

Temporary Event Coordinator's Planning Guide

What are Temporary Events?

Temporary events are time-limited public gatherings where services are offered to the public from temporary or mobile facilities. Examples include fairs, festivals, markets, fundraisers, tradeshow, and other special events. The locations of these events can range from sites without basic utilities — such as open fields — to modern convention centers with full amenities.

The food, water and other services provided at these events can pose health risks to attendees. Under the BC *Public Health Act*, these services must be delivered in a manner that minimizes risk to public health and safety. Therefore, before such services can be offered at an event, they must receive health approval from an Environmental Health Officer (EHO).

What is the role of an Event Coordinator?

The **Event Coordinator** is the person responsible for overseeing the planning and management of a temporary event. Their responsibilities include:

- Submitting event details to the EHO for health review and approval.
- Coordinating the health approval process for all **regulated vendors** attending the event. Regulated vendors are those offering any of the services listed in [Table 1](#) below.
- Ensuring all vendors comply with health and safety requirements and operate in a manner that does not pose a risk to the public.

Designating an Event Coordinator is strongly recommended for events with **10 or more regulated vendors**, as it helps streamline the organization and approval process. Depending on the size and complexity of the event (e.g. multi-day outdoor or other large-scale events), an EHO may require that an event have an Event Coordinator.

An EHO should be contacted well in advance of the event to discuss specific requirements and expectations. The larger or more complex the event, the earlier an EHO should be contacted – at least one to two months in advance is recommended.

For example, events held in rural or undeveloped areas without basic infrastructure may require additional planning. Providing potable water to a site with no existing supply involves significant consultation with the EHO and may require separate approvals or permits.

To speak with an EHO, contact EPHDirect@interiorhealth.ca.

NOTE: It is also the responsibility of the Event Coordinator to ensure all applicable requirements of other government agencies are met.

How does the Event Coordinator apply for health approval?

Event Coordinators are to complete the [Temporary Event Coordinator Application Form](#) to provide key event details, including location, date(s), and services offered. As part of the application, the following should be included in the submission:

1. **Vendor List:** Compile a list of all regulated vendors participating at the event, and include vendor type, business name, and contact information. Only vendors identified on this list will be considered for approval. Event Coordinators may use the template provided in the application or create their own as a separate attachment (spreadsheet format preferred). Go [here for more information on regulated vendors](#).
2. **Additional Documentation Required Per Vendor:** Listed vendors must submit the required documents outlined in Table 1 below. The documents should be provided to the Event Coordinator for submission.

Table 1

TYPE OF VENDOR	DOCUMENTS REQUIRED PER VENDOR
Temporary Food Services	<p>Review: Health Approval for Temporary Food Service Guideline</p> <p>Submit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary Food Service Application Form • Supporting documentation as described in the above guideline <p><i>Unless otherwise stated on their existing BC Permit to Operate, caterers identified as part of the Event Coordinator's application require a Temporary Food Permit to Operate for the event. A full set of Temporary Food Service documents must be submitted for EHO review.</i></p>
Mobile Food Premises	<p>Submit: BC Permit to Operate (issued by a BC Health Authority)</p>
Lower Risk Temporary Food Market Vendor	<p>Review: Guideline for the Sale of Foods at Temporary Food Markets</p> <p>Submit: No additional documentation required</p>
Higher Risk Temporary Food Market Vendor	<p>Review: Guideline for the Sale of Foods at Temporary Food Markets</p> <p>Submit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter of Confirmation; OR • BC Approval / Permit to Operate
Temporary Personal Service Establishment (PSE)	<p>Review: Guidelines for Personal Services Offered At Tradeshows</p> <p>Submit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix B: Application Form • Appendix C: Booth Layout <p><i>For events with personal services where the Event Coordinator assumes greater responsibility for vendor setups and infection control, applications may be submitted — grouped by service type — on behalf of their vendors.</i></p>
Animal Areas (Petting Zoos / Open Farms)	<p>Review: Guidelines for Prevention of Zoonotic Diseases from Petting Zoos and Open Farms</p> <p>Submit: No additional documentation required (pending EHO review)</p>
Camping	<p>Review: Province of BC - Major Planned Events</p> <p>Submit: No additional documentation required (pending EHO review)</p>
Recreational Water Activity	<p>Submit: No additional documentation required (pending EHO review)</p>

3. **Venue Details:** Depending on the event's scope, size, and location, essential services—such as potable water, sanitation, waste management, and power—may be required. Specify on the application how these services will be provided. Go [here for types of essential services](#) that may be needed at the event.
4. **Venue Site Plan / Layout:** Provide a detailed site plan of the event venue, including vendor locations and venue details. Event Coordinators may use the template provided in the application or attach as a separate document.

Submit the Event Coordinator application form and supporting documents (“application package”) to EPHDirect@interiorhealth.ca. A single application package for the entire event is preferred, but individual vendors may submit their own applications directly to Interior Health if needed.

Vendor applications must be submitted **at least 14 days in advance of the event**, but Event Coordinators are strongly encouraged to submit their application package earlier. Application packages submitted even 14 days in advance may not allow enough time for review, especially for large or complex events, which could impact event approval.

NOTE: *Temporary Food Service applications must be submitted at least 14 days before the event. Incomplete or late applications may not be processed. **Applications submitted less than 14 days before an event are considered late and subject to a \$50 administrative late fee.***

What are regulated vendors?

Vendors offering the following services are considered regulated vendors and will need to be identified in the Event Coordinator's Vendor List:

- **Temporary Food Service:** A temporary booth or similar structure where food is offered to the public for immediate consumption and operates no more than 14 days per calendar year. Vendors must submit Interior Health's [Temporary Food Service Application](#), along with supporting documents, and obtain approval before serving food to the public. Caterers must also submit a full set of Temporary Food Service documentation for EHO review, unless otherwise stated on their BC Permit to Operate. The approval process is outlined in Interior Health's [Health Approval for Temporary Food Services Guideline](#).
Venues hosting tradeshow may prepare food in their approved commercial kitchen and deliver it to vendor booths. Vendors using the venue's kitchen must include this information in their application, along with any off-site preparation details. Event Coordinators are responsible for ensuring these spaces are properly equipped and maintained for food storage, handling, cleaning and sanitation.
- **Temporary Food Market:** A temporary food retail establishment operating at a fixed location in connection with a charitable or public event, farmers market or similar gathering. Food is pre-packaged and not intended for immediate consumption. Market vendors must operate in accordance with BCCDC's [Guideline for the Sale of Foods at Temporary Food Markets](#):
 - Vendors may sell **Lower Risk Foods** (Appendix I) without additional approval.
 - Vendors selling **Higher Risk Foods** (Appendix II) require approval from a BC Health Authority—either a Letter of Confirmation or an Approval/Permit to Operate—before foods can be offered to the public. They must operate in accordance with that approval.
 - Market Vendors who offer food samples may do so in accordance with BCCDC's Guideline. Otherwise, they must apply for a Temporary Food Service Permit.

- **Mobile Food Premises:** A vehicle, cart, or other self-contained moveable structure designed for storing, preparing and/or serving food to the public. Operators must hold a valid Permit to Operate issued by a BC Health Authority. They must operate solely within their permitted structure and in accordance with the conditions of their permit. If operations deviate from the permit conditions (e.g. separate temporary food service areas outside of the permitted structure), additional documentation or approvals may be required—consult an EHO. For more information, refer to BCCDC’s [Mobile Food Premises Guidelines](#).
- **Personal Services (PSE):** An establishment in which a person provides a service to or on the body of another person, and includes a barbershop, beauty parlour, health spa, massage parlour, tattoo shop, sauna and steam bath. Vendors must obtain approval before offering services to the public. To apply, vendors must submit a “PSE application package”, which includes Appendix B (Application Form) and Appendix C (Booth Layout) from the [Provincial Guideline for Personal Services Offered at Tradeshows](#). All vendors must operate in accordance with the provincial guidelines.

For events where Event Coordinators assume greater responsibility for vendor setup, they may submit a grouped application package on behalf of the vendors, organized by service type. Using a tattoo and piercing tradeshow as an example, the Event Coordinator may submit one application for tattoo services and another for piercing services. In these cases, the Event Coordinator must implement a structured approach for infection control and hygiene for all vendors to follow. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Supplying and maintaining designated handwashing stations, as well as areas for vendors to clean, disinfect and sterilize instruments and equipment.
 - Providing other essential infection control supplies, including booth components that are smooth, non-absorbent, and easy-to-clean (e.g. tables, chairs, and partitions), as well as single-use disposable items (e.g. covers, gloves, and other necessary items).
 - Ensuring sharps containers are available where needed, and that biohazardous waste is safely disposed of.
- **Animal Areas:** Any place where the public may interact directly with animals and their environment, such as petting zoos, animal exhibits, pumpkin patches, country fairs, amusement parks, and animal rides. Event Coordinators and/or businesses providing these services are to operate according to BCCDC’s [Guidelines for Prevention of Zoonotic Diseases from Petting Zoos and Open Farms](#).
- **Camping:** Camping areas should provide essential amenities such as medical assistance, potable water, power supply, showers, washrooms with handwashing stations, and waste management. Additional considerations may be necessary depending on the event’s scope and size. For example, larger events may need an enhanced site sanitation management plan that covers pest control and dust suppression. Further guidance is provided in the [Provincial Guidance for Major Planned Events](#). Consult with other agencies as appropriate (e.g. Local Government, Fire Department, Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch, etc.).
- **Recreational Water Activities:** If recreational water activities involving a pool, hot tub or similar water feature are offered, adequate supervision and compliance with the [Pool Regulation](#) are required. Contact an EHO to discuss details.

What types of essential services may be needed at the event?

Potable Water Supply & Distribution: A clean, safe water supply is required for food preparation, cleaning, sanitation, and personal hygiene. While many venues may have a direct connection to the local approved water system, in areas without such access, contact an EHO to discuss alternative arrangements. Food-grade storage tanks, hoses and backflow prevention devices may be needed for potable water storage and distribution.

Washroom & Shower Facilities: Adequate washroom and handwashing facilities must be available for public use and conveniently located. For events without permanent washrooms, portable toilets may be used if handwashing stations are provided. Events with camping should offer an adequate number of showers at convenient locations as well. All facilities should be supplied with pressurized potable hot and cold running water. Consult local government for additional requirements.

Waste Collection & Disposal: Liquid and solid waste must be collected and disposed of in a sanitary manner. Arrangements, such as contracting a waste disposal company, should be made for regular collection and disposal of garbage, frying oils, greywater, washroom facility waste, etc. For larger events/venues, a site sanitation management plan may be required.

Power Supply: An adequate, reliable and continuous power supply must be available for event services, including lighting, cleaning and sanitation, as well as equipment for food storage, preparation and service. This may also include overnight power for refrigerated food storage. If temporary power sources are used, a backup power supply should also be in place.

Outdoor Booth Construction (Overhead Covers, Flooring & Lighting): A suitable overhead cover must be provided to protect storage and service areas from contamination, including those used for food and PSE storage, preparation, and service. Acceptable covers for outdoor venues include tents or canopies. When setup is on grass, gravel, dirt or other loose surfaces, temporary flooring may be needed to prevent generation of mud or dust. Asphalt or concrete flooring are also acceptable. Proper sloping or other measures should be implemented to reduce the risk of flooding. Additionally, food refrigeration equipment and cold storage areas should be shielded from direct sunlight. For guidance on portable heaters and cooking equipment under covers, consult your local Fire Department.

For outdoor events extending into the evening, lighting must be adequate to support all service activities, including cleaning and sanitation tasks.

Handwashing Stations & Supplies: Handwashing is crucial for reducing the risk of communicable disease transmission by service providers. An adequate number of handwashing stations must be available at appropriate locations close to service areas, each equipped with pressurized potable hot and cold running water, liquid soap, single-use paper towels, and waste receptacles. The required number of stations may need to be determined in consultation with an EHO. In most cases, individual vendors will need their own handwashing stations. Stations designated for food or personal service providers must be used exclusively for handwashing and must not be shared with dishwashing/equipment cleaning or washroom handwashing stations. For detailed requirements, refer to the respective guidelines above for temporary food services and personal services. Handwashing stations provided by the coordinator or venue must be reviewed by an EHO.

Shared Food Storage Facilities: Large or multi-day events may require centralized cold and/or dry storage areas for food and single-use disposable food packaging and utensils. Food must be stored in a manner that protects it from contamination and tampering. Cold storage facilities must be capable of maintaining food at a temperature of 4°C (40°F) or colder. Frozen foods should be maintained at -18°C (0°F) or colder.

Ice Supply: Ice intended for consumption must be obtained from an approved source and stored in a manner that protects it from contamination.

Dishwashing Stations & Supplies: Dishes, utensils and other food contact surfaces used in food preparation and service must be cleaned and sanitized regularly. In most cases, individual vendors will need their own dishwashing station. The station must be equipped with pressurized potable hot and cold running water, and have tables or drain boards on each side for bussing and drying. Liquid detergent and an approved sanitizer must also be available. If reusable dishware and utensils are used, a 2- or 3-compartment sink dishwashing station is required. In some venues, commercial dishwashing machines may be available and can replace this sink requirement. For more details, refer to the *Health Approval for Temporary Food Services Guideline*. Dishwashing stations provided by the coordinator or venue must be reviewed by an EHO.

Equipment Cleaning Stations & Supplies: Instruments and equipment used for personal services must be cleaned, disinfected, and, if needed, sterilized in accordance with the *Provincial Guideline for Personal Services Offered at Tradeshows* and the *Provincial Guidelines for Personal Service Establishments*. Items that puncture the skin or come into contact with puncture sites or sterile instruments must be either single-use or sterilized before reuse. Designated areas must be available for the cleaning, disinfection, and sterilization of reusable items. These areas should be well stocked with supplies needed to maintain proper infection control. This might include cleaning and disinfecting agents, test strips, sterilizing equipment, covers, packaging materials, gloves, and supplies for biohazardous waste disposal, such as sharps containers.

NOTE: Smoke Free Events – Take this opportunity to designate outdoor events as a [smoke free event](#). For more information or resources, contact Interior Health's Tobacco & Vape Reduction Program at tobaccoandvape@interiorhealth.ca. To designate non-smoking and smoking areas, signage should be displayed. Contact your local government regarding smoking bylaws.

When will the EHO grant approval?

Timelines may vary depending on the size and scope of the event and completeness of the submitted application package. Approval is also based on accurate information being provided and the discretion of the EHO, and as such, is not guaranteed.

At minimum, Event Coordinators are to allow 14 days for application processing. Larger events, however, may require significantly more time for EHO review. Therefore, applications should be submitted as early as possible. It is strongly recommended that Event Coordinators contact an EHO well in advance to discuss the specific requirements for the event, ensuring the application includes all necessary details. Once submitted, the EHO may reach out for more information as needed.

What happens after approval is granted?

If the EHO determines approval can be granted after reviewing the application, the approval and any conditions will be communicated to the Event Coordinator and/or the vendors, allowing event preparations to proceed.

Prior to the event, a final inspection may be conducted to verify setup is completed in accordance with the approval, and any risks to public health and safety are addressed. The Event Coordinator and vendors should be available to meet on-site with the EHO to address deficiencies, if any.

Event Coordinator Submission Checklist:

Email EPHDirect@interiorhealth.ca to submit your application package or to speak with an EHO. Submit your application package as early as possible — 14 days before the event is a minimum requirement, but larger events may need significantly more time. Only one application package should be submitted per event.

ENSURE THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE SUBMITTED
<input type="checkbox"/> Temporary Event Coordinator Application Form
<input type="checkbox"/> Vendor list
<input type="checkbox"/> Additional documentation required for individual vendors (where applicable)
<input type="checkbox"/> Event site plan / layout
<input type="checkbox"/> Photo or specification sheet of handwashing station(s) (where applicable)
<input type="checkbox"/> Photo of dishwashing station(s) (where applicable)

NOTE: Event Coordinators are recommended to keep a copy of their application for their records and to use as a pre-inspection checklist.

General Information and Resources

BCCDC – [Petting Zoos and Open Farms](#)

Provides guidance on how to prevent and reduce the risk of diseases being transmitted from animals to humans in petting zoos and open farms.

Interior Health – [Food Premises | Businesses | IH](#)

Food safety and sanitation signs, posters and other printable resources are available here, including handwashing and dishwashing posters. Application and guidance documents for temporary events, food service and food markets can also be found here.

Interior Health – [Personal Services | Businesses | IH](#)

Personal service infection control and other safety resources available here. Application and guidance documents for operating a personal service establishment can also be found here.

Province of BC – [Major Planned Events](#)

Provides guidance documents and fact sheets developed by the Province of BC to help event organizers plan large-scale events.