



BRHD Environmental Health Offices	
Location	Phone
Charlottesville/Albemarle	434-972-6219
Fluvanna County	434-591-1965
Greene County	434-985-2262
Louisa County	540-967-3707
Nelson County	434-263-4297

CATERING GUIDELINES

The Health Department looks at other parameters beyond just an approved commercial kitchen when the operator decides to cater either in an existing restaurant space or create a catering facility specifically for catering with no seating.

1. **Type of Menu**-The Health Department will need to assess the flow of food production proposed, as well as operational procedures. If foods is to be prepared at least one period of service in advance, there will be a need for bulk cooling. If raw meats will be stored, handles, thawed and or/prepared, there will be a need for adequate space during storage and preparation to minimize the risk of cross contamination between raw meat and any foods ready to eat such as raw vegetables or precooked foods.

2. **Daily Volume**-(the maximum number of meals to be prepared per day (mpd)). The operator needs to be able to calculate the maximum number of meals to be prepared in a day including catered as well as served meals in a restaurant. This will ensure the kitchen is designed to safely store, prepare, cook, hold and serve on its busiest day. The goal being to minimize the risk of contamination, growth and survival of microorganisms. Some examples of what the Health Department will be assessing includes an adequate number and capacity of hand sinks, refrigeration, steam tables, space for storing, prepping, and/or transporting to minimize cross contamination.

3. **Sufficient insulated transportation equipment** for the volume of food production and an area for this equipment storage. This equipment must be commercial grade for ease of cleaning and durability. Some examples of commercial brands of insulated transportation equipment includes Cambro, Carlye, and Rubbermaid. Operator should store these units indoors and off the floor in clean locations.

4. **Adequate facilities to wash, rinse, sanitize and air dry all catering equipment**, both food and nonfood contact equipment used for catering will also need to be reviewed.

5. **Adequate hot and cold holding capacities** for storage of time/temperature controlled for safety (TCS) foods from receiving to service. (*Virginia Food Code 12VAC5-1450*)

6. **A dedicated walk-in cooler (s) of adequate size** with “sped” racks to facilitate rapid cooling may be needed if high volumes of food production will occur in advance of service. A separate walk-in cooler dedicated to rapid cooling or blast chiller may be needed if daily meal production volume is anticipated to exceed 500 meals/day.

7. **Time/Temperature Cooking and Holding Log-** It is strongly recommended that you take internal food temperatures at each step in the flow of food and maintain and store daily food temperature logs for each catering job. Data from these logs can be stored and attached to each job or by date and event either handwritten form or electronically. Documentation such as this can prove that the operator took “reasonable care” to minimize the risk of foodborne illness at each event.

8. **Portable Hand Sink-** The department strongly recommends that portable handwash stations with warm water and free flow

valves be easily accessible to all food handlers in outdoor “field” settings.

9. **Self-service provided to guests-** The department will need to assess food dispensing when buffet style or other self-service method is used. Operator may need to use a portable sneeze guard and/or overhead tent for overhead protection to minimize the risk of food contamination.

10. **Cleaning food/non-food contact surfaces-** Adequate equipment will be needed to accommodate the volume/process proposed. This may include adequately sized 3 compartment sink to accommodate the largest pot or pan used and/or commercial dish machine at the commissary kitchen.

Alternatively, the caterer may choose to utilize a dish service who can provide clean dishes/tableware then pick up the soiled ones.

11. **Type of Transport Vehicles-**These vehicles may need to be refrigerated depending on the type of food transport equipment, volume to be transported, and time of year when events are planned. Vehicles should be regularly monitored, digital cameras and air temperature dataloggers are recommended. Please note: All pull behind trailers are to comply with VDOT requirements (be road worthy, have tags, etc.

12. There must be a **knowledgeable person-in charge (PIC) of each off-site catered event.** If food is prepared and served, each off-site location is considered to be a food preparation area so this is crucial at each event. The department strongly encourages all owners/operators, managers and on-site PICs attend food Safety manager certification courses.