

Food products at marketplaces, trade fairs and events

Notification of food sales or serving

The sale and serving of food at marketplaces, trade fairs and large public events must be notified to the Food Safety unit no later than four business days prior the date of the sales event. Notification of the sales event should be submitted electronically via the city's eServices or via notification form. The instructions and forms for notifications are located on the City's website (hel.fi/en) under "Outdoor food sales and mobile food premises".

Notification is not obligated if the operations are low-risk, such as serving coffee or tea or distributing wrapped sweets, biscuits or pastries.

Serving and selling food and distributing food samples

The most important things to keep in mind regarding events:

1. The right kinds of products and their preparation. The scope of the use of the exhibition stand (or serving/distributing stand) is dependent on how the stand is equipped. All food products should mainly be prepared (meat and other products cooked, vegetables chopped up, washed, etc.) before the event in an appropriate food handling premises, so that they only need to be heated up or served on-site. This will also save time during the event.

Food can be handled at the event site if the event organizer provides a proper preparation premises. If the exhibition/distribution stand features a kitchen that is equipped with water points connected to a water and sewage system and has enough working space, food may be handled on a wider scale.

2. Proper storage and serving temperatures. Cold-stored food products should be kept cold (usually below +6 °C, but note the colder storage requiring products, such as fish) and hot foods should be kept hot (over +60 °C, but while cooking the foods temperature should rise above 70 °C and above 75 °C in poultry). Foodstuff should not be stored in the danger zone temperature (6 - 60 °C) even shortly (defrosting included). Cold-stored food products should be cooled to 6 °C immediately or at least in four hours after preparation or kept over 60 °C until served. Proper temperatures must be controlled during the whole food chain (e.g. storage, preparing, transportation, serving) and easily perishable products should not be served at room temperature. Cold-stored products can be served from the top of cooling packs, for example, and warm products should be kept in a heating bath. For storing products, operators should at least reserve some cool boxes, and preferably refrigerators. Cool boxes and refrigerators must include thermometers and temperatures must be measured and documented during storage at least twice a day.
3. Sneeze shielding. If the stand is used for preparing, measuring out or assembling samples that are served to customers or for selling unpacked food products, the stand should be protected with a Plexiglas sneeze shield, for example, or organised in such a way that the preparation takes place away from the public.

If the operations occur outside, the stand used for unpacked easily perishable products should be protected with three walls and a roof and if necessary, a base (if on gravel or grass).

4. Hand washing station. Each sales point that is used for handling easily perishable products (e.g. Portioning food or ice cream) must include a hand washing station. The washing station

must include at least a water canister with a tap, some liquid soap and paper towels and it must be located near the food handling. Dirty water must be collected in a separate container. Hand washing stations must be installed before any unpacked food products are taken out.

If the sales point is used for preparing perishable foods, which are, for example, portioned or heated up (e.g. smoothies), the water point must include warm water. In outdoor events or other events where warm water is not available, the water point must include a boiler.

If the sales point is used for preparing food portions, and if food is prepared in large quantities and includes e.g. handling raw meat, washing food or preparing ice cream, all water points must be connected to a water and sewage system. There should also be multiple water points depending on the type of the operations.

Requirements for water points are always evaluated on a case-specific basis, and if the operator attends events for example once a year and uses the sales point only for minor operations, it is possible to consider whether the sales point only needs to include a water canister as a hand washing station.

If the sales point is only used to serve dry food products, sweets or coffee, a hand sanitiser will be enough.

5. Samples. It is recommended to chop up the food samples in advance somewhere else than at the exhibition stand and measure them out into single-use portions. Customers must be prevented from taking additional samples using containers or implements that have already been used. Samples should be served according to demand, not in large quantities at a time.
6. Information about food products. Consumers must be provided with adequate information concerning the food products being sold or served. Packed foodstuff must be equipped with proper food labels and unpacked foodstuff must be provided with crucial information, such as substances and products causing allergies or intolerants, and the country of origin of meat used. The information must be provided with the foodstuff or by informing that the information can be obtained from the staff. For more information, please visit <https://www.ruokavirasto.fi/en/>.
7. Importing foodstuff. The import of animal origin products requires doing a notification (linkki). Commercial document and laboratory's salmonella test report must be provided from imported (fresh and frozen) beef, pork and poultry meat (organs and blood included) or minced meat made from these products. Animal origin products must be prepared in an approved food handling premises and equipped with adequate information. Imported animal origin products must also be traceable/associated with commercial documents.
8. Toilets. In order to avoid the spread of infectious diseases, persons handling food products should only use the toilets reserved for food operators, instead of public toilets.
9. Waste. The stand's waste containers should be emptied regularly and recycled appropriately.
10. Ventilation. The stand must have adequate ventilation. If the preparation or heating of food products results in smoky smells or actual smoke, adequate local ventilation must be provided.