



Meeting Health Code Requirements in Concessions !

For decades public health agencies have looked the other way when park concession facilities were operated in community parks. Now, with increased scrutiny from health officials and the risk of potential litigation from park visitors who become ill from food served at facilities, these regulations are changing. California leads the way with its enforcement of its Retail Food Code.

Q: What do we need to know about the new regulations?

A: The intent of the new regulations is to control park food facilities during preparation and service in compliance with similar health codes for restaurants and other food service businesses. The new regulations break down food service into three categories, considering the potential for unsanitary conditions. There are degrees of protection based on the type of food preparation and service. Level 1 service is totally prepackaged food served unopened to the public, such as bottles of water, candy and individual bags of potato chips. Level 2 service is open food that is warmed at the facility, such as coffee and nachos. Level 3 service is a full-service commercial kitchen with an Ansul hood system, required for grilling and frying.

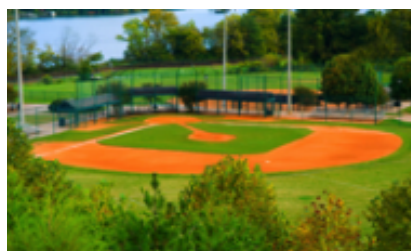
Q: What is open food?

A: Open food is ice, soda from a fountain, coffee, nachos, hot dogs, etc. Sunlight, temperature, sneezing, coughing, sweating and more can affect food bacteria levels. If you're serving anything other than unopened, packaged food at your concession, you need to pay careful attention to your concession building design and food service practices to maintain compliance with health regulations.

Q: What should we do to ensure our concessions are safe and in compliance with these new regulations?

A: The national changes for food service regulations deal with packaged, open and cooked food. In preparation/food service facilities where the interior temperature rises to more than 80 degrees, service staff can sweat, which could drop onto open foods. This is, of course, unsanitary and could cause illness to consumers. Some state codes require this type of facility to provide conditioned space (heated and cooled) for the interior, along with energy code compliance, including fully insulated walls and ceilings. Conditioned space allows for greater food protection, thus less health risk for the public and less liability for the agency that owns the park.

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Q: Do I need to install automatic closing service windows and air curtains?

A: Yes, most of the current health codes now require self-closing window service openings to prevent insects from entering the food service facility. Some states restrict the opening for food service to 216 square inches. Air curtains are generally required on door entries, and may also be required on service window openings.

Q: Is there more to consider?

A: Now there is much more to consider when planning a concession facility. Codes change, different states are modifying their regulations, and new answers to food sanitation problems are emerging as new safer food products are developed. Talk to the designer of your concession building to learn more about meeting your health code requirements for your park concession facilities.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Public Restroom Company: 888-888-2060

