

Project: Food Protection	Number: 97:2	Effective: March 6, 1997
Subject: Catering	Supersedes: New	Approved by: Larry Kirchner

- 1.0 **BACKGROUND:** Catering operations have been a concern for some time. Many of their activities take place at private events where we do not inspect. A number of foodborne illness outbreaks have been reported from catered events in this and other counties.
- 2.0 **PURPOSE:** To establish criteria for determining when a food establishment is a caterer, and criteria for inspection by this department.
- 3.0 **AUTHORITY:** Title 5 of the Code of the King County Board of Health (King County Food Code), Chapter 10.11 of the Seattle Municipal Code (Seattle Food Code) and 246-215 RCW (Washington State Food Code).
- 4.0 **DEFINITIONS:**
- 4.1 "Caterer" means any person operating a food service establishment that pursuant to a prior order or agreement prepares food, provides transportation for such food to other premises for consumption, and serves food, sets up a buffet for self-service or prepares food for immediate service, either as the primary function of the establishment or as an activity additional to another requiring a permit issued pursuant to this title.
- 4.2 "Food preparation" means thawing, cooking, cooling, heating, reheating, putting together, cutting, slicing, dividing, mixing, portioning, or packaging food for a consumer, except that trimming or cleaning of whole vegetables or fruits for display and sale shall not be considered food preparation.
- 5.0 **POLICY:**
- 5.1 To be considered a caterer, the establishment must have a contract or agreement with a customer for a **predetermined, finite** amount of food or for food for a **predetermined, finite** number of persons. The event or facility at which the food is served may be either public or private (see Special Events policy 90.2). The agreement may be for a one time only meal or for daily service.
- 5.2 When the event or facility is determined to be private, the caterer may either leave the food for the customer to display and serve, or may themselves display and serve the food, including finishing preparation and cooking for immediate service.
- 5.3 When the event or facility is determined to be public the caterer must maintain control of the food until it reaches the final consumer unless the establishment or site where service takes place is permitted for the type of food service being done.

- 5.4 To be considered a caterer, food preparation must take place prior to the event and at a location different from the event.
- 5.5 A person who prepares food at a private event or facility, but does no food preparation prior to the event other than purchasing the foods will not be considered to be a caterer. Food must be taken directly from where it is purchased to the event. Any interim storage will require a catering permit.
- 5.6 Delivery of food from a licensed food service establishment to a customer by prior order (e.g., pizza delivery) will not be considered to be catering when such delivery reaches the customer within 30 minutes from the time of preparation.
- 5.7 If catering is being done by a licensed food service establishment, no additional permit will be required. The catering menu must not exceed the capacity of the establishment nor may the menu be more extensive than allowed under that permit. For example, an espresso cart may cater espresso, but not provide full service meals with a 1E1 permit.

## 6.0 PROCEDURES:

- 6.1 During inspections of food service establishments that do catering as an additional function, the EHS will discuss the catering operations. At least one inspection per year will be done while preparation for catered events is taking place.
- 6.2 Free standing caterers preparing potentially hazardous foods will be inspected four times per year during times when preparation is taking place. One inspection will be an educational visit.
- 6.3 The EHS will ask appropriate questions to determine the caterer's knowledge of proper practices for transportation and service. He/she will inspect the vehicle(s) used and the equipment used for hold/cold holding during transport and service; onsite cooking equipment; alternate handwashing setups, etc. In the case of private events, inspections may take place at delivery but not during the actual event.
- 6.4 A plan review is required prior to issuance of a catering permit. If the establishment is to be constructed or extensively remodeled, a full plan review is required. If the establishment is under permit by SKCHD or is permittable, the EHS will conduct (and charge for) a field plan review. If approved, the EHS will document on an inspection form that the facility has been inspected and meets current standards for all operations under permit.

## CATERER CHECKLIST

### COMMISSARY

- Adequate facilities for hot and cold holding
- Adequate facilities for preparation
- Adequate facilities for **amount** of food being prepared (hot holding, cold holding, etc)
- Dishwashing facilities adequate for largest utensils

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### TRANSPORTATION

- Adequate equipment for hot and cold holding during transport
- Appropriate containers, equipment for transporting
- Appropriate vehicle (cleanable, covered, etc.)
- Provisions to prevent cross contamination

### ON SITE

- Provisions for hot and cold holding, including during service
- Thermometers available
- Provisions for handwashing
- Provisions for on site cooking/final preparation
- Sneeze guards, covered dishes, etc.
- Disposition of leftovers

### OTHER

- Provisions for peak seasons