



May 1, 2018

CHARITABLE FOOD FACILITIES (CFF) FAQs

Q: What type of facility qualifies as a Charitable Food Facility (CFF)?

A: Qualifications include:

- 1) Current non-profit status (ex. IRS 501(C) (3)) and do not charge for their services.
- 2) Store, prepare, or distribute foods to another CFF.
- 3) Store, prepare, or distribute foods to a shelter on a regular basis.
- 4) Store, prepare, or distribute foods to those who are food insecure on a regular basis.
- 5) Store, prepare, or distribute foods to a city, county or state owned senior center.

Q: Is a CFF permit required if a church only feeds parishioners and their guests?

A: No; a permit is not required when the food is served only to parishioners and their guests. Guests may be considered friends or family members visiting parishioners and who do not regularly attend the CFF.

Q: Is a CFF permit required if a church occasionally prepares and serves food to individuals who are food insecure?

A: Yes; when food is prepared for the public (including those individuals who are food insecure); a Contra Costa Environmental Health Permit is required. In some cases the food may be prepared and served at a church or delivered and served at another facility. In the second case, the distribution location also requires a permit to operate from Environmental Health.

Q: Are foods prepared from a private home permitted to be served to parishioners?

A: Yes; only when the food is served to parishioners and their visiting guests. We highly recommend that food safety guidelines are implemented for all occasions where parishioners share their food (ex. potluck meals).

Q: Are foods prepared from a private home permitted to be served to the public/individuals that are food insecure?

A: No; foods prepared from a private home shall not be served to the public/individuals that are food insecure.

Q: If parishioners choose to prepare pastries from home, what type of permit is available?

A: The Cottage Food Operator permit allows specific foods to be prepared from a private home (refer to the Contra Costa County Cottage Food Operation Application).

Q: What is the process to obtain a CFF permit?

A: To apply for a CFF permit:

1. Submit the [Contra Costa Environmental Health Facility Evaluation Application](#) to our office or email to cocoeh@hsd.cccounty.us

2. On the Facility Evaluation Application check the "Other" box and write "Church" or "Charitable Food Facility" on the line.
3. A fee of \$213 must be included with the Facility Evaluation Application.
4. The district inspector will call the applicant within 3-5 business days to conduct a Facility Evaluation.
5. After the district inspector approves the facility to operate, complete the Contra Costa Environmental Health Permit to Operate Application.
6. Submit the church's IRS 501(C) (3) letter with the Permit to Operate Application to qualify as a non-profit organization.

Q: How long does it take to obtain a CFF permit?

A: After processing the Contra Costa Environmental Health Permit to Operate Application with the IRS 501 (C) (3), the permit will be mailed to the billing address within 30 days.

Q: Are the application and the facility evaluation fees waived for a CFF?

A: No; the Facility Evaluation Application fee (\$39) and the inspection fee (\$174) are not waived. The total fee due with Contra Costa Environmental Health Facility Evaluation Application is \$213.

Q: Are annual permit fees waived for a CFF?

A: Yes; Contra Costa County Environmental Health Permit to Operate fees are waived if an IRS 501(C) (3) letter is submitted with the Contra Costa Environmental Health Permit to Operate Application. The Permit to Operate application fee (\$39) is also waived.

Q: To waive the annual permit fee, does each CFF have to have an IRS 501(C) (3)?

A: Yes; each CFF must submit their allocated IRS 501(C) (3) letter.

Q: Is a Contra Costa Environmental Health Permit required if the food is prepared in another county?

A: No; a permit to operate is required from the county where the food is prepared.

Q: What types of certifications are required to maintain the CFF permit?

A: At least one person in charge of the CFF must obtain a valid Food Safety Certification from an accredited food protection manager certification organization. The organization must be ANSI accredited.

Q: Are volunteers required to obtain a California Food Handler Card?

A: No; food handler volunteers are not required to obtain a California Food Handler Card. However, it is highly recommended that each person handling food obtain a Food Handler Card.

Q: What types of food are permitted to prepare from the CFF?

A: The type of foods permitted to be prepared at each CFF depends on the equipment available in the kitchen. During the Facility Evaluation process, the inspector will determine the type of foods that may be prepared with the equipment available in the CFF.

Q: What type of equipment is required in the CFF?

A: A handsink installed in the kitchen is priority.

A: The type of equipment required depends on the types of foods being prepared.



Q: What is the warewashing process if a CFF has a two compartment sink?

A: A 3-compartment utensil warewash sink is preferable; however, if an existing 2-compartment is available, the following procedures apply:

1. Before setting up the compartments scrape the food debris into garbage containers and rinse the utensils in the compartment where soap will be placed.
2. Clean and sanitize the two compartment sinks.
3. Place dish detergent and hot water (100 degrees Fahrenheit) in the first compartment.
4. Thoroughly scrub and wash the utensils in the first compartment.
5. Rinse the utensils in the second compartment and set aside on a clean and sanitized drain board or shelf/rack.
6. After rinsing the soap from all utensils, place an approved sanitizer (bleach or quaternary ammonia) in the second compartment.
7. Soak the utensils in the sanitizer for at least 30 seconds (bleach) or 1 minute (quaternary ammonia).
8. Air dry all utensils in a clean and sanitized area that does not drip onto food or in-use utensils.

Q: Is a separate handsink required in the kitchen if the restroom is nearby?

A: Yes; a separate handsink will be required outside of the restroom where food is processed.

Q: If a CFF has a current Contra Costa Environmental Health Permit to Operate, is a Contra Costa County temporary event permit required for public events?

A: Yes; if the temporary event is advertised to the public and is held outside of the CFF (ex. church parking lot). Advertising of the event may also occur via social media, radio, or signage posted for public viewing.

Q: What application is required for a CFF temporary event?

A: Yes. A Contra Costa Environmental Health Application for Temporary Food Event Permit and packet must be submitted to Contra Costa Environmental Health at least two weeks prior to event.

Q: If a CFF advertises their events within membership/parishioners, is a temporary event permit required?

A: No; if advertisements are not visible to the general public, a temporary event permit is not required.

Q: What is the difference between a Contra Costa Environmental Health annual health permit to operate and a Contra Costa Environmental Health temporary event permit?

A: An annual permit to operate is a year permit starting from the date of the Facility Evaluation approval to the end of the permit year, which is February 28th of each year. For the majority of food facilities in Contra Costa County, the annual permit is valid from March 1 to February 28 (the next year).

A: A temporary food event permit is required for community events that operate for not more than 25 consecutive or nonconsecutive days in a 90-day period. A community event is of civic, political, public, or educational nature, including state and county fairs, city festivals, circuses, and other public gathering events approved by the local enforcement agency.

Q: Are caterers allowed to serve food from the CFF during a community event?

A: Yes; a caterer with a valid and current permit to operate may serve food from a CFF during a community event.

