

Georgia Food Safety Regulations Cheat Sheet



This guide is only meant to be an introduction to food safety for agritourism venues in the state of Georgia and was prepared with resources from Southern SARE. Even if the site does not serve prepared foods, farmers markets, stands and agritourism venues should consider food safety as well.

Best management practices are ever-changing and local health agencies are ultimately responsible for regulating activity. Consult your local health department in addition to the state agency.

Minimizing health risks associated with food service helps to ensure visitors, employees and others an amazing experience. For the purpose of this guide, food safety is a measure of the risk to health and safety posed by handling and consuming agricultural products or prepared foods purchased at a farmers market or agritourism venue.

The Georgia Food Act defines food as “articles used for food or drink for human consumption, chewing gum, and articles used for components of any such article.” A food product is “contaminated with filth” if the food is not securely protected from dust, dirt, and all foreign or injurious contamination.

The following regulations are excerpts from the Georgia Department of Human Resources, Public Health Food Service Code Chapter 290.5.14. Please refer to this document for further explanation or definition.

(a) Valid Permit Required. It shall be unlawful for any person to operate any type of food service operation: food service establishment, mobile food service unit, extended food service unit, or temporary food service establishment, without having first obtained a valid food service permit from the Health Authority pursuant to this Chapter

(2) Mobile Food Service Unit. A food service permit will be issued to a mobile food service operation in the county of origin where the base of operation is located. A separate “Mobile Unit Permit” will be issued for each mobile unit in each county in which the mobile unit operates.

(3) Application for a Permit

(a) Requirements. The management of the food service establishment including a mobile food service unit and an extended food service unit shall submit to the local Health Authority an application for a permit at least ten (10) business days prior to the anticipated date of opening and commencement of the op

(1) Mobile Food Service Units and Extended Food Service Units

(a) Compliance Required. Mobile food service units and extended food service units shall comply with the requirements of this Chapter, except as otherwise provided in this subsection and as specified under subsection (1)(b) of this Rule.

1. The Health Authority may impose additional requirements to protect against health hazards related to the conduct of the food service establishment as a mobile operation; or
2. May prohibit the sale of some or all potentially hazardous food, and
3. When no health hazard will result, may modify requirements of this Rule relating to physical facilities, except those requirements specified under subsections (1)(e) and (f) of this Rule.

(b) Exceptions to Compliance.

1. Mobile food service units and extended food service units serving only food prepared, prepackaged in individual servings, transported and stored under conditions meeting the requirements of the Chapter; or

2. Beverages that are not potentially hazardous and are dispensed from covered urns or other protected equipment, need not comply with requirements of this Chapter pertaining to the necessity of water and sewage systems nor to those requirements pertaining to the cleaning and sanitization if the required equipment for cleaning and sanitization exists at the commissary or other approved base of operation.

3. Frankfurters, precooked encased sausages, and similar approved foods requiring heating only may be prepared and served from enclosed type mobile food service units approved for such purpose having handwashing and utensil sanitation facilities on the unit, positioned at a fixed location, and operating from an approved commissary or base of operation

(2) Temporary Food Service Establishments

(a) Operation, Permit Application, Responsibilities

1. A temporary food service establishment means a food service establishment that operates at the same location for a period of no more than 14 consecutive days in conjunction with a single event or celebration.

2. The application for a special food service permit shall indicate the inclusive dates of the proposed operation and must be submitted at least 30 days prior to the event

Exceptions to Compliance. Temporary food services which:

1. Are sponsored by a political subdivision of this state or by an organization exempt from taxes under paragraph (1) of subsection of (a) of Code Section 48-7-25 or under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(d) or paragraphs (1) through (8) or paragraph (10) of Section 501 (c) of the Internal Revenue Code, as that code is defined in Code Section 48-1-2; Chapter 290-5-14 Food Service 138

2. Last 120 hours or less; and

3. When sponsored by such an organization, is authorized to be conducted pursuant of a permit issued by the municipality or county in which it is conducted.

A "label" means a display of written, printed or graphic matter upon the immediate container of any food article. The food product is properly labeled if every weight, statement or other information appears on the outside wrapper or container of a retail package, or is easily legible through the outside container or wrapper. "Labeling" means all labels and other written, printed or graphic matter upon an article or any of its containers or wrappers or accompanying such article.

1. "Ready-to-eat food" means food that is in a form that is edible without additional preparation to achieve food safety, or is a raw or partially cooked animal food and the consumer is advised, or is prepared in accordance with a variance that is granted, and may receive additional preparation for palatability or aesthetic, epicurean, gastronomic, or culinary purposes.

2. "Ready-to-eat food" includes:

(i) Raw animal food that is cooked or frozen;

(ii) Raw fruits and vegetables that are washed;

(iii) Fruits and vegetables that are cooked for hot holding;

(iv) All potentially hazardous food (time/temperature control for safety food) that is cooked to the temperature and time required for the specific food and cooled;

(v) Plant food for which further washing, cooking, or other processing is not required for food safety, and from which rinds, peels, husks, or shells, if naturally present are removed;

(vi) Substances derived from plants such as spices, seasonings, and sugar;

(vii) A bakery item such as bread, cakes, pies, fillings, or icing for which further cooking is not required for food safety;

(viii) The following products that are produced in accordance with USDA guidelines and that have received a lethality treatment for pathogens: dry, fermented sausages, such as dry salami or pepperoni; salt-cured meat and poultry products, such as prosciutto ham, country cured ham, and Parma ham; and dried meat and poultry products, such as jerky or beef sticks; and

(ix) Foods manufactured as specified in 21 CFR Part 113, Thermally Processed Low-Acid Foods Packaged in Hermetically Sealed Containers.

A summary of a few recent major changes in Georgia's food safety regulations (Chapter 290-5-14).

- **PERSON-IN-CHARGE (PIC) OF THE OPERATION DURING INSPECTION MUST DEMONSTRATE FOOD SAFETY KNOWLEDGE**

PIC must demonstrate knowledge of foodborne disease prevention, application of the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles, and complying with the requirements of rules by:

- (1) Having no critical violations during the current inspection;
- (2) Being a CFSM; or
- (3) Responding correctly to the inspector's questions as they relate to the specific food operation.

- **DOUBLE HANDWASHING IS REQUIRED AFTER USING THE RESTROOM**

You must wash your hands before leaving the restroom and again in the kitchen before returning to your duties. Wash hands at designated hand stations only, never in kitchen sinks. Hand antiseptics are never substitutes for hand washing. Apply these products only after properly washing hands.

- **GLOVES ARE REQUIRED WHEN PREPARING ANY READY-TO-EAT FOODS**

You must wear clean disposable gloves when preparing any ready-to-eat foods with your hands. Change disposable gloves any time you touch an unclean surface or change tasks.

- **DATE MARKING ON FOODS IS NOW REQUIRED – FOODS MAY BE HELD 7 DAYS MAXIMUM**

Potentially hazardous foods prepared on site and held in refrigeration for more than 24 hours must be marked with the name of the food, the preparation date, and the use-by date or discard date. If the food is held under refrigeration at 41°F or below, the maximum holding time is seven (7) calendar days. Commercially prepared containers of potentially hazardous foods that are opened and held at 41°F or below must also be marked with the use-by or discard date (no more than seven (7) calendar days).

RESOURCES for Georgia Food Health and Safety and Agritourism venues

<http://health.state.ga.us/pdfs/environmental/Food/Rules/FoodServiceRules.pdf>

<http://www.nasda.org/nasda/nasda/foundation/foodsafety/Georgia.pdf>

http://sfp.ucdavis.edu/farmers_market/food_safety.pdf

Disclaimer:

This information is to only be used as a reference material and all appropriate agencies should be contacted. Information included is provided in the resources listed above. Utilization of this document does not constitute an agreement with any agency listed