

School Food Activities

Schools often host food programs for their students. Environmental Public Health (EPH) issues Food Handling Permits for select meal and snack programs, and these programs must comply with Alberta's Food Regulation. Schools may also participate in school food activities that do not require a Food Handling Permit. The following tables explain when a school must apply for a Food Handling Permit.

DEFINITIONS

Complex Foods: Foods that require extensive handling to prepare.

Delivered Meals: Meals are prepared by a restaurant or other food facility that holds a valid Food Handling Permit and delivered to the school for students. The meals may be pre-portioned or may require portioning by school staff.

Simple Foods: Foods that require very little preparation or handling.

Special Lunch Events: Food activities that occur occasionally throughout the school year where school staff and/or volunteers prepare simple foods for students. This does not include meal/snack programs that occur regularly during the school year.

FOOD ACTIVITIES THAT REQUIRE A FOOD HANDLING PERMIT

School Food Activity	Comments
Meal/Snack Programs Provided by the School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple or complex foods may be served. School must use appropriate facilities.
Kiosks and/or Stores Selling Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-packaged foods may be sold. Food preparation may be permitted.
Lunchrooms Preparing Food On-Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School or company leasing the lunchroom or cafeteria facilities must hold a valid Food Handling Permit.
Cafeterias Preparing Complex Foods	

FOOD ACTIVITIES THAT DO NOT REQUIRE A FOOD HANDLING PERMIT

School Food Activity	Comments
Bake Sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise money for charitable purposes only. • Sell only low-risk foods. • Please read Bake Sale Guidelines available at http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/eph/Page13999.aspx under Community Events
BBQ (outdoors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify AHS Environmental Public Health to discuss safe food preparation.
Delivered Meals Ordered by School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes special lunch events or regular meal/snack programs where restaurants or similar food facilities deliver meals. • Food facilities must hold valid Food Handling Permits. • Food must be served on the day it is delivered. • Minimize the time food is held between 4°C and 60°C.
Fundraisers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sell food items like cookie dough, frozen pizzas or similar products. • Sell only pre-packaged foods. • Collect orders and deliver food items only.
Meal/Snack Programs Provided by Caterers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caterers prepare food off-site and serve food in temporary buffet-style set-up. • Caterers must hold valid Food Handling Permits.
Milk Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve in original containers
Special Lunch Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occur intermittently. • Prepare simple foods only. • Use appropriate facilities for food preparation.
Water Coolers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean and maintain water coolers regularly.

More information about safe food handling activities that do not require a Food Handling Permit is available from the [Guidelines for School Food Activities that Do Not Require a Food Handling Permit](#) public resource, available at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/eph/Page8302.aspx> under **Schools** heading.

For more information, please contact your nearest Environmental Public Health office.

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