

GUIDELINES FOR THE INSTALLATION AND USE OF OPEN-AIR BARBECUE FACILITIES

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BACKGROUND

California Retail Food Code (CalCode) contains requirements for the use of open-air barbecue facilities. 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 Health and Safety Code which permit the use of an open-air barbecue facility apply only to approved food facilities where the barbecue is operated on the same premises as, and in conjunction with, a food facility, temporary food facility, or stationary mobile food preparation unit.

DEFINITIONS

1. **Barbecuing** - shall mean cooking foods directly over hot coals, heated rocks or stones, radiant metal bars, or gas flame. The cooking must be done 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 barbecues include but are not limited to, griddles, ranges, ovens, and some underground vaults and pits.
2. **Open-air barbecue facility** - shall mean an unenclosed facility 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 California Department of Health Services, on equipment suitably designed and maintained for use out-of-doors, that is operated by an approved food facility, stationary mobile food preparation unit, or temporary food facility.
3. **Permanent barbecue facility** - shall mean a barbecue unit that is permanently fixed in place.
4. **Temporary barbecue facility** - shall mean a 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 food facilities, stationary mobile food preparation units, and temporary food facilities that meet the requirements for food preparation and service will be approved to operate and maintain an open-air barbecue facility. Adequate preparation and storage space and adequate 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. If the barbecue facility is a permanent structure, it shall be equipped and maintained with a floor surface that is smooth, nonabsorbent, durable, 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 the permanent open-air barbecue they shall be durable, smooth, nonabsorbent, and washable.

3. The barbecue facility may not be operated in or out of any motor vehicle, as determined by the enforcement officer. For the purposes of this section a motor vehicle does not include a stationary mobile food preparation unit.

4. The floor surface on which a temporary barbecue facility is located shall be smooth and easily cleanable. The floor shall be made of approved material, including, but not limited to, metal, tile, and concrete, or other acceptable material.

5. The barbecue facility shall be located in an area which suitably protects the food and equipment from dust, dirt, and overhead contamination. The surface of the ground adjacent to the barbecue facility must consist of a material which will inhibit the generation of dust.

6. The barbecue unit 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 barbecue units shall be made of acceptable materials that are flush, smooth, and made nonabsorbent by utilizing an approved sealer where appropriate. Food contact surfaces shall meet or be equivalent to approved applicable sanitation standards.

7. All accessory equipment located at an open-air barbecue site (other than the 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 barbecue unit.

8. Approved toilet and handwashing facilities which are on the same premises as the on-site food facility shall be available for use within 200 feet of the barbecue facility. All restroom and handwashing facilities shall be kept clean, fully operative, and in good repair. All handwashing facilities associated with the barbecue operation shall be approved by the enforcement officer prior to use. Handwash and toilet facilities which are not approved shall not be located closer to the barbecue facility than the required, approved facilities.

9. All necessary approvals and permits from the local fire and building authorities must be obtained for all open-air barbecue facilities.

OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Foods which are intended to be stored at or served from an open-air barbecue facility are limited to foods barbecued directly upon the 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 facility unless dispensed from units approved by the enforcement officer.

2. All foods held at a barbecue facility must be returned to the food facility during periods when the barbecue is not in use.
3. No food preparation may take place out-of-doors except the barbecuing of foods on the barbecue and the application of condiments to the foods barbecued. No other form of preparation including, but not limited to, forming, trimming, grinding, or slicing, may take place out-of-doors.
4. Foods which are barbecued on the barbecue may be dispensed directly from the barbecue unit using sanitary utensils or returned to the food facility for serving.
5. All food to be barbecued on an open-air barbecue shall at all times be reasonably protected from dust, dirt, insects, rodents, and other forms of contamination.
6. All foods capable of supporting the rapid and progressive growth of pathogenic microorganisms shall be barbecued according to the Health and Safety Code.
7. 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 facility.
8. All barbecue equipment, utensils, and accessory fixtures associated with a barbecue facility 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 the Health and Safety Code.
9. No 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).
10. No insecticide shall be used at an open-air barbecue facility unless it is approved for use within food establishments and is used in a manner consistent with the label instructions such that it will not cause contamination of food or utensils.
11. 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 CalCode.
12. All food waste or rubbish associated with a barbecue facility 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 a sanitary condition.
13. All equipment associated with a barbecue facility must be returned to approved clean up and storage facilities at the end of each day's use.

14. Approved storage facilities shall include accommodations that will properly protect the equipment from contamination when the barbecue facility is not in use. The storage of the 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 barbecue is not in operation.

15. All employees, while preparing or serving food at an open-air barbecue facility, shall have their hair confined, wear clean, washable outer garments, and refrain from the use of tobacco in any form.

16. Open-air barbecue facilities may only be operated by the permittee on the same premises as, and in conjunction with, the on-site food establishment, stationary mobile food preparation unit, or temporary food facility.