Safe Sampling Method

People carry many bacteria and viruses on their hands. These germs are easily passed from person to person through items they touch.

To provide safe samples, a method must be used to ensure that a customer is able to touch and handle only one sample at a time. This way, germs will not spread easily.

Several acceptable ways to prepare and serve samples include:

- Prepare individual **samples upon request**
- Place samples in **individual sample cups** or on separate napkins
- **Provide toothpicks** for picking up samples
- Use a **squeeze bottle** to dispense samples

If crackers, chips, pretzels, etc. are used to taste samples, separate them on a plate rather than placing them in a common bowl.

Common bowls provide an easy way to spread germs. Instead of using common bowls, provide the cracker upon request or arrange the crackers on a dish so that each is separated. With proper layout, each person should only touch the one of choice. To save time during the event, prepare several trays ahead of time or separate layers with napkins.

If you provide utensils with your samples, they must be placed in a clean container with all the handles facing in one direction.

To prevent contamination, do not leave your samples unattended at the event.

Thermometer Use

A thermometer must be available for checking the temperature of any product that must be kept hot or that requires refrigeration. The thermometer must have a temperature range of 0° to 220°F. Check it for accuracy prior to use; it should read 32°F in ice water.

Thin foods, such as deli meat, lettuces, and meat patties, need a digital thermometer.

Once cooked, hot food products must be held hot at 135°F or above at all times to prevent bacteria from growing. Use your thermometer to ensure hot food temperatures are 135°F or above.

If the food to be sampled requires refrigeration, it must be kept cold at 41°F or below. Mechanical refrigeration is required to store food supplies for events that are over 8 hours or that are longer than one day in length. For events that are less than 8 hours, ice may be used to store extra food supplies.

When ice is used to keep food or samples cold, make sure to insert the food container into the ice until the food level is surrounded by ice. Use your thermometer to ensure cold food temperatures are 41°F or below.

For more information:
Benton-Franklin Health District
7102 W. Okanogan Pl.
Kennewick, WA 99336 (509) 460-4205
www.bfhd.wa.gov

Other related materials available:
Handwashing brochure
Temporary Food Service Establishments guidance booklet

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Safe Sampling

Seasonal Food Safety Series

www.bfhd.wa.gov

PUBLIC HEALTH
Prevent • Promote • Protect
BENTON-FRANKLIN HEALTH DISTRICT

Who Needs A Permit To Sample?

Most individuals or groups providing food samples to the public at an event such as a bazaar, craft show, mall, specialty shop, or fairt must obtain a permit through the Benton-Franklin Health District.

This pamphlet is provided for reference; it is not necessarily a complete list of items that may be required to provide samples to the public. Contact the Benton-Franklin Health District with questions.

Types Of Permits

Two types of permits for sampling are available.

- A **temporary food service permit** is the best choice for food sampled one to two days at a single event during the calendar year in Benton or Franklin County.
- An **annual food demonstrator permit** is more cost-effective if food will be sampled more than two days or at multiple events. This permit allows you to provide samples at any event within Benton and Franklin counties during the calendar year.

Regardless of the type of permit, it is necessary that at least one person at the sampling area has a valid Washington State Food Worker Card.

Safe Sampling

In order to minimize the potential sources of contamination when preparing and serving samples, bare-hand-contact must be prevented by using a barrier (tongs, utensils, scoops or gloves) at all times. Be sure to take spare utensils to replace soiled ones during the sampling event.

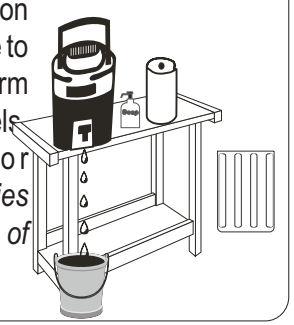
All foods must be prepared at the permitted site or in a licensed food establishment.

Handwashing

Unwashed hands are the leading cause of germ contamination of foods. To reduce the spread of bacteria and viruses, it is essential that hands are washed before and during sample preparation.

A temporary or permanent (plumbed sink) handwashing facility must be at the location where sampling will occur. A temporary handwash station must be created when a plumbed sink is not available.

A temporary handwash station has a spigotted container (able to hold at least 5 gallons of warm water), liquid soap, paper towels and a catch basin for wastewater. *Ensure supplies are available for the duration of the event.*



A handwashing facility must be available, even if gloves or other barriers are used. If gloves are going to be worn during sample preparation or serving, you must wash your hands before putting them on. Because gloves can become contaminated, it is necessary to change gloves often and wash your hands each time gloves are changed.

There are many antibacterial products available, including hand gels. Hand gels are not necessary for food service and are not permitted as a *replacement* for handwashing when working with food. If you use these products, only apply them after thoroughly washing your hands. **Do not use a hand gel in place of handwashing.**

Sanitizing Solution

A sanitizing solution must be available to sanitize all cleaned surfaces and utensils prior to, and during, sample preparation. Sanitizing will kill germs so they will not contaminate the food. There are three types of approved sanitizers that may be used: chlorine bleach, quaternary ammonium, or iodophor solutions. When using an ammonium or iodophor product, follow the mixing and usage directions carefully.

To prepare a chlorine bleach solution: mix 1 teaspoon of bleach per gallon of cool water. The bleach solution may be prepared in an open container or in a spray bottle. Solutions prepared in open containers must be changed every 2 hours to remain effective. Keep wiping cloths immersed in the solution to prevent germs from multiplying on the cloths.

The bleach solution can also be put into an airtight spray bottle. To use: spray the solution on a clean surface, let it stand for at least one minute, then wipe it off with a *dry paper towel*. The spray bottle needs to be clearly labeled so it is not used for the wrong job. Wiping cloths are not permitted for use with spray containers of sanitizer--you must use disposable paper towels.

Sneeze Guards

To protect the food from contamination by the public, a sneeze guard must be provided if more than 12 samples are on display.

A sneeze guard can be in the form of a dome, sheet of plexiglass, or similar type of cover. If samples are provided outdoors, there must also be an overhead cover above the sampling area.