

Prince Edward Island

Guideline for Food Service at Special Events

Event Organizer and Food Vendor Guideline

Department of Health and Wellness
Chief Public Health Office
Environmental Health

April 2025

Contents

Guideline for Food Service at Special Events.....	2
Licensing.....	2
Class 3-B License	2
Class 3-A License	2
Class 4 License.....	2
Event Organizer.....	2
Food Premises License Application.....	3
Food Preparation and Handling.....	3
Booth or Structure	4
Mobile Food Service Vehicle.....	4
Hand Washing.....	4
Self-Contained Handwashing Station	4
Gravity-Fed Handwashing Station	4
Cleaning and Sanitizing	5
Dishes and Utensils	5
Food Contact Surfaces	5
Log Sheets.....	5
Wastewater Disposal	5
Refrigeration, Cooking and Hot Holding.....	6
Limits on Use of Raw Foods at Special Events	6
Transportation	6
Storage.....	7
Single Service Items	7
Solid Waste	7
Personnel	7
Washroom Facilities.....	7
Table 1. Toilet Facilities Required at Special Events	9
Figure 1: Self-Contained Handwashing Station	11
Figure 2. Temporary Hand Washing Station.....	12

Guideline for Food Service at Special Events

Special event food service means a booth, structure or mobile unit constructed to provide food service at exhibitions, fairs, concerts, community festivals or similar organized events to a maximum of ten (10) consecutive days or less per event.

This guideline has been established to reduce the risk of food-borne illnesses associated with special events.

Licensing

The [PEI Public Health Act Food Premises Regulations](#) require either a class 3-A, class 3-B or class 4 license for a vendor handling unpackaged food or high risk food items at a special event.

Class 3-B License (fee \$55.00) - Upon approval, a vendor may be issued a class 3-B license which would allow the vendor to operate at an unlimited number of special events between April 1 and March 31.

Class 3-A License (fee \$37.50) - Upon approval, a vendor may be issued a class 3-A license which would allow the vendor to operate at one special event. The license expires at the end of the chosen event.

Class 4 License (no fee) – Non-profit community or religious organization or institution.

The [application](#), fee (if applicable) and food service plan must be submitted to Environmental Health for approval no less than fourteen (14) days prior to the event. **Incomplete applications may delay the approval process.**

Event Organizer

The organizer of an event in which food is provided to the public is required to obtain a class 3-B license.

If all food vendors attending the event are selling pre-packaged, low-risk food items or if there is only one food vendor handling un-packaged food items on-site at the event, the event organizer does not require a license.

The organizer is responsible for providing Environmental Health with the names and contact information of any potential food vendors and to ensure that food vendors on-site during the event have been approved to attend by Environmental Health.

Vendors that sell only pre-packaged low risk foods prepared in private residence no longer require a license or approval by Environmental Health.

Environmental Health Officers (EHO) are available for consultation and welcome the opportunity to discuss the requirements in this *Guideline*.

Food Premises License Application

To access the online application for a food premises license, click [here](#). You may request a PDF copy by contacting Environmental Health at 902-368-4970 or envhealth@ihis.org. You will be provided with an event application to complete in addition to the license application.

Event organizers must complete a sanitation plan and submit it to Environmental Health for review.

An EHO will review the application and contact the applicant with further direction. **Approval will only be granted once food safety requirements have been met.**

The food premises license must be displayed in the immediate area where the food vendor is operating.

Unless exempt from licensing, a food vendor is not permitted to participate in a special event until they have been granted approval by Environmental Health.

The application must include:

- applicable fee;
- special event application (vendors);
- proof of food safety training;
- written sanitation plan (organizer); and
- date(s) and hours of operation.

Food Preparation and Handling

The potential for contamination of food is increased at special events where facilities are often limited. An EHO will advise on what foods may or may not be permitted after reviewing the event application.

All food contact surfaces must be smooth and easily cleanable. They must be cleaned and sanitized before handling any food and as necessary throughout the event.

All food must be thoroughly cooked and should be served immediately.

Any advanced food preparation must be done in an approved facility while using safe, acceptable food handling practices. This information must be provided in the event application.

If a food vendor has been approved for pre-packaged food items only, the food product must remain in the sealed package for the duration of the event.

Ready-to-eat food should be handled using utensils when possible.

Persons handling food should not handle money.

Booth or Structure

If a food vendor is operating from a booth or structure, every effort must be made to reduce the risk of food contamination during food service.

A floor plan of the booth or structure must be submitted with the event application.

Mobile Food Service Vehicle

Mobile food service vehicles are subject to the requirements of the *PEI Public Health Act Food Premises Regulations*.

Mobile food service vehicles must meet requirements for potable water supply and wastewater disposal.

A mobile unit that is already licensed with Environmental Health will not need to complete an event application if they are operating as previously approved.

Hand Washing

It is the responsibility of the food vendor to ensure easily accessible hand washing facilities are provided for use by food handlers. Every food vendor must have a handwashing station located in their booth/structure unless handling pre-packaged food items only.

Hand washing facilities must consist of a sink or basin and sufficient hot and cold running water, liquid soap and single use paper towels.

The type of handwashing station required will depend on the food premises license and the level of food service.

Self-Contained Handwashing Station

A self-contained handwashing station, see [Figure 1](#), which has separate holding tanks for potable water and wastewater is required for food vendors with a 3B license to attend multiple events each year and for food vendors handling un-packaged food on-site at the event.

Gravity-Fed Handwashing Station

A gravity-fed handwashing station, see [Figure 2](#), which has potable water gravity-fed from a container with an on/off valve and the wastewater is collected in a basin, is acceptable for food vendors who are not directly handling un-packaged food items on-site at the event.

Proper hand washing is one of the most important steps in the prevention of foodborne illness.

Hand sanitizer may be kept on-site and used in addition to proper hand washing. The use of hand sanitizer does not replace the need for hand washing facilities and proper hand washing.

Cleaning and Sanitizing

Dishes and Utensils

A utensil is any instrument that contacts food when preparing, dispensing, or serving food and includes, but is not limited to forks, knives, spoons, bowls, cups, plates, serving dishes, tongs or lifters.

Facilities for cleaning and sanitizing utensils should be available within the confines of the special event. These facilities must consist of a minimum two-compartment sink supplied with hot and cold running water to wash and sanitize the utensils. The sink compartments should be large enough to accommodate the largest utensil that requires cleaning. All utensils must be washed and sanitized following the approved 4-step method (wash, rinse, sanitize, and air dry). Quaternary ammonia sanitizer (200ppm) or bleach sanitizer (100ppm) is required for manual dishwashing. These concentrations must be verified with test strips and logged.

Depending on the type of operation, menu and the number and kinds of utensils used, the required facilities may vary. An EHO will advise each food vendor of the required facilities for the event.

Reusable utensils must be replaced every two hours with clean, sanitized utensils.

Food Contact Surfaces

Food contact surfaces require frequent cleaning and sanitizing. Surfaces must be cleaned with soap and water prior to sanitizing with an approved food grade sanitizer. A food grade sanitizer is either a bleach mixture (100ppm), or a quaternary ammonia mixture (200ppm). Food vendors must have the appropriate test strips on-site to verify the sanitizer concentration daily.

Log Sheets

It is required to log the concentration of surface sanitizer and dishwashing sanitizer each day of the event as sanitizers will deteriorate over time and lose potency. It is strongly recommended to also log refrigeration and freezer temperatures daily. A log sheet template can be provided by Environmental health.

Wastewater Disposal

Ideally, wastewater should be plumbed directly into a sanitary sewer or an on-site sewage disposal system. If this is not practical, the wastewater disposal must be approved by the Environmental Health Officer.

Proper maintenance of the wastewater system is mandatory.

Refrigeration, Cooking and Hot Holding

Refrigeration and hot holding equipment must be provided so that potentially hazardous foods are maintained, transported and sold either:

- **Cold Foods:** at a temperature of 4°C (40°F) or colder
- **Hot Foods:** at a temperature of 60°C (140°F) or hotter. Hot holding units must be capable of maintaining an internal food temperature of 60°C (140°F) or hotter. When cooking and/or reheating foods, the internal temperature of the food must reach at least 74°C (165°F).
- **Frozen Foods:** at a temperature of -18°C (0°F) or colder.

Probe thermometers must be available to check the internal temperatures of the food.

Refrigeration units **MUST** be equipped with thermometers to verify that safe temperatures are maintained. The use of Styrofoam coolers is not permitted.

If a refrigerator is not available, ice packs in a cooler may be used if approved by an EHO prior to the event. If ice packs are permitted for use, enough must be present to ensure the food temperature does not exceed 4°C (40F). Food stored in coolers must be kept in tight, waterproof containers. The food must not be in direct contact with the ice packs or cooler.

Food in coolers with ice packs should be used within four hours. For events lasting longer than 24 hours, mechanical refrigeration may be required.

Other than during food preparation, potentially hazardous foods are not to be held at room temperature. You must have adequate storage for the quantity of food you wish to prepare and serve.

Limits on Use of Raw Foods at Special Events

An EHO may limit the type of food items served based on the principals of food safety. The food vendor will be advised on what food item(s) may or may not be allowed after their event application is reviewed.

Transportation

Food which is prepared off-site and intended to be served at the special event must be prepared in an inspected and approved kitchen. Any food preparation taking place off-site must be noted in the event application submitted to Environmental Health during the approval process.

All food items capable of supporting bacterial growth must either be transported cold (at 4°C/40°F or colder), or hot (at 60°C/140°F or hotter) and must be transported in closed containers. If transporting at 60°C/140°F or hotter the temperature of the food must be checked and recorded upon arrival at the event. If the temperature dropped below 60°C/140°F, the food must then be reheated above 74°C/160°F. If it is not possible then it must be discarded.

Storage

Food and food containers must always be protected from contamination. All food must be enclosed, covered, packaged or otherwise contained so that it is continuously protected from sources of contamination.

Storage must be at least 15cm (6in) off the floor or ground. The use of pallets, shelving, etc. to keep food dry and reduce the risk of contamination from insects, dust, etc. is strongly recommended.

Single Service Items

All items (e.g. straws, cups, plates, and cutlery) used for service to the public at a special event must be single use only.

To prevent cross-contamination, condiments must not be served from open containers, it is strongly recommended to use squeeze bottles or individual single use packages.

Solid Waste

All garbage generated must be stored in covered, rodent and insect proof containers. A commercial type of container or dumpster should be provided at large events and emptied as often as necessary.

Personnel

Every food handler at the special event shall:

- wear clean outer garments (aprons are suitable);
- use proper hair control (hair net, cap, etc.);
- wash hands before handling food and after any possibility of contamination (e.g. after using the washroom, after handling money, after fixing your hair, etc.), after sneezing, coughing or blowing nose; and
- be free from illness and follow the established illness policy.

Washroom Facilities

Washroom facilities must be conveniently located within the confines of the special event. The event organizer is responsible for providing washroom facilities for the public and dedicated, easily accessible washrooms for the staff and volunteers, including food handlers.

The number of units required for public use is based on the anticipated attendance and/or site capacity and the duration of the event. (See [Table 1](#))

Toilet facilities are to consist of water closets or portable toilets.

Where portable toilets are used, it is the responsibility of the event organizer to ensure that a maintenance contract for the units is in place and is available to view by the EHO if requested.

Maintenance must include a schedule for cleaning and disinfecting units and replenishing supplies throughout the event.

Hand washing stations, see [Figure 1](#), must be conveniently located near the toilet facilities and must include running water, liquid soap and single use paper towels. The number of units required for public use is based on the anticipated attendance and/or site capacity and the duration of the event. (See [Table 2](#))

Hand washing facilities must be available for food handlers with no exceptions.

Wastewater disposal must be consistent with the requirements of the above section on wastewater disposal.

For more information, please contact Environmental Health:

(902) 368-4970 or (Toll Free) 1-800-958-6400

envhealth@ihis.org

Table 1. Toilet Facilities Required at Special Events

Peak Crowd	HOURS OF OPERATION FOR EVENT									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1-250	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3
250-500	2	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	5
500-1000	3	4	5	6	6	7	7	9	9	10
1000-1500	4	6	8	9	9	10	10	12	12	12
2000	5	8	10	11	12	13	13	14	14	14
3000	7	12	15	16	18	18	19	20	20	21
4000	10	16	19	22	24	25	25	27	27	28
5000	12	20	24	27	29	31	32	33	33	34
6000	14	24	28	33	35	37	37	39	41	41
7000	17	27	34	38	41	42	46	46	47	48
8000	20	32	38	44	48	49	50	51	53	54
10000	24	39	47	54	58	62	64	66	67	68
12500	30	48	61	68	73	78	80	81	82	85
15000	37	57	70	81	87	92	94	99	102	104
17500	42	68	84	95	100	110	111	113	116	118
20000	48	77	95	107	115	120	127	131	133	136
25000	60	96	122	133	146	156	159	162	165	171
30000	73	114	141	163	174	184	188	194	197	201
40000	95	156	188	217	231	243	249	257	266	271
50000	120	192	238	267	290	305	312	322	330	337
75000	177	292	357	403	432	455	470	485	491	508
100000	239	378	475	515	542	562	583	593	620	633

This chart assumes:

- Equal percentages of men and women in attendance.
- A maximum acceptable queue (line up) of 10 people.
- No alcoholic beverages being served.
- Standby service for all events requiring 50 or more units.

Adjust unit requirements when:

- When the percentage of women in attendance increases, increase the number of units by that same percentage.
- When the percentage of men in attendance increases, decrease the number of units by ½ that percentage.

If alcoholic beverages are served, increase the number of units by 13%

Separate toilets must be available for patrons and food handlers.

Table 2. Hand Washing Facilities Required at Special Events

Peak Crowd	Minimum Number of Hand Wash Basins Required
1-250	2
250-500	2
500-1000	4
1000-1500	5
2000	6
3000	8
4000	10
5000	12
6000	14
7000	16
8000	18
10000	20
12500	25
15000	30
17500	35
20000	40
25000	50
30000	60
40000	80
50000	100
75000	150
100000	200

Notes:

- Add one additional handwash basin for each additional 500 people
- Water, paper towels, and liquid soap must be available at all times
- Hand wash stations to be set up near toilet facilities
- Separate and additional hand wash stations may be required for food handlers. This is to be determined before the event.

Figure 1: Self-Contained Handwashing Station

A self-contained handwashing station, which has separate holding tanks for potable water and wastewater is required for food vendors with a 3B license to attend multiple events each year and for food vendors handling un-packaged food on-site at the event.

Examples of acceptable portable handwashing stations include:

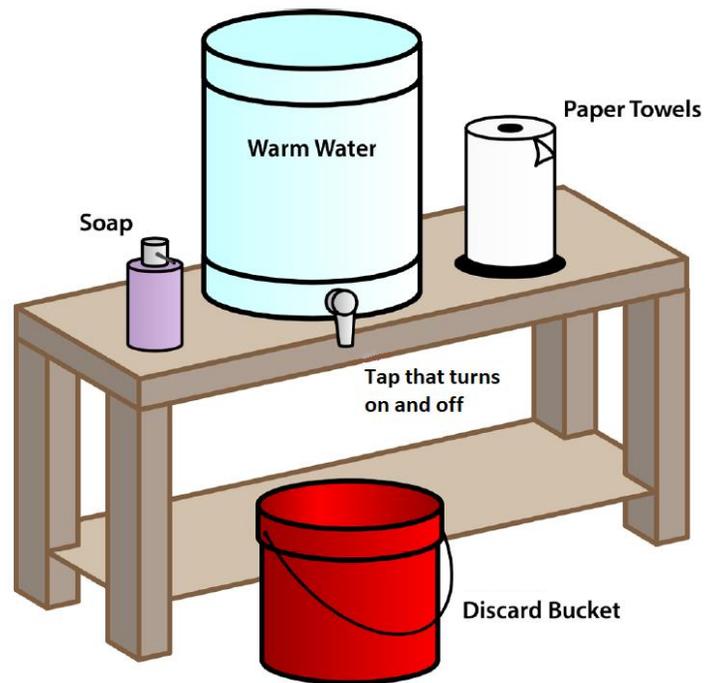


A self-contained handwashing station must consist of:

- separate, enclosed containers for potable water and wastewater
- potable water supply under adequate pressure
- liquid hand soap in a dispenser
- single-use paper towels in a dispenser
- a container to collect wastewater

Figure 2. Temporary Hand Washing Station

Hand washing is very important to prevent the spread of illness and cross contamination of food. Hand washing stations are required for all food vendors. Food vendors operating with a temporary set-up and only handling pre-packaged food items may use a temporary hand washing station.



A temporary hand washing station must consist of:

- a container with a spigot and potable water
- liquid hand soap in a dispenser
- single-use paper towels in a dispenser
- a container to collect wastewater