

## Catering

**Q: What is catering?**

A: Catering is defined as preparing or providing food for someone else to serve; or preparing, delivering and serving food at the premises of another person or event. If you agree to deliver or serve the food, the proper equipment for food protection and maintaining food temperatures is required according to the regulations in the *Pima County Code Title 8*.

**Q: Who may be a caterer?**

A: Any person who has an operating license from the Pima County Health Department

**Q: Can any food establishment cater, i.e., a restaurant?**

A: Yes, any food establishment can cater.

The food establishment must have the necessary equipment to prepare the menu items. The food establishment must follow the regulations in *Pima County Code Title 8* when preparing, transporting and serving the food.

**Q: I cook and serve in private homes using the homeowner's food and equipment in the homeowner's kitchen. Must I have an operating license from the Health Department?**

A: No, you are a "private chef."

Private chefs that use the homeowner's food and prepares it in the homeowner's kitchen are not required to have an operating license. However, the Health Department recommends that you attend an accredited course in food safety.

**Q: Sometimes, I cater special events. Is my operating license sufficient for special events?**

A: Not always

Special events are called "temporary events" in the Code. If the temporary event is by "invitation only," then you do not have to have a temporary license because the event is considered "private." However, if you prepare, sell or give food away at temporary events that are open to the public, then you will need a temporary license. Usually, each food booth or tent has a temporary license at a special event.

**Q: What if I only provide food to a special event that is open to the public, but I will not be onsite to dispense the food. Is a temporary license required?**

A: Yes, either you or the coordinator of the special event must have a temporary license.

**Q: How do I become a licensed caterer in Pima County?**

**Plan Review**

Caterers who plan to construct a food establishment where food will be produced are required to follow the standard plan review procedures before an operating permit is issued. The fee for plan review is \$480.00 for a fixed food establishment and \$230.00 for a mobile food establishment. Before the business can prepare food, an onsite inspection is required. The fee for this inspection is \$56.00.

**Modified Plan Review**

You may choose to use an already permitted food establishment in Pima County in which to prepare your food. The food establishment must have a valid operating permit issued by the Pima County Health Department. To use this food establishment, you are required to submit a modified plan review with the appropriate plan review fee for *Other Health Review*, which is \$66.00. In addition, there is a \$56.00 inspection fee to conduct the final, pre-operational inspection before the business can begin to prepare food products. The modified plan review must be typewritten and include the following information:

1. A **marketing plan** disclosing how the product will be marketed or distributed, such as:
  - Direct to the consumer at the licensed facility or delivered to the consumer locally,
  - To businesses for use in their operations as an ingredient or as part of their menu,
2. A **notarized, written agreement** between the food caterer and the food establishment's permit holder.
  - In the agreement the permit holder must authorize the caterer to use the food establishment, and state that all food ingredients, finished food products, and food equipment are stored at the food establishment.
  - No ingredients, equipment or finished food products may be stored in any other location without the location being approved by the Pima County Health Department. This includes warehouses, storage companies, residences, etc. Multiple locations will require approval from and additional permits issued by the Pima County Health Department.
3. A **complete menu listing all foods** to be prepared.
4. **Standard operating procedures (SOPs)** stating how prepared foods will be transported and delivered, include any specialty equipment required for temperature control; for batch cooked foods to be cooled and reheated adequate cooling and reheating procedures must be in place.
5. **The types of packaging** for the product and the **names of the suppliers** of the packaging materials.
6. **The training or other education** the Person in Charge will receive before the food operation begins. The Person in Charge must be able to comply with the Arizona Food Code, Chapter 2-102.11 by the date of the onsite inspection.

**Plan Review**

The plans submitted must be complete before they will be evaluated. Only complete plans, including all required information as outlined, will be evaluated. The notarized agreement does not guarantee approval of selected location for manufacture.

**Final Approval**

After the proposal is reviewed and approved, an onsite inspection of the food establishment is conducted. The caterer must submit an application for the operating permit, and pay the permit and inspection fees before this onsite inspection.

**Only after the Pima County Health Department issues written approval of the food establishment can food preparation begin.**