

2026 RAGBRAI Food and Beverage Licensing and Requirements



Questions

RAGBRAI-Licensing@dia.iowa.gov

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Appeals, & Licensing

What is a Temporary Food Stand?

A temporary food stand is a food establishment that operates in one location for a period of no more than 14 consecutive days in conjunction with a single event or celebration.

Each town along the RAGBRAI Route is its own Event.

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What is a Temporary Event?

An “event or celebration” is a significant occurrence; such as a fair, carnival, or festival; sponsored by a civic, a business, an educational, a government, a community, or a veteran’s organization and may include athletic contests.

- ▶ As an example, an event does not include a single store's grand opening or sale.

When is a license required to operate a food stand in Iowa?

- ▶ When handling or providing any unpackaged food or beverages such as items prepared or poured on site (like slices of pie, tacos, bbq meats, fountain drinks, keg beer or mixed drinks), or any other food or drink that is not served in a closed package.
- ▶ When providing packaged or unpackaged temperature controlled for safety (TCS) food or beverages such as cream pies, raw or cooked meat or fish, dairy products (milk, ice cream, etc.), cooked vegetables, cut watermelon (or other melons), cut tomatoes, or cut leafy greens (lettuce).

1. Is it unpackaged?
2. Does it require refrigeration?

If you answered **YES** to either question- a Food License is required.

What types of food stands do not require a license in Iowa?

- ▶ Food Stands operated on a Non-Profit Organization's premises (in some instances)
- ▶ Food Stands that serve:
 - ▶ Commercially prepared prepackaged foods and beverages that do not require temperature control for safety such as bottled soda, packaged candy, packaged chips, wrapped granola bars, etc...
 - ▶ Whole, uncut fruits and vegetables
 - ▶ Packaged and labeled Cottage Foods provided in a food stand operated by the Cottage Food producer.
- ▶ All other Food Stands require a License.

Who Requires a Food License?

- ▶ For profit organizations and individuals
- ▶ Non-profit organizations that do not meet the licensing exemption requirements
- ▶ Out of State food vendors
- ▶ Iowa licensed Mobile Food Units that operate outside of their unit and/or more than three consecutive days without returning to their home base will need an additional temporary food license.
- ▶ Iowa licensed food establishments that operate away from their own licensed premises will need an additional temporary food license.

Non-profit Food License Exceptions:

Non-profit organizations are exempt from licensing if they serve food only one day per week (and not on two consecutive days) from their premises.

There are two additional exemptions for non-profit organizations:

- ▶ Twice per calendar year—may serve food to the public up to three consecutive days from their own premises
- ▶ Twice per year, the non-profit can use the premises of another non-profit organization to serve food for one day
 - ▶ (Property owned by a city, county, or state entity such as streets and most parks are not considered non-profit premises)

Non-profit Food License Exceptions:

Non-profit organizations that are licensed as temporary food establishments may serve packaged or unpackaged foods that do not require temperature control from any source. **Example-** baked goods, fruit pies, candies, etc. made by organization members

- ▶ This does not include home-canned pickles, vegetables, or fruits produced in accordance with Iowa Cottage Food Law
- ▶ **Pies** that require temperature control for safety, such as cream pies, custard pies, meat pies or other cooked meats or vegetables must be prepared in or purchased from a licensed food establishment or processing plant.

What menu items can be sold in my Temporary Food Stand?

Food and Beverage items that are listed on the Temporary Food License application and approved prior to the event, may be served in a Temporary Food Stand.

Temporary Food License Types

**SINGLE EVENT TEMPORARY
FOOD LICENSE**

**ANNUAL TEMPORARY FOOD
LICENSE**

**EVENT REGISTRATION
LICENSE**

Single Event Temporary Food License- \$50.00

This License allows the permit holder to operate and vend food in one food stand for up to 14 consecutive days in conjunction with a single event

Each RAGBRAI town, or county that allows vendors to set up outside city limits, is its own event and Vendors are required to obtain a separate temporary food license for each food or beverage stand.

Due to the high number of applications, we ask that you apply at least 30 days in advance of your event. We cannot guarantee that your application will be processed in time for your event if these timelines are not met or your application contains errors or misinformation. Please note that providing food without a license or permit is subject to a penalty double license fee.

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Annual Temporary Food License- \$200.00

This License allows the permit holder to operate and vend food for up to 14 consecutive days in conjunction with one **Event** at a time anywhere within the state of Iowa. (Event was previously defined.)

- ▶ Persons who operate simultaneously at more than one Event or more than one stand are required to have a separate license for each food stand.
- ▶ License applications must be received a minimum of 30 days prior to the first Event for complete processing and approval.
- ▶ ****Annual Temporary Food License Applications not received, processed, and approved prior to operating will require a single event temporary food license until the annual license is approved and issued.**

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Event Registration License- \$50.00

An Event Registration License must be received from each Event (submitted by the event coordinator, host, or sponsoring organization putting on the event) a minimum of 60 days prior to the event

- ▶ Due June 1, 2026
- ▶ An Event Registration license is not required for an event having 10 or fewer licensed temporary food vendors, a fair (as defined in Iowa Code section 174.1, such as a county or state fair), or a farmers market.

Other Licenses

Mobile Food License- aka- **Food Truck or Pushcart** (Annual License), may be used up to 3 days in a single location before the unit needs to return to its Home Base of Operation. **License applications** must be received a minimum of 30 days prior to opening for complete processing and approval.

****Mobile Units operating for longer than 3 days on the RAGBRAI route without returning to their Home Base of Operation for cleaning and servicing are required to obtain a Temporary Food License.***

****Push carts must return to their Home Base of Operation daily or obtain a Temporary Food License.***

Other Licenses

Food Service or Retail License, aka- Restaurant, Grocery Store (Annual License)

- ▶ If your licensed facility can not support your operation a Temporary Food License may be required. Contact your inspector for more information.
 - ▶ **Example:** a bar or grocery store without a kitchen wants to set up a food stand in the parking lot on RAGBRAI day. A temporary food license would be required.

License applications must be received a minimum of 30 days prior to opening for complete processing and approval. This license may only be used on the premises for which the license was issued. A licensed establishment may set up a food stand on their own premises without an additional food license requirement.

LICENSE RESPONSIBILITY

Town's Responsibility

- ▶ Event Registration License (if required)
- ▶ Ensure that Food or Beverage Vendors who are properly licensed before setting up and vending in your town.

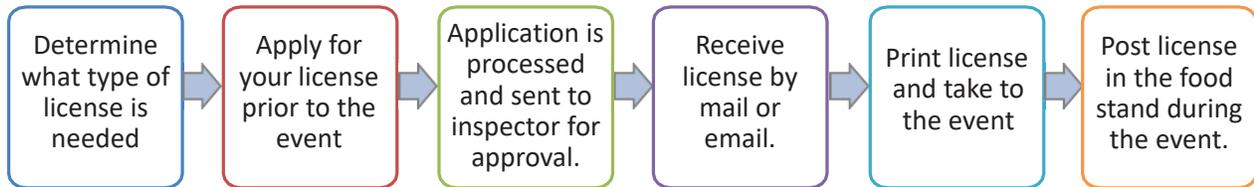
County's Responsibility

- ▶ Event Registration License (if required)
- ▶ Ensure that Food or Beverage Vendors who are properly licensed before setting up and vending in your County along the route.

Food or Beverage Vendor's Responsibility

- ▶ Obtain the appropriate Food License to vend in each town or County prior to operation. (apply at least 30 days ahead to ensure enough time)
- ▶ Obtain appropriate Vendor Permits from the city where you intend to operate.
- ▶ If setting up outside City Limits, contact the County for appropriate Vendor Permits

The Licensing Process



How to Apply for a Temporary Food License

<https://dial.iowa.gov/>

DIAL A-Z | I need to... | **1. Licenses, Permits, & Registrations** | Hearings & Legal | IOSHA | About DIAL

Alarms & Fire Safety	Amusement Rides	Athletic Events
Barbering & Cosmetology	Building, Construction & Trades	Fireworks & Explosives
2. Food & Hotels	Gambling & Amusement Devices	Health Facilities & Programs
Health Professions	Migrant P...	
Tanning Permitting	Tattoo P...	

Food Establishments & Hotels

Food Safety Complaints	3. Apply for a Food License
Cottage Foods	Food Resources
Food Inspection Jurisdictions	Food Establishment Plan Review

SERVICES

Typically provided by the Event

(If the Event does not provide services then the responsibility falls on the Food Vendor)

Providing Services

ELECTRICITY

- Ensure each stand has enough electricity to safely operate (lighting, mechanical refrigeration and hot holding)

TOILETS/HANDWASHING

- Provide an adequate number of approved toilet and hand washing facilities at each event. (Each food/beverage stand is required to have its own handwashing station.)

Providing Services

WATER SUPPLY, STORAGE

- **Provide water from an approved source-** city, county, bottled, and wells that have a satisfactory water test within the last year. (Well tests should be submitted with the license application and available for review on site.)
- Water storage units and hoses must be made from food grade material and used only for potable water.
- Protect water supply systems against backflow or contamination.

Providing Services

WASTE WATER AND GARBAGE/GREASE DISPOSAL

- It is the responsibility of the food stand operator to keep the area around their stand free of food scraps, paper and other trash.
- Dispose of waste water in an approved waste water disposal system sized, constructed, maintained and operated according to law.
- Ensure that water or melting ice does not create a wet or muddy area around the food stand.
- Provide an adequate number of covered trash containers in each food stand.
- Dispose of garbage and grease in an approved manner.

Providing Services

ICE

- Ice used for food/beverages must be obtained from an approved source.
- Do not store unpackaged food in contact with water or ice.
- Packaged food or canned and bottled beverages may be stored in ice bins that are continuously drained.
- Ice that has been used for cooling or keeping food or beverage containers cold may not be reused in beverages provided to customers.
- Store ice used for beverages in the bag in which it is purchased or in clean, properly constructed ice storage units which are easily cleanable, and kept drained.
- Dispense ice with scoops, tongs, or other utensils with a handle, *not with hands or drink cups*.

- ❖ Selling purchased packaged Ice does not require a license.
- ❖ A food processing license may be required to produce ice that will be sold to food stands.

Food Stand Requirements

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH FOOD VENDOR TO ENSURE THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS ARE MET PRIOR TO BEGINNING FOOD SERVICE AT AN EVENT.

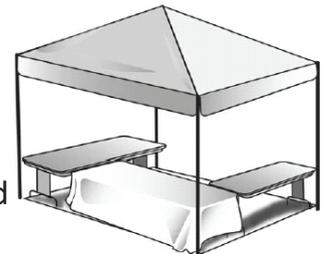
Licensing a Temporary Food Stand

- ▶ A Temporary Food License must be applied for and approved before setting up and serving, selling or providing food at a temporary event.
- ▶ Food vendors operating without an approved license are subject to closure and penalty fees, including a double license fee for each food stand operating without a license.
- ▶ Mobile Food Units operating outside the scope and requirements of their license are subject to closure and penalty fees.



Food Stand Construction

- ▶ Food stands should have overhead shelter to protect food and equipment.
- ▶ Side panels or screening may be needed to protect from insects, dust, and weather.
- ▶ Floors of the food stand (if not set up on concrete) should be covered with wood, rubber or plastic mats to control dust, mud, and insects.
- ▶ Stands should have adequate lighting. Light bulbs above exposed food preparation areas must have shatterproof covers.



Personnel

- ▶ Food stand workers must wear clean clothing and keep their hair properly restrained.
- ▶ Tobacco use of any kind is not permitted inside the food stand or while attending grills outside the stand.
- ▶ No eating is allowed in food preparation areas. Drinking is allowed- but only from covered containers.
- ▶ Personal belongings should not be stored with food, food contact surfaces, or in dishwashing areas.



III Food Handlers



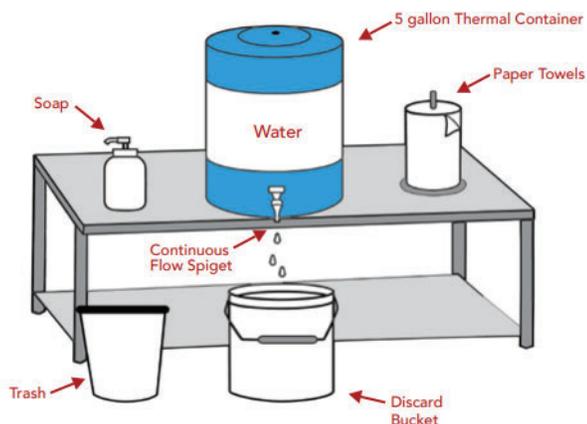
- ▶ Food stand workers must be free of contagious or communicable diseases, sores, or infected wounds.
- ▶ Exclude employees from working in a food stand when the following symptoms are present:
 - ▶ Vomiting, Diarrhea, Jaundice, Sore throat with fever, or open cuts or wounds that cannot be covered.
 - ▶ Cover cuts or sores on the hands or wrist with a bandage and a single-use glove.
- ▶ Employees with a diagnosed foodborne illness (such as Norovirus, Salmonella, Shigella, E. coli 0157:H7 or Hepatitis A) or sudden onset of vomiting or diarrhea, should be excluded from work in a food stand.

Handwashing

- ▶ Handwashing stations must be set up within the food stand prior to any food handling.
- ▶ Handwashing stations must be accessible to all food handlers.
 - ▶ Hand sanitizers or wipes may not replace hand washing.
- ▶ Wash hands as often as necessary to maintain good sanitation, and always before beginning work and after using the restroom, eating, taking breaks, handling garbage, handling raw meat, handling cell phones, using tobacco products, or any other time they may become contaminated.



Handwashing Station Set up



Temporary handwashing setup:

- ▶ Provide soap from a pump dispenser and paper towels.
- ▶ Maintain a minimum of **2 gallons of water per person (every 4 hours)** of potable water in a container, or containers, capable of dispensing water through a valve or spout. This valve or spout must allow a constant flow of water when opened. Collect waste water in another container and dispose of in a sanitary manner.

Food Preparation and Handling

Bare hand contact with ready-to-eat food is strictly prohibited.

Ensure that workers use one of the following methods when handling ready-to-eat food:

- ▶ disposable gloves,
- ▶ utensils, deli tissues,
- ▶ tongs,
- ▶ or other dispensing equipment.



Hands must be washed before putting on gloves. Gloves can become contaminated and should only be used for food preparation. Gloves must be changed when they come into contact with non-food items, or when changing tasks.

Food and Condiment Display

- ▶ Place condiment stations in an area where they can be constantly monitored by employees.
- ▶ All food must be protected from customer handling, coughing or sneezing, and other contamination by wrapping the food, sneeze guards, or other effective means.
 - ▶ Sugar, ketchup, mustard and other condiments need to be individually packaged or dispensed from closed squeeze, pour, or pump type dispensers.
- ▶ The public is not allowed to serve itself from opened and uncovered containers of food.



Cooking and Holding Temperatures

Hold all temperature-controlled foods in refrigeration at 41°F or less or hold (by other means) at 135°F or higher. All cold storage units must be equipped with an accurate, easily-visible thermometer. An accurate thin tip metal stem food thermometer must be provided to check storage and cooking temperatures.

Cooking temperatures for meat products:

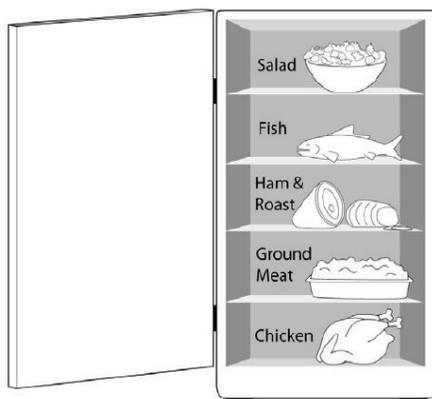
- ▶ Poultry and ground poultry 165°F or higher
- ▶ Stuffed meats and stuffing 165°F or higher
- ▶ All other ground meats 155°F or higher
- ▶ Whole pork, lamb, and fish 145°F or higher
- ▶ Beef steaks and roasts 145°F or higher
- ▶ Reheated or microwaved items 165°F or higher



***If raw or undercooked animal foods such as meat, eggs, or fish are served, a consumer advisory as required by the Food Code and must be posted in the stand or included on the menu.**

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Proper Refrigerated Storage of Raw Meat & Poultry



	Cooking Temp.
Ready to eat items	
Fish	145°F
Beef/Pork Roasts	145°F
Ground meat	155°F
Poultry	165°F

Remember this.... The higher the cooking temperature of the food, the lower it should be stored on the shelves.

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Food and Food Contact Item Storage

- ▶ Store food and supplies off the ground, and cover them to protect from dust, rain or other contamination.
- ▶ Leftover cooked food must be discarded at the end of each day and cannot be reused the next day.

Ware washing, Sanitizers, & Wiping Cloths

- ▶ Use chlorine bleach or another approved sanitizer for ware washing and wiping cloths.
- ▶ Use wiping cloths on counters, tables and other food contact surfaces. Rinse cloths frequently and store in a clean sanitizer solution between uses.
 - ▶ Change sanitizing solution often to maintain the solution in a clean condition.
- ▶ Test strips are required in the food stand for checking sanitizer levels.



Sanitizer Test Kits

Chlorine sanitizer should be mixed to 50ppm-100ppm



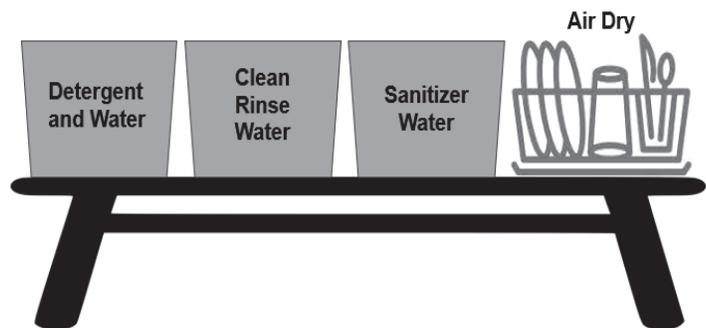
Quaternary Ammonium sanitizers should be mixed to 200ppm or as specified on manufacturer's instructions



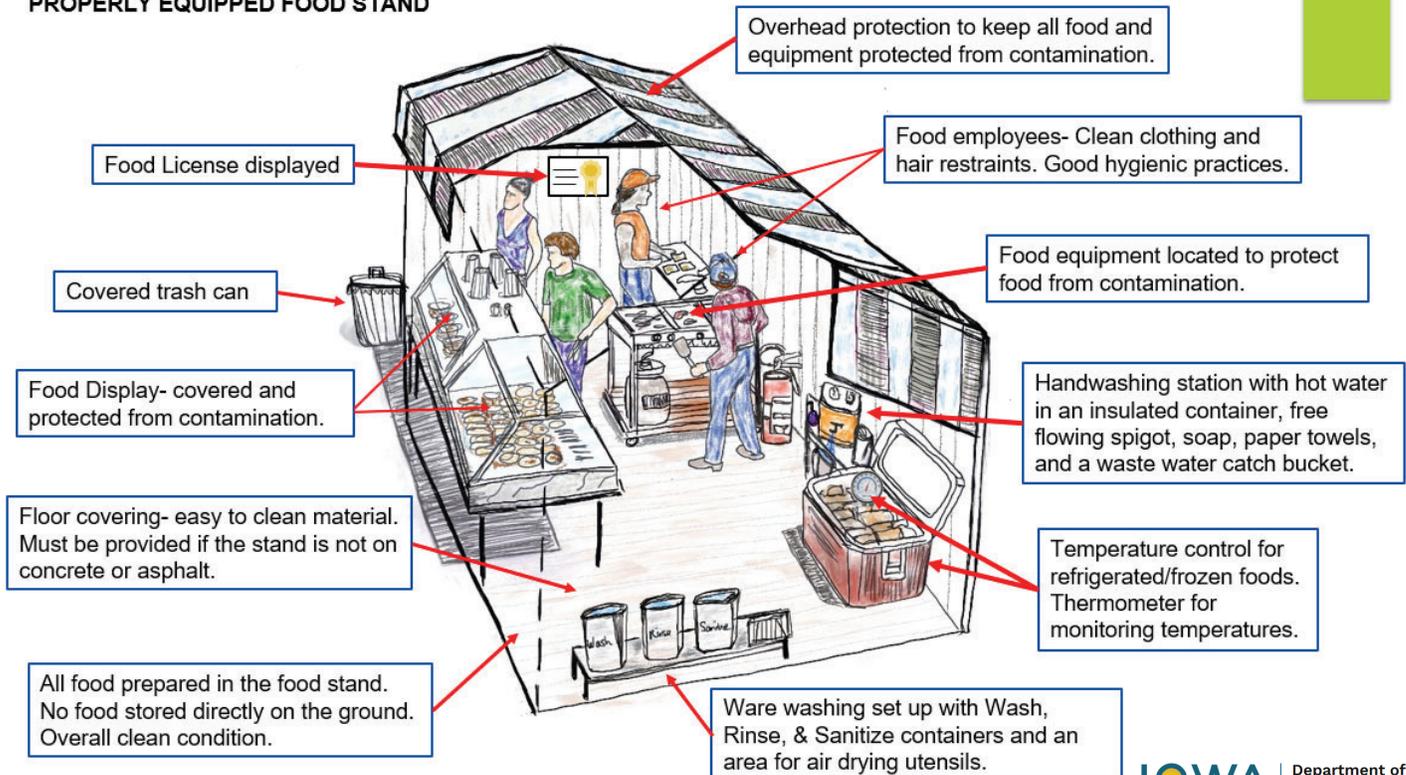
All other sanitizers must be mixed to manufacturer's specifications.

Ware washing for Utensils

- ▶ Food stands will need three containers of water that are large enough to fit the largest utensil.
- ▶ First container should contain soapy water for washing. Second container should contain fresh clean water for rinsing. Third container should contain a sanitizer & water solution for sanitizing.
- ▶ Change container contents as often as needed to maintain the water and solutions in a clean condition.
- ▶ Allow utensils to thoroughly air dry prior to storage or re-using.



PROPERLY EQUIPPED FOOD STAND



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Resources

Additional Questions:

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[Basic Requirements for Temporary Food Establishments](#)

All Event Coordinators, Towns, Food and Beverage Vendors, Mobile Food Units, and Local Restaurants:

- [VIDEO: Temporary Food Stand- Licensing Requirements](#)
- [VIDEO: Temporary Food Stand- Operating Requirements](#)
- [Regulations for Temporary Food Establishments](#)

Ensure that you have everything needed for a successful Temporary Food Stand:

- [Properly Equipped Food Stand](#)- Example
- [Handwashing at Temporary Food Stand](#)- Example
- [Temporary Food Establishment Vendor Check List](#)- Print and Use
- [Temporary Food Employee Logbook](#)- Print and Use
- [Temporary Event Coordinator Questionnaire](#)- Submit to your Inspector
- [Non-profit Organization Licensing Chart](#)- Non-profit organizations operating on their premises for one day do not need a food license.
- [Cottage Food sold in food stands during RAGBRAI](#) - Cottage Foods cannot be used as ingredients or sold unpackaged in temporary food stands.

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Other Agency Considerations

- ▶ **Food and Beverage License- Department of Inspections, Appeals, & Licensing**
 - ▶ RAGBRAI-Licensing@dia.iowa.gov
- ▶ **Social Gambling License- Department of Inspections, Appeals, & Licensing**
 - ▶ 515-281-6848
- ▶ **Iowa Alcoholic Beverage Division**
 - ▶ 515-281-7400, Option 1
 - ▶ licensing@iowaabd.com
- ▶ **Sales Tax Permit- Department of Revenue & Finance**
 - ▶ 800-367-3388