

Onsite Food Sampling & Handling Requirements

The Produce Marketing Association has never had a case of foodborne illness linked to distribution of food products on the exposition floor. To maintain this record, we have established the following requirements for foodservice by exhibitors.

“Food Sampling” means the practice of any person/company offering or serving, without charge to the consumer, unpackaged food to the public for the purpose of publicity, advertising, or promotion of the sale of food, food products, or food equipment.

Exhibitors who wish to distribute food samples on the show floor must submit a Food Sampling Permit to Aramark. This permit can be found in the Rules & Regulations section of the service kit.

Food Handlers

Food handlers who assemble salads, cut or slice sample products, or prepare and distribute ready-to-eat foods in any other way must avoid any bare-hand contact with these foods by using tongs, tissues, or other utensils.

Food handlers must wear gloves and clean aprons or smocks. These items should be changed daily and more often if necessary and should be removed when leaving the sampling or preparation area and should never be worn into bathroom facilities.

Food handlers must wash their hands and arms with soap and warm water before commencing work, after using toilet facilities and before returning to work, and such other times as necessary to prevent contamination of food.

Each exhibiting company sampling food shall provide “hand-washing” facilities in its booth including single-service soap, water (can be bottled, does not need to be running water), and towels (paper towels, wet wipes, antibacterial solutions, etc.) available to each food handler. Aramark, the convention center caterer, provides hand-washing kits for \$25.00 each. Hand-washing kits include a two gallon water with spigot, liquid hand soap in a pump dispenser, paper towels, and a bucket. Hand washing kits can be ordered using the order form provided in the Catering & Food Preparation section of the service kit.

Equipment, Storage, and Sanitation

Exhibitors should have adequate facilities and equipment in their booth to maintain their sampling foods at the proper temperatures. Maintain hot foods at temperatures of 140 degrees Fahrenheit (60 degrees Celsius) or above and cold foods at temperatures of 41 degrees Fahrenheit (5 degrees Celsius) or below.

All equipment used in the preparation, storage, or display of unpackaged foods shall be easily cleanable, made of nontoxic materials, and must be washed, rinsed, and sanitized in order to be classified as being maintained in a sanitary manner. The restroom sink does not qualify as an appropriate sink for utensil washing.

All foods, utensils, and other related items shall be stored off the ground and be adequately protected from contamination while being transported, stored, prepared, displayed, and served. All food products and utensils used in the preparation and service of food must be at least six inches (15 centimeters) off of the show floor.

The exhibiting company shall provide ample clean, bagged trash containers for refuse at the booth.

Food Preparation and Distribution

All water supplies (including those used for ice) shall be from an approved source, protected from contamination, and waste water shall be disposed of in a safe and sanitary manner.

All food and food-related items must be stored and handled or prepared within the exhibitor's rented space or by the official caterer. Food handlers, when offering food to customers, must remain in their booth at all times. When possible, sampled product should be served in small cups. Items displayed for customer self-service should be prepackaged. Food samples shall not be offered from a common bowl, cup, container, or tray where the customer's hands or lips could come in contact with the food on display.