

Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
S. Anthony McCann, Secretary
Community Health Administration
Diane Matuszak M.D. M.P.H. Director
Office of Food Protection and Consumer Health Services
Alan L. Taylor, Director



Interpretive Memorandum

To: Health Officers and Environmental Health Directors
From: Alan Brench
Re: Outdoor Food Preparation and Service
Date: June 1, 2005

This memorandum addresses issues related to outdoor cooking and service of beverages on outdoor deck bars. It is the position of this Office that permitting limited outdoor cooking of food and service of beverages on deck bars at a licensed food service facility will not have a negative impact on public health.

Outside grilling at a licensed food service facility may be allowed under the following conditions:

1. The barbeque grill must be equipped with a lid that is attached to the unit.
2. The equipment may only be used at the food service facility for immediate service to patrons.
3. Outdoor grilling must be located in close proximity to the food preparation area of the facility, and away from parking areas and patron entrances.
4. The equipment must meet the requirements set forth in COMAR 10.15.03.06A(1b-1);
5. All food preparation is completed inside the facility and the food is protected from contamination during cooking and service.
6. A HACCP plan must be submitted and approved before any outdoor cooking is allowed.

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Outdoor cooking and food service by a licensed caterer may be allowed if:

1. Handwashing is available near the cooking area.
2. A HACCP plan for outdoor cooking is submitted and approved.

Beverages may be prepared and served at outdoor bars if:

1. Beverage and beverage ingredients are protected from contamination during storage, including ice, drink mixes, condiments, and beverage containers; and
2. For service other than beer, wine, and canned soda, the following must be provided:
 - a. Overhead protection;
 - b. A hand washing sink in accordance COMAR 10.15.03.07E; and
 - c. Mechanical refrigeration if potentially hazardous drinks or drink mixes is used.

Please insert this memo into the Yellow Food Program Policies Binder. Contact Alan Brench at (410) 767-8400 if there are questions concerning this memo.

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