

Permits Required when Food or Beverages are Served to the Public

Temporary Food and Mobil Food Facility Permits

If you intend to sell, serve, give away, or sample food or consumable products including water, alcohol and other beverages at a public event, you must obtain a temporary food facility permit. This County Health Permit is required whether you are serving food prepared on-site, pre-packaged food, or food and beverage considered to be “low risk” (i.e. bottled water, packaged cookies, cakes, etc.). The application is obtained through the County of Santa Barbara’s Environmental Health Services Department at (805) 681-4900 or on their website at www.sbcpd.org/ehs. Since the County Health permit is usually issued on the day of the event, the Special Events Coordinator will directly confirm your approval status with County Health in advance.

Mobile Food Facilities (i.e., food trucks) must have a current Mobile Food facility permit on file with the County health Department. Mobile Food Facilities do not require a “day of” inspection at the event site in order to acquire the permit and serve the public.

Open Flame Permits

Temporary Food Facilities using an open flame burner may require an open Flame Permit and Inspection from the City Fire Department. There is an additional cost for this permit. Examples of situations that may trigger this permit requirement are open flames used inside tents or under canopies, or oversized burners for specialty items such as Paella.

Prohibition of Plastic Straws, Stirrers, Cutlery and Expanded Polystyrene

Organizers and participants in Special Events must abide by all city, county, state and federal laws, which include but are not limited to the following:

- Ban on plastic straws, stirrers and cutlery. SBMC § 9.165
- Ban on expanded polystyrene (commonly referred to as Styrofoam). SBMC § 9.160.040

Please inform vendors of these City ordinances and ensure that food and beverages are served using items made from alternative materials. For more information on hosting a sustainable or “Zero Waste” event, please visit the City’s Sustainability and Resilience Department webpage at

<https://www.santabarbaraca.gov/services/recycling/default.asp>

Parking for Food Trucks and Trailers

Parking on City Streets

Vehicles over the size of 25 feet long, 80 inches wide or 82 inches high are considered “oversized vehicles” and are prohibited from parking on the street unless they obtain a Parking Restriction Waiver Permit from Public Work. This applies to vehicles like food trucks. SBMC § 10.44.220

A parking restriction waiver permit must be acquired if you want to post “no parking” signs on a street that normally allows street parking in order to create an unloading/loading zone for your event vendors’ staff, and on-demand ride sharing vehicles.

Parking in a Waterfront Parking Lot

Food trucks and Trailers must be approved to park and conduct business in a Waterfront Parking Lot in advance of the event date. Standard charges will apply for each parking space used in addition to a refundable security deposit.

Generally, mobile food facilities must be located in an area that is deemed safe for patrons to access. City staff reserves the right to dictate the appropriate location for a mobile food facility while parked on City property.

Please visit the Waterfront parking Office webpage for more information at <https://www.santabarbaraca.gov/gov/depts/waterfront/parking/default.asp>

Vendor and Sidewalk Merchandising Licenses

All vendors selling or promoting food and beverages, merchandise or services must obtain a One-Day Vendor License from the City of Santa Barbara Finance Office for each day they are present at an event. There is a cost for this license if the vendor does not have a current business license on file with the City of Santa Barbara.

If you plan to use a street or sidewalk for vendors to sell or promote food and beverages, you are also required obtain a Sidewalk Merchandising License from the City Public Works Department for use of the public right of way. There is an additional cost for this license.

For additional information on these licenses, please review the Special Event Planning Guide.