

Guidelines for Providing Safe Food Samples at Farmers Markets

Farmers' markets operating will be inspected using the California Retail Food Code (Cal Code) that requires basic sanitation practices to be followed when samples are dispersed at farmers' markets

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Sampling

Due to quality concerns, preparation of most fruit and vegetable samples requiring cutting or slicing needs to be done on-site, immediately prior to consumption. Samples prepared ahead of time must be prepared in a licensed kitchen.

Best Practices - Bring several clean knives and cutting boards in protective plastic containers or food storage bags, wrapped in plastic wrap, etc. Use clean equipment to cut product, taking care to store in-use items so they are protected from contamination.

- Replace soiled knives, cutting boards, etc. with clean items every four hours.
- Use single service items whenever possible.
- Store soiled items in a closed bag or container to avoid attracting insects. Take soiled items with you at the end of the day.
- Should on-site utensil and equipment washing be necessary, set up and operate as shown in warewashing section.
- All fruits and vegetables must be rinsed thoroughly in clean water. Should a potable water supply not be available on-site, rinse products to be used for sampling in advance and store in disposable food bags..
- Fruit and vegetable sample servings must be protected from contamination at all times. **Serving must be done in a manner protecting the sample from any bare hand contact.** Utilizing disposable gloves, single service utensils, napkins or tissues, or toothpicks are all adequate methods to avoid handling prepared samples. If preparing some samples ahead of time, wrap cut product samples in plastic wrap.
- Melons and tomatoes must be stored at 41°F or below, once cut. These items have been associated with foodborne disease outbreaks. Mechanical refrigeration is recommended.

Food Protection -All food shall be protected from customer handling, coughing, sneezing, or other contamination by wrapping, the use of sneeze guards, or other effective barriers.

- Preparation of samples must be done using smooth, cleanable surfaces (i.e. tables) that are protected from customer traffic.
- Slicing must be done on cutting boards. **Slicing may not be done on vehicle tailgates or by using pocket knives.**
- Display food samples on disposable plates or trays clean sanitized display trayware, unless approved warewashing facilities are provided on-site.
- When transporting pre-prepared samples, protect from contamination and maintain temperature of 41°F or below

Overhead Protection - Outdoor farmers' market booths which offer food samples must be covered with a canopy or other type of overhead protection unless the food items offered are pre-packaged. Overhead protection is not required over outdoor cooking devices.

Floors - Flooring is necessary when located on dirt, gravel or a surface that can allow dust or mud to be generated and contaminate food samples. When temporary flooring is provided, it should be constructed of materials such as non-absorbent matting, tight wood or removable platforms that minimize dust and mud.

Processed Food Sampling

Processed foods include bakery items, jams, jellies, jerky, cheese, salsa, canned items, etc.

Best Practice

Prepare samples at a licensed kitchen prior to arriving at the market. For example, a vendor that operates a licensed bakery or a cottage food operator can cut baked goods into pieces at their production facility, place them on a tray, insert a toothpick in each piece, and keep the tray covered with plastic wrap.

- Packaged items (i.e., jelly, salsa, etc.) may be opened one package at a time and supplied with a disposable utensil for customers to use.
- Generally, use toothpicks, wax paper, paper sampling cups, or disposable utensils to distribute samples.
- Temperature control must be maintained on items needing refrigeration after opening until the food is consumed or discarded.
- Bring several clean, sanitized knives and cutting boards in protective plastic containers or food storage bags, wrapped in plastic wrap, etc.
- Use clean equipment to cut product, taking care to store in-use items so they are protected from contamination.
- Replace soiled knives, cutting boards, etc. with clean items every two hours.
- Use single service items whenever possible.

Take soiled items with you at the end of the day. Should on-site utensil and equipment washing be necessary, set up and operate as shown below:

Warewashing

- When on-site warewashing is necessary it must be done as follows. Either a commercial dishwasher or a three-compartment sink set-up must be utilized to wash, rinse, and sanitize equipment and utensils coming into contact with food. The minimum requirements for a utensil washing set-up to wash/rinse/sanitize should consist of three basins that are large enough for immersion of the utensils, a potable hot water supply.



Sanitizing

An approved sanitizer must be provided for sanitizing food contact surfaces. Sanitizers must be used at appropriate strengths as specified by manufacturer. Three common sanitizers, and the typical concentrations required by manufacturers, are:

- Chlorine solution = 50 ppm;
- Iodine solution = 12.5 to 25 ppm;
- Quaternary ammonium compound = 200 ppm.

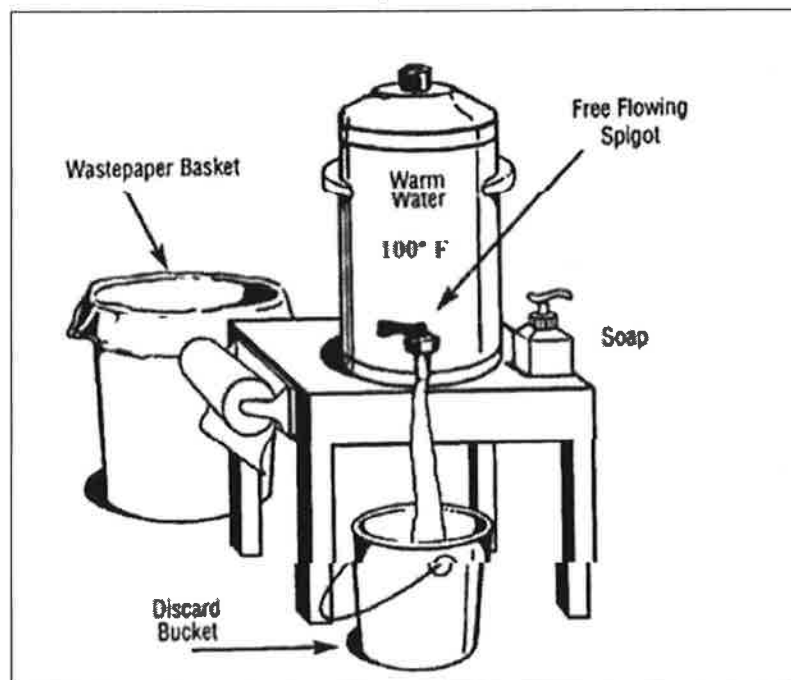
Soak clean, rinsed items in sanitizing solution for at least 60 seconds and then air dry. An approved test kit to measure sanitizer concentrations must be available and used.

Personal Hygiene - The following practices will help assure food safety:

- Avoid bare hand contact with ready-to-eat food - Suitable utensils, such as deli paper, spatulas, tongs, dispensing equipment, or gloves shall be used.
- Practice Good Personal Hygiene
 - Food employees shall maintain a high degree of personal cleanliness and shall conform to good hygienic practices during all working periods.
 - Smoking, eating, and drinking are not allowed by food employees when preparing or serving samples.
 - Wash hands frequently after using the toilet room, handling animals, coughing/sneezing, using a handkerchief, touching bare human body parts, using tobacco, eating/drinking, handling soiled equipment/utensils and after engaging in any other activities that contaminate the hands.
 - Wash hands properly: food employees shall clean their hands and exposed portions of the arms in a properly equipped handwashing facility by vigorously rubbing together the surfaces of the lathered hands and thoroughly rinsing with clean water.

Handwashing Facilities - When cutting or handling exposed ready to eat food, use either hand wash facilities provided in your space or located in close proximity to your space (i.e. within app. 15').

1. Potable hot and cold tempered running water under pressure with suitable hand cleaner, dispensed paper towels, and a waste receptacle. This option must be used when available.
2. When food exposure is limited, a food vendor may use a five-gallon insulated container with a spigot, which can be turned on to allow potable, clean, warm water to flow over one's hands into a waste receiving bucket of equal or larger volume; suitable hand cleaner; disposable towels, and a waste receptacle.



Exclude Ill Employees From Work - The person in charge must exclude employees who have the following conditions:

- Symptoms such as diarrhea, fever, vomiting, jaundice, sore throat with fever. (A food employee with vomiting or diarrhea must be free of symptoms for at least 24hours.)
- Illnesses such as Salmonella, Shigella, E.coli 0157:H7, Hepatitis A, or Norovirus or other communicable diseases.