

Excluded Organization Information Sheet for Public Events

In accordance with the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 10.15.03.26F, the Howard County Health Department does not require a Temporary Food Service Permit or written notification from an unlicensed excluded organization (bona-fide non-profit organization) that plans a single event to prepare or serve potentially hazardous food to **less than 200 people from the public**.

Acceptable “Potluck” Style Food Service Operation for Non-Profit Organizations

A Potluck style meal often involves a gathering of people where each person is expected to bring a dish of food to be shared among the group or people attending the event. Potluck style meals generally consists of a mixture of commercially prepared foods that are purchased and taken directly to the event, commercially prepared foods that are stored in a private home prior to the event or food prepared in a private kitchen. Potluck style meals that consist of commercially prepared food stored in a private home prior to the event or food prepared in a private kitchen may only be served under the following provisions:

1. Potluck meals may be served at private events, parties and events attended only by members of an organization or club. A Temporary Food Permit is not required.
2. Potluck meals prepared off site or on site of an excluded organization facility may be donated or served for the purpose of a charitable service to the unemployed, homeless, or another disadvantaged population. A Temporary Food Permit is not required.
3. A potluck style meal may be served by an organization or an individual that uses an excluded organization’s facility for a private function that includes the attendance of family, friends and invited guests. This includes events such as wedding receptions, private parties, funeral receptions, birthday parties, anniversary parties or holiday parties. A Temporary Food Permit is not required.

Public Event: An event that is attended by individuals from the public whether or not a fee is charged. Any event advertised with fliers, banners, newspaper articles, radio or television announcements, or on an internet website as being open to the public. Examples of public events are festivals, fairs, carnivals, public exhibitions or fundraising events. A Temporary Food Permit is required.

Public Event Does Not Include: Private gathering, party or an event that is restricted to organization members or any event that restricts the public from attending. Examples of non-public events are wedding receptions, graduation parties, birthday parties, family gatherings, funeral gatherings, organization membership meetings or holiday parties with invited guests.

Bake Sale Event: Bakery products in connection with a “Bake Sale” may be prepared in a private home kitchen or an unlicensed kitchen. Only non-potentially hazardous bakery goods (commercially prepared or homemade) including breads and pastries may be sold in conjunction with a “Bake Sale” fundraising event open to the public. Fundraising events in which baked goods are prepared or brought from home should be advertised in part or in whole to notify individuals that baked goods are in connection with a “Bake Sale”. These guidelines would apply to such operations as a bake sale “Cake Raffle” or “Cake Wheel” event. A Temporary Permit is not required if only non-potentially hazardous baked goods are provided.

(Revised 10/29/2018 MJD)