business may not be run from a private residence. It may only operate through an approved food facility.

WHAT KIND OF PERMITS OR LICENSES DO I NEED?

Existing Health Permit Holder

If you already own and operate a restaurant or other type of food facility approved for food preparation, you may expand your operation to include catering with no additional fees or permit requirements. However, please review and discuss the operational aspects of your catering business such as equipment you intend to use, procedures for transportation, set up, and serving with your Environmental Health Specialist (EHS).

No Health Permit

If you do not have a restaurant or other similar food facility under permit with this Department then you will need to get a caterer permit. The following steps will apply to you:

1. Make an Appointment

Call for an appointment with an Environmental Health Specialist. It's important to make an appointment because they may not be available to help you when you come in. Once you make an appointment you can then sit down with an EHS to discuss the type of operations you want to run. The EHS can then advise you on the things that will be necessary to gain compliance.

2. Catering Agreement letter

You will need to bring a catering agreement letter (attached) with you when you meet with the specialist. A catering agreement letter establishes an arrangement between you and an approved food establishment stating that you (the caterer) have access to the kitchen and storage areas to prepare and store your food and utensils. Again, food operations out of a private residence are not allowed so operation out of an approved food facility is the only way you will gain approval.

3. Permit

Once you've met with an EHS and your catering agreement letter is approved you may fill out an application and submit the fees for your Environmental Health permit. The fee is renewed annually. Be sure to check with the cities you operate in for any business license fees that may be due.



COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE • COMMUNITY HEALTH AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

WHAT ARE THE OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR MY BUSINESS?

All food must be stored and prepared at the caterer's permitted food facility as stated in the catering agreement letter. Equipment and utensils must be washed, sanitized and stored at the restaurant as well. No food may be prepared or stored at the caterer's private residence or any other location that has not been approved by this Department.

All food workers must have valid Food Worker's Certificates issued by this Department. Riverside County Code 8.44 requires anyone whose job includes the handling of food, beverages or utensils be certified in safe food handling practices.

The caterer maintains control over the food at all times including periods of storage, preparation, transportation, and service. All foods must be adequately protected from contamination and all potentially hazardous food maintained at the proper temperature. Hot foods must remain at or above 135° F and cold foods at or below 41°F.

The catering delivery vehicle must be fully enclosed and maintained in a clean and sanitary condition. All unpackaged food must be stored in approved, food grade, tightly covered containers. Utensils must be covered, wrapped or otherwise protected from dust and contamination. **Catering vehicles are not approved for food preparation.**

Toilet and hand washing facilities with hot and cold running water must be available for food workers at each catering function. These facilities should be located within 200 feet of the food service area.

A sign in log sheet (attached) is to be maintained at your catering headquarters. Include the date, time, and event for which the caterer is using the facility.

All dirty equipment and utensils must be returned to the approved food establishment to be properly washed, sanitized, and stored.

For more information or to make an appointment, please contact your nearest office.

*Document available in an alternate format upon request

OFFICES AVAILABLE IN: RIVERSIDE, BLYTHE, CORONA, HEMET, INDIO, MURRIETA AND PALM SPRINGS

For more information call (888) 722-4234

Department Web Site – www.rivcoeh.org



COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE • COMMUNITY HEALTH AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

CATERING AGREEMENT LETTER

Name of Catering Operation: _____

Owner / Permittee: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Business Phone: _____

The following section is to be completed by the owner/operator of the permitted facility, which will be used as the headquarters for the catering business.

Name of food facility: _____

Environmental Health Permit: _____

Address of facility: _____

Business Phone: _____

Business Hours: _____

Days of the week approved for the caterer to use: _____

The above named caterer has my permission to use my health regulated business as stated above for the purpose of storing and preparing food and for cleaning and storing utensils.

I understand this agreement is between myself and the caterer, and that I shall notify the Department of Environmental Health, District Services Division, within 10 days of severance of this agreement.

I understand this agreement and declare the information above to be accurate and correct.

Signature _____

Date _____

NOTE – all food and food related items (i.e. utensils, pots, pans, bowls, etc.) must be stored at the catering headquarters. Tables, chairs and other non-food related decorations need not be maintained at this facility.

As representative of the department, I am familiar with the above-mentioned facility and consider at this time that this catering operation may be operated from it.

Signature of Department Representative _____

Date _____