

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE
ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH AND SAFETY DEPARTMENT**

		Effective Date January 12, 2026	Number F 03
Subject UHCL Temporary Food Permit Guidelines			
Reference 25 TAC 228.222, 25 TAC 229		Special Instructions None	
Distribution UHCL Faculty, Staff, Students, and Guests		Reevaluation Date December 2026	No. Pages 12

I. PURPOSE

When faculty, staff, students, and/or visitors want to cook and/or distribute food on UHCL property, steps must be taken to ensure food is purchased, handled, prepared, and served safely according to state and federal food regulations for the public. The university has developed the UHCL Temporary Food Permit Guidelines (TFP-Guidelines) to address these concerns and fulfill state requirements.

The UHCL TFP-Guidelines do not in any way replace or supersede food safety and health regulations set forth by any city, county, state of Texas, or federal regulations. Where this guideline or local regulation sets stricter standards, the stricter standard shall be followed.

Anyone requesting to distribute food on campus must have an approved permit and comply with [Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 228 \(TFER\)](#).

For any food-related questions or concerns, please contact the EHS department at foodpermits@uhcl.edu.

II. DEFINITIONS

- Catering Services – A licensed entity that provides food services (cooking and/or provision of cooked and/or uncooked food) at an event. The catering service is required to have properly trained personnel and all necessary equipment to maintain temperature control and handle food before, during, and after the event.
- Declaration of Acknowledgement (DOA) - A signature page for individuals or groups to print and sign, indicating that they have read, understood, and agreed to the Temporary Food Permit (TFP) Guidelines prior to applying for a TFP. The guidelines must be reviewed and signed annually, or whenever updates are made.
- Event Assistant – An individual who prepares and/or distributes food or drink to the public.

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE

ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH AND SAFETY DEPARTMENT

- Food Establishment - An operation—temporary or permanent, mobile or stationary—where food or beverages are prepared, packaged, served, or otherwise provided for human consumption, and possession of the food is relinquished to a consumer. This includes, but is not limited to, residential cafeterias, delicatessens, caterers, food trucks, concession stands, restaurants, temporary food service establishments, makers' markets, public events, fundraisers, and any other establishment where food and beverages are prepared or served to the UHS community.
- Food Handler Certificate (FHC) – A certification accredited by the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) or the ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB). The FHC proves a person's knowledge of safely handling and serving food. **This certificate is required by individuals who plan to distribute medium and high-risk food items.** *Certificates must include an expiration date or clearly indicate when they expire.*
- Food Manager Certificate (FMC) – A certification accredited by the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) or the ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB). The FMC proves a person's knowledge and skills to keep food safe and prevent foodborne illnesses. **This certificate is required for high-risk food events** (e.g., Chili Cook-Off). *Certificates must include an expiration date or clearly indicate when they expire.*
- Open Flame Permit (OFP) – An OFP is required to approve the use of open flames for cooking, hot holding, or decorative purposes. This includes chafing fuel cans, wood/charcoal grills, barbecue pits, propane grills, candles, sparklers, tiki torches, oil lamps, bonfires, etc.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - gloves, hair restraints, face masks, etc.
- Responsible Person – The applicant of the TFP who is trained and ensures the food service and/or event, and Event Assistant(s) adhere to policies and procedures.
- Temporary Food Permit (TFP) - A one-time or recurring permit approved for specific date(s) and time range, allowing a maximum of four hours for medium and high-risk foods, and no set time limit for low-risk foods.

III. CHARTWELLS AGREEMENT

A. University Funds

1. UHCL departments, groups, and/or organizations **using university funds** (greater than \$250 or more than \$500 for UHCL-Pearland) must first request services from Chartwells. UHCL has an exclusive agreement with Chartwells, the UHCL Dining (Food) Services provider on campus. It is a violation of the agreement to allow any other outside vendors to sell food products or provide samples to our campus community without requesting their services first. Catering requests with Chartwells may be submitted via [Fresh Fork Catering](#).

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE
ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH AND SAFETY DEPARTMENT**

2. **If university funds are being used** and you do not wish to use Chartwells products or services, then a Food Service Waiver Request Form must be completed. To obtain a [Food Service Waiver Request](#), complete the following steps:
 - a. Email foodservice@uhcl.edu, and attach your quote(s) from the vendor or store.
 - b. Forward your approved response from Chartwells with the attached quote(s), a completed [Waiver Request Authorization Form](#), and any other pertinent information to procurement@uhcl.edu. Please note this form must be submitted a **minimum of ten business days** before the event.
 - c. If approved, the requester will receive a signed Food Waiver Request from the Procurement Department.
 - d. After you receive the waiver, **you must still obtain a TFP.**

IV. OUTSIDE CATERER

All outside caterers, vendors, restaurants, or contractors providing food at UHCL and UHCL-Pearland, whether for profit or not, must possess a valid City or County Health Permit, which must be visibly displayed.

V. PROCEDURES FOR EMPLOYEES

A. How To Obtain a Temporary Food Permit (TFP)

1. Reserve your space/room first. UHCL [Scheduling](#) must confirm site reservation before applying for the TFP and/or OFP online.
2. To use the online [TFP Request System](#), you will need a valid UHCL email and login credentials. The "Username" is your faculty or staff email prefix, the same as your UHCL computer and email account login (e.g., lastname@uhcl.edu).
3. Before completing the online application, each applicant/Responsible Person and Event Assistant(s) must read these TFP-Guidelines and submit a [Declaration of Acknowledgement \(DOA\)](#) to the online TFP Request System found on the [EHS Forms webpage](#).
 - a. The DOA signature page remains valid for one year, unless an update has been made. It can be submitted as a single sheet containing multiple signatures or, preferably, submitted individually online. Submitting them individually allows for easier searching of the DOA by name for future applications.
4. After the DOA is uploaded, the application link will appear.
5. See *Procedures & Training Requirements for Employees and Student Organizations*.

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE
ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH AND SAFETY DEPARTMENT**

VI. PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

All student organizations at UHCL that wish to serve food must be officially recognized and registered with the UHCL Center for Student Engagement. Only after completing this registration can they apply online for a TFP through HawkLink. If you have any questions or concerns about this process, please contact the Center for Student Engagement at 281-283-2560 or via email at engagement@uhcl.edu.

VII. PROCEDURES & TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR EMPLOYEES AND STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

A. Submission Deadline

1. The TFP requests must be submitted at least 10 days before the proposed event.
2. **Requests submitted within the 10-day window will automatically be denied a permit.**

B. Home-Cooked Food is Prohibited

1. Food shall be prepared only in permitted or licensed establishments.
2. **Food prepared in a private home and distributed to the public is not allowed; this includes Hunter Hall.**
3. Homemade food may not be distributed on campus to the public as donations, for fundraising, for profit, or for free.

C. Fundraising

Food may be sold ONLY for fundraising purposes, not for profit.

D. Food Handler Certificate (FHC) (Required for Medium & High-Risk Events Only)

1. The FHC is required for the Responsible Person(s) and Event Assistant(s) before permit approval.
2. Nominal fees are associated with obtaining these training certificates, which are paid directly to the training provider and are at the expense of the applicant/organization.
 - a. Training may be found at the following links: <http://www.learn2serve.com> or <https://www.sersafe.com>.
3. Attach a copy of your valid certificate to your TFP request
 - a. For employees, upload your certificate(s) to the online TFP Request System. You only need to do this once, and the certificate will remain valid until it expires.

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE
ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH AND SAFETY DEPARTMENT**

- b. For student organizations, upload the certificate(s) through HawkLink. You must include all related documents (e.g., DOA, FHC, FMC) for each TFP request.

E. Food Manager Certificate (FMC) (Required for High-Risk Events Only)

1. The FMC is required by at least one person for high-risk food events.
2. The FMC holder must be present during the duration of the event.
3. Nominal fees are associated with obtaining this training certificate, which are paid directly to the training provider and are at the expense of the applicant/organization.
 - a. Training may be found at the following links: <http://www.learn2serve.com>, <https://www.servsafe.com>, or <https://www.houstonconsumer.org/food-permits/food-manager-food-handler-certification>
4. Attach a copy of your valid certificate to your TFP request.
 - a. For employees, upload your certificate(s) to the online TFP Request System. You only need to do this once, and the certificate will remain valid until it expires.
 - b. For student organizations, upload the certificate(s) to HawkLink. You must include all related documents (e.g., DOA, FHC, FMC) for each TFP request.

F. Open Flame Permit (OFP)

1. Open Flame Permits are obtained through the Office of Emergency Management.
2. Fire Extinguisher Training must be completed to obtain a permit.
3. A designated Fire Watch must be present when open flame equipment is in use.
4. For any questions or concerns on OFP, please contact the Office of Emergency Management at 281-283-2707 or uhcloem@uhcl.edu.

G. Allergens

1. When completing your TFP application, be sure to select all allergens in your ingredients. An allergen sign will be generated along with your approved TFP. Common allergens, such as eggs and nuts, are already listed, but you also have the option to manually enter any additional potential allergen ingredients.
2. Print and post this allergen sign at your event.

H. Application Changes

1. If the event is rescheduled, a new site reservation is necessary, and applicants should contact the EHS Department by email (foodpermits@uhcl.edu) to request TFP

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE
ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH AND SAFETY DEPARTMENT**

modifications; otherwise, a new application for a TFP will need to be submitted through the systems.

2. If the already approved application needs modifying (e.g., changes to the food items, changes to the Event Assistants on-site, or modifications to the caterer/vendor listed on an approved TFP), the EHS Department must approve those changes at least **7-days** before the start of the event; otherwise, a new application for a TFP and/or OFP will need to be submitted.
3. **The TFP expires upon completion of the event.**

VIII. FOOD RISK CATEGORIES AND REQUIREMENTS

A. Low-Risk Category

1. Low-risk category foods are sealed, individually packaged, bottled or canned, single-serving, shelf-stable, ready-to-eat, non-perishable foods with low moisture content or preserved. These foods do not need temperature control before being consumed or need to be reheated or kept cold. **Food or drink may not be opened and cut/poured into smaller serving portions.**
2. Examples of Low-Risk sealed packaged foods include, but are not limited to:

Candy	Soda/Water	Chips	Popcorn	Pretzels	Cookies
Little Debbie Snacks	Trail Mix/ Jerky	Gummy Fruit Snacks	Sandwich Crackers	Granola Bars	Applesauce

3. **These food items do not require a FHC but do require a TFP.**
4. Beverages must be unopened, single-serving, canned, bottled, or pouch.
5. Serving portions from a commercial package that are not individually wrapped by the vendor (e.g., a box of donuts or a tray of cookies) is prohibited in this category.

B. Medium-Risk Category

1. Medium-risk category foods may require breaking the seal of a package, bottle, or similar to combine ingredients and/or divide them into smaller quantities. These foods are not individually wrapped, and/or may need to be warmed up, and/or opened and poured into smaller portions. Time and temperature can affect the quality of these food items.
2. All participants (Responsible Person & Event Assistants) must have a FHC for this category. **Every name listed on the DOA, must have a FHC** for any medium-risk food items being served.

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE
ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH AND SAFETY DEPARTMENT**

3. Examples of Medium-Risk food items include, but are not limited to:

Cotton Candy	Value-size items intended to be open, manipulated, and served in smaller portions (e.g., coffee, chips)	Whole Fruit (e.g., apples, bananas, peaches)
Popcorn	Pickles, Snow Cones	Tray of Cookies, Brownies, and sliced Cakes
Coffee	Box of Pizza(s), Box of Doughnuts	Catered food from a restaurant (e.g., Raising Cane's, Chick-fil-A)

4. **These food items must be eaten within 4 hours of pickup or delivery.** If you are preparing the food on-site, the 4-hour timeframe begins after the final preparation, ensuring that cold food remains cold and hot food stays hot. Any food that is not consumed within this timeframe must be discarded.
5. Foods that are professionally cooked and served by a caterer or restaurant fall into the medium-risk category. When these foods are made, transported, and served by the restaurant itself, the individual or organization does not need to have a FHC. However, if food is purchased from a professional company but is then transported and served by an individual or organization, all participants must possess a FHC or FMC.
6. Food items that suggest or require an open flame are prohibited in this category (e.g., hot dogs, canned chili, or cheese).

C. High-Risk Category

1. High-risk category foods are raw and commonly cooked foods that are stored, and/or maintained at specific temperatures (either hot, refrigerated, or frozen). These items are prepared by the TFP requester/individual or group.
2. All participants must have a FHC for this category. Every name listed on the DOA must have a FHC for any high-risk food items being served. In addition, **there should be at least one person possessing a FMC** who is present to supervise during the duration of the event. More than one trained Food Manager is recommended for larger events requiring multiple serving stations and backup purposes (e.g., Chili Cook-Off and National Night Out).
3. High-risk category foods are not allowed to be cooked on campus unless for UHCL-sponsored events. These events are hosted by UHCL departments and are **arranged 30 days in advance.**

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE
ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH AND SAFETY DEPARTMENT**

4. Examples of High-Risk foods include but are not limited to:

Dairy Product (e.g., cheese, milk, yogurt)	Fat (e.g., olive oil, oil mixtures)	Fruit (e.g., melon, stone fruits)
Grain Product (e.g., pasta, pizza, tamale)	Other Protein Food (i.e., tofu, soy, sprouts)	Meat (e.g., beef, lamb, pork)
Poultry (e.g., chicken, duck, turkey)	Seafood (e.g., crustacean, fish, shellfish)	Vegetable (e.g., bean, potato, rice)

5. Meat, pork, and poultry products shall be initially cooked to the following minimum internal temperatures: Poultry = 165°F, Ground Meats and Pork = 155°F, and Other Meats = 145°F. Once cooked, they must be held hot at 140°F.
6. Potentially hazardous food already cooked that will be served hot (instead of cold) needs to be reheated prior to the start of the event; it must be done rapidly to 165°F or above for at least 15 seconds within two hours. A microwave oven, conventional oven, stove, or electrical skillet may be used. Crock pots, chafing dishes, or food warmers shall not be used to rapidly reheat foods – they may only be used for hot holding after food is reheated.
7. After cooking or reheating, potentially hazardous foods (e.g., foods which consist in whole or in part of meat, poultry, seafood, dairy, cooked beans, rice, potatoes, pasta) must be maintained at 140°F or above for hot foods, or 40°F or below for cold foods.
8. An appropriately scaled and calibrated metal stem-type thermometer must be on site and used to monitor proper internal cooking and holding temperature of the food when served.
9. Applicants planning to use an open-flame device must obtain an [Open Flame Permit \(OFP\)](#). Please complete and submit your OFP request to the Office of Emergency Management.

IX. SICKNESS

Any individual feeling ill (e.g., runny nose, sore throat, cough, fever, jaundice, stomach or digestive illness) or who has an infection (nasal, throat, skin infected wound, or boil) may not handle or prepare food.

X. NO BARE-HAND CONTACT WITH READY-TO-EAT (RTE) FOOD.

To prevent foodborne illness, food handlers must not touch RTE foods with their bare hands under any circumstances. All food handlers must use suitable utensils such as gloves, tongs, or spatulas when handling RTE foods.

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE
ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH AND SAFETY DEPARTMENT**

XI. HAND HYGIENE

1. Individuals cooking or serving must thoroughly wash their hands before and after handling or switching between different foods, changing gloves, using the restroom, touching their face or body, handling trash, etc.
2. Hand sanitizers must be readily & visibly available at all food events.

XII. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

1. Servers must wear disposable gloves and use a different serving utensil for each food group. **If self-serving, sanitizer and/or disposable gloves must be made available.**
2. Individuals handling food shall wear an effective hair restraint (e.g., ball cap, hair tie, hair net, scarf, beard restraints). Hair longer than shoulder length shall be tied back and/or worn up under a hair restraint.
3. Cooks and servers may not wear food gloves outside of the serving station nor eat or drink inside the food prep area.

XIII. FOOD TRANSPORTATION

1. If food is not professionally transported or catered, use insulated carriers (such as a thermal tote bag, thermal cargo blanket, or cooler with ice) to keep hot items hot and cold items cold, while ensuring they are separated from each other.
2. Food should be delivered to the campus event as close to serving time as possible to maintain proper temperature control.

XIV. SERVING HOT FOOD

1. Food that is cooked and/or typically served hot must be kept hot using one or more of the following methods: an electric skillet, a slow cooker (warmed in the microwave first), or chafing fuel cans.
2. Any additional or extra food containers must be kept hot in a thermal container. Before serving, they should be reheated quickly to 165°F for at least 15 seconds within two hours. If reheating takes longer than two hours, the food should be discarded.
3. All containers must be kept covered and sealed throughout the entire food event.

XV. SERVING COLD FOOD

1. Food must be kept cold using one or more of the following methods: the "double bowl" technique, which involves placing a smaller bowl of food on top of a larger bowl filled

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE
ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH AND SAFETY DEPARTMENT**

with ice, or using an ice pan that holds smaller bowls or plates for condiments. If these methods are not used, the food should be stored in an ice chest.

2. Ice intended for drinking must come from an approved water source and should be stored in bags until needed. Never store food in water or ice that is meant for human consumption. Always use disposable gloves and an ice scoop to handle ice; do not use bare hands or cups that have been touched by bare hands.
3. All containers must be kept covered and sealed throughout the entire food event.

XVI. EQUIPMENT AND UTENSILS

1. When serving food, provide consumers with disposable items like plastic utensils and paper plates.
2. All food-contact surfaces, including utensils and equipment, shall be cleaned and sanitized frequently as necessary to protect against contamination of food.
3. Washing utensils or equipment in the bathroom sink or hand-washing station is not permitted.
4. Proper washing of utensils and equipment involves using three containers with the following contents:
 - Container #1** – A mixture of potable water and soap.
 - Container #2** – Clean potable water
 - Container #3** – A sanitation solution, made by mixing 2 capfuls of bleach with 1 gallon of water.
5. Store all food, utensils, plates, cups, and napkins at least 6 inches above the ground.

XVII. WASTE DISPOSAL

1. The Responsible Person shall arrange or provide disposal covered containers for waste and garbage.
2. Dispose of all liquid and solid waste properly following UHCL regulations. Large quantities of liquid food or hot food items must not be placed in campus trashcans.
3. Chafing fuel cans should be extinguished using a candle snuffer and allowed to cool before disposal. If the can is empty, it can be recycled or placed in the regular trash. If it is not empty, securely reattach the lid and keep it for future use.
 - a. Do not dispose of full or partially full chafing fuel cans in the trash, as they are considered hazardous flammable waste due to their fuel content.

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE
ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH AND SAFETY DEPARTMENT**

- b. If you need to dispose of any unwanted fuel chafing cans, please contact the EHS Department at 281-283-2104 or 281-283-2106 or email foodpermits@uhcl.edu. Please allow several days for pickup.

XVIII. VIOLATIONS

1. The first violation may result in a warning. In this case, the Responsible Person and Event Assistant(s) may be required to review the TFP Guidelines and complete additional training.
2. A second violation may lead to the suspension of TFP requests until the start of the next academic year.
3. Any organization, business, or individual operating without a TFP will be immediately placed under suspension until the start of the next academic year.
4. Violations may be reported to the Center of Student Engagement and Academic Affairs for further review and potential disciplinary action.
5. Posting food permits is mandatory, and these permits will be inspected periodically to ensure compliance.
6. EHS reserves the right to shut down any event that it considers to be a public health hazard.

XIX. REPORTING FOOD SAFETY CONCERNS

Each Food Establishment must report all food safety complaints to UHS Food Safety Office using the [UH Fire & Life Safety Report a Concern](#) form.

XX. LINKS

1. [City of Houston Food Manager Certificate Website](#)
2. [ServSafe Food Handler Certificate Website](#)
3. [Learn2Serve Food Handler Certificate Website](#)
4. [Fresh Fork Catering Website](#)
5. [UHCL Online TFP Request System \(For Employees\)](#)
6. [UHCL Scheduling Website](#)
7. [SAM 01.F.03 \(Food Safety Standard\)](#)
8. [Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 228 \(TFER\)](#)

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE
ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH AND SAFETY DEPARTMENT**

ELECTRONIC APPROVAL

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Interim Manager of Environmental, Health & Safety

Date: January 12, 2026