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OPEN AIR BARBECUE OPERATIONS

The California Retail Food Code (CalCode) allows open-air barbecues and outdoor wood burning ovens to operate in conjunction with certain food facilities. The following summarizes CalCode and Division of Environmental Health (DEH) requirements for open-air barbecues in Humboldt County. Numbers in parentheses refer to relevant sections of CalCode.

1. Prior to building, installing, or purchasing any open-air barbecue, the plans, equipment, and construction must be approved by DEH (see Humboldt County Food Facility Plan Check Guide for more information on plans and submittal). Permits or review may also be required from the local planning, building, and fire authorities. (114380)
2. Prior to operating any open-air barbecue, the operation must be inspected and approved by DEH. (114381)
3. Open-air barbecue operations are limited to approved, permitted food facilities where the open-air barbecue is operated on the same premises as (in reasonable proximity to) and in conjunction with:
 - a. A permanent food facility that is approved for food preparation, or
 - b. A temporary food facility, or
 - c. A mobile food facility that is operated at a permitted community event, such as a fair or festival. Open-air barbecues may not operate in conjunction with a mobile food facility (MFF), except at community events. (113843)
4. An approved open-air barbecue is part of a permitted food facility, and may not serve as the entire kitchen for the facility.
5. Open-air barbecue facilities must comply with CalCode and the current version of CCDEH "Guidelines for the Installation and Use of Open-Air Barbecues" (begins on page two).

CALIFORNIA CONFERENCE OF DIRECTIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH (CCDEH)

GUIDELINES FOR THE INSTALLATION AND USE OF OPEN-AIR BARBECUES

(Revised July 2008)

BACKGROUND

This guideline was originally created in May 1999. This revision was completed by the Bay Area Food Technical Advisory Committee in response to the adoption of the California Retail Food Code (CRFC).

The California Retail Food Code contains requirements for the use of open-air barbecues, which are defined in Section 113843. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide uniform minimum structural and operational criteria to assure that proper health and sanitation standards are met.

SCOPE

The provisions of the CRFC which permit the use of an open-air barbecue, apply only to approved food facilities where the open-air barbecue is operated on the same premises as, in reasonable proximity to, and in conjunction with a permanent food facility that is approved for food preparation, or a temporary food facility, or a mobile food facility that is operated at a community event (Section 114143a).

DEFINITIONS

OPEN-AIR BARBECUE is a piece of equipment designed for barbecuing food where the food is prepared out of doors by cooking directly over hot coals, heated lava, hot stones, gas flame, or other method approved by the department, on equipment suitably designed and maintained for use out of doors, that is operated by a temporary food facility or a mobile food facility that remains fixed during hours of operation at a community event or a permanent food facility (Section 113843).

** Note: Barbecuing means that cooking is achieved by radiant heat and not via conduction or convection. The food being barbecued must be heated directly over the heat source and not through an intermediate medium or vessel. Wrapping the food in foil or placing the food in cooking utensils (i.e. pots and pans) and then placing the wrapped food or utensil over the heat source does not constitute barbecuing. Examples of equipment that are not considered to be open-air barbecues include but are not limited to: griddles, ranges, ovens, and some underground vaults and pits.

PERMANENT OPEN-AIR BARBECUE is an open-air barbecue unit that is permanently fixed in place.

TEMPORARY OPEN-AIR BARBECUE is an open-air barbecue unit that is of such size and design so as to be readily movable to storage and clean up facilities.

STRUCTURAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Only those approved permanent food facilities, mobile food facilities, and temporary food facilities that meet the requirements for food preparation and service will be approved to operate and maintain an open-air barbecue. Adequate preparation, storage space, and equipment shall be provided to accommodate the operation of the open-air barbecue so as not to interfere with the sanitary operation of the food facility.
2. The open air barbecue is separated from public access to prevent food contamination or injury to the public by using ropes or other approved methods. Minimum 3-foot distance recommended or as approved by the local fire department. Check with the local fire jurisdiction for specific minimum distance requirements.
3. If the open-air barbecue is a permanent structure, it shall be equipped and maintained with a floor surface that is smooth, impervious, and easily cleanable. This floor surface must extend a minimum of five (5) feet from the open-air barbecue on all open sides. When wall surfaces are within five (5) feet of a permanent open-air barbecue, they shall be durable, smooth, non-absorbent, and washable. [§11401H (l)]

4. An open-air barbecue may be operated adjacent to a mobile food facility at a community event, if approved by the enforcement agency. [§114307 (c)]
5. The floor surface on which a temporary open-air barbecue is located shall be smooth and easily cleanable. The floor shall be made of approved material, including but not limited to metal, tile, concrete, or other acceptable material.
6. The open-air barbecue shall be located in an area which suitably protects the food and/or equipment from dust, dirt, and overhead contamination. The surface of the ground adjacent to the open-air barbecue must consist of a material which will inhibit the generation of dust.
7. The open-air barbecue and all accessory equipment associated with its operation shall be made of nontoxic materials, constructed so as to be rodent-proof, readily and easily cleaned, kept clean, maintained in good repair, and designed for its intended use. Exterior surfaces of open-air barbecue units shall be made of acceptable materials that are flush, smooth, and made non-absorbent by utilizing an approved sealer where appropriate. Food contact surfaces shall meet or be equivalent to approved applicable sanitation standards.
8. All accessory equipment located at an open-air barbecue site (other than the open-air barbecue unit) shall be portable. No permanently installed food-related equipment (including but not limited to refrigeration and hot holding units), structures, counters, or enclosures are permitted. Permanently installed electrical or plumbing connections to food equipment are not permitted other than gas lines to the open-air barbecue unit.
9. Approved toilet and hand washing facilities which are on the same premises as the on-site food facility shall be kept clean, fully operative, and in good repair. All hand washing facilities associated with the open-air barbecue operation shall be approved by the enforcement officer prior to use.
10. All necessary approvals and permits from the local fire and building authorities must be obtained for all open-air barbecues.

OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Foods which are intended to be stored at or served from an open-air barbecue are limited to foods barbecued directly upon the open-air barbecue and condiments such as relish, onions, or catsup that are prepackaged or dispensed from approved pump-type, pour-type, or squeeze-type containers, or fully enclosed dispensing systems. Buns, rolls, or garnishes – such as lettuce, tomatoes, or pickles – are not permitted to be stored at, or served from, an open-air barbecue unless dispensed from units approved by the enforcement agency.

1. All foods held at an open-air barbecue must be returned to the food facility during periods when the open-air barbecue is not in use.
 - ** Note: Open-air barbecues operating at temporary food facilities must comply with other requirements as noted in §114335 et seq.
2. No food preparation may take place out of doors except the barbecuing of foods on the open-air barbecue and the application of condiments to the foods barbecued. No other forms of preparation including – but not limited to – forming, trimming, or slicing, may take place out-of-doors.
3. Foods which are barbecued on the open-air barbecue may be served directly from the open-air barbecue unit using sanitary utensils or returned to the food facility for serving.
4. All food to be barbecued on an open-air barbecue shall at times be protected from dust, dirt, insects, rodents, and other forms of contamination.
5. All foods capable of supporting the rapid and progressive growth of pathogenic microorganisms shall be barbecued according to §114004. Cooked and refrigerated food that is prepared for immediate service in response to an individual consumer order may be served at any temperature. (§114014)

6. An accurate, metal stem, probe-type thermometer suitable for measuring the temperature of the potentially hazardous food shall be kept readily available for use at the barbecue. (§114157 and 114014)
7. All open-air barbecue equipment, utensils, and accessory fixtures associated with an open-air barbecue shall be kept clean and in good repair. They shall be cleaned daily or more often, as needed. Food contact surfaces, including utensils, shall be cleaned and sanitized according to §114097 and 114099.6.
8. No open-air barbecue may be operated under conditions in which the foods are likely to be adulterated. The operator of the open-air barbecue shall immediately cease operation and dispensing if unsanitary conditions exist whereby the food may become contaminated, rendered unwholesome, or otherwise adulterated (e.g., by inclement weather), as required by §113980.
9. No insecticide shall be used at an open-air barbecue unless it is approved for use within food facilities and is used in a manner consistent with the label instructions such that it will not cause contamination of food or utensils. (§114254 – 114254.3)
10. No live animals, birds, or fowl shall be kept or allowed within 20 feet of any area where food or beverage is prepared, stored, kept, or served, except as noted in §114259.4 – 114259.5.
11. All food waste or rubbish associated with an open-air barbecue shall be placed in disposable bags, impervious to moisture, and sealed or stored in non-absorbent, rodent-proof containers which have tight-fitting lids. All waste containers shall be kept clean and in sanitary condition.
12. All equipment associated with an open-air barbecue must be returned to approved clean up and storage facilities at the end of each day's use.
13. Approved storage facilities shall include accommodations that will properly protect the equipment from contamination when the open-air barbecue is not in use. The storage of the open-air barbecue equipment in the on-site food facility shall not interfere with the sanitary operation of the approved on-site facility, and the storage facilities shall be available during periods when the open-air barbecue is not in operation.
14. All employees, while preparing or serving food at an open-air barbecue, shall have their hair confined, wear clean and washable outer garments, and refrain from the use of tobacco in any form.
15. Open-air barbecues may only be operated by the permit holder adjacent to the permanent food facility, mobile food facility, or temporary food facility.