

WSU FOOD SAFETY

“IS MY EVENT CATERED?”



INTRODUCTION:

Licensing requirements need to be considered for events where food will be served to the [public](#). If you are planning on drop-off or pickup of Time/Temperature Controlled for Safety (TCS) food from a licensed Food Service facility this is not considered a “catered” event. You are required to make an application for a temporary food license in order to serve TCS food.

However, you may choose to have your food catered which may exempt you from the need for further licensing. A catered event, as defined below, allows for an already licensed food service establishment to extend their base license to an off-site location.

“...If food is prepared in a food service establishment licensed under this chapter and the food is transported from the food service establishment to a fixed temporary serving location, the serving location is not required to be separately licensed and is considered an extension of the food service establishment if no food preparation is conducted at the serving location and the food is transported and served by employees of the food service establishment.” [Michigan Food Law Chapter 289.4105](#)

To qualify for the serving site license exemption, the base establishment must be licensed and the serving site must be fixed, temporary, have no on-site preparation, and have food served by the food establishment employees. Evaluations of off-site operations may be made at the regulatory agency’s discretion, since the off-site operation is an extension of the base establishment license.

CATERED EVENTS BY A LICENSED FOOD SERVICE FACILITY –NO ADDITIONAL LICENSING NEEDED:

The following activities performed by a licensed Food Service facility are considered an extension of that facility’s license:

- Transporting food
- Thawing ready-to-eat food (i.e. frozen desserts, shrimp ring)
- Hot holding
- Cold holding
- Pre-mix beverage machines, kegs of beer, etc.
- Icing and/or pouring beverages into glasses (i.e. beer, bulk pre-mixed drinks, wine, juice, water, cider, milk, coffee, tea, pop)
- Making popcorn or cotton candy
- Making coffee and tea
- Operating a post-mix carbonated beverage or potentially hazardous product dispensing machine (e.g. soft-serve ice cream)
- Simple cutting, slicing, or handling of product for service only. Examples include:
 - Carving slices of cooked meat
 - Cutting pizza slices, cake, lasagna
 - Placing a cooked item in a bun
 - Buffet line service (employee serve or self-serve)
 - Scooping hand-dipped hard ice cream

EXAMPLE SCENARIO:

A licensed Food Service establishment has been contracted to provide a hot breakfast for an event. Is a license required?

- No, additional licensing is not required as long as employees of the licensed establishment transports and serves the breakfast items.

CATERED EVENTS BY A LICENSED FOOD SERVICE FACILITY –ADDITIONAL LICENSING REQUIRED

The following activities performed by a licensed Food Service facility require additional licensing when performed offsite of their fixed, licensed, location:

- Thawing raw food
- Washing
- Mixing / forming food ingredients
- Cooking
- Reheating
- Mixing drinks at a bar (full bar operation with condiments, blending drinks, etc.)
- Cutting raw produce
- Complex assembly of food items (i.e. making a sub sandwich to order, assembling tacos) Slicing items that can be most appropriately done at the licensed establishment
- Most cutting operations, including slicing, prior to assembly, display or service

EXAMPLE SCENARIOS:

A licensed Food Service establishment wishes to provide a taco bar at an offsite location. Is a license required?

- Yes, application for a temporary license must be made by the licensed facility.

A licensed Food Service establishment wishes to hold an outdoor BBQ where they plan on grilling hot dogs and burgers. Is additional licensing required?

- Yes, application made by the licensed facility for a temporary license for grilling outdoors.