

Food catering sites - keeping community events safe

SafeWork SA

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Food catering sites at community events are workplaces too. Good planning will make sure you, your workers and the public have a safe and successful event.

The following safety tips will help you manage some of the common risks associated with food catering sites at community events.

By understanding what can cause people harm you can take steps to prevent it from occurring.

Ensure that your workers are trained on how to work safely and that they are adequately supervised. This includes giving them clear instructions on what to do when safety issues arise (e.g. a leaking gas bottle), in the event of severe weather (e.g. heat, storms) and in case of emergencies (e.g. an injury).

Electrical safety

For electrical safety ensure that:

- a residual current device (RCD) that accommodates all your electrical items is fitted
- all electrical leads and electrical equipment are inspected and tested
- electrical leads, equipment and connection points are protected from heat sources and wet weather
- appropriate electrical power boards are used
- electrical cables are protected to prevent damage and secured to prevent a tripping hazard
- festoon lighting is supported by steel cables or guy wires of at least 2.7 metres height above pedestrians and at least 6 metres above vehicle traffic areas.

Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG)

All gas appliances should be fit-for-purpose when used at community events. Ensure that:

- LPG cylinders (including spares) are correctly stored externally and secured to prevent them from falling (e.g. with a chain)

- connections from LPG cylinders to appliances are in good order
- pressure relief valves are facing away from the catering van, tent or other combustible materials
- LPG cylinders are kept well-ventilated and clear of ignition sources (e.g. naked flames, electric sockets)
- plastic milk crates are not used to store LPG cylinders as this may cause static electricity to build up.

Fire prevention

- Maintain clearance distances between all ignition sources and combustible materials (e.g. vans, tent and marquee walls, overhanging trees etc).
- Use soapy water or detergent to check for leaks in LPG cylinders and fittings before use.
- Safely dispose of used cooking oil and coals (after they have cooled) and clean up excess grease and fat from grills etc.
- Fit your structure or van with appropriate and readily available (i.e. unobstructed) fire-fighting equipment, ensuring that fire extinguishers are charged and within the test date.

Working conditions

Good working conditions for you and your workers include provision of:

- clear, unobstructed entry to and exit from work areas
- fresh drinking water
- hygienic washing and eating facilities
- floors and surfaces in good condition (e.g. no water pooling on the floor)
- adequate ventilation
- sufficient space to carry out work and for storage of stock, without risks to health and safety
- steps or ladders, if supplied, in good condition
- emergency plans.

First aid

Make sure your first aid kit is stocked and easily accessible.

Lifting and moving equipment

Trolleys and sack trucks can assist you and your workers to lift and move equipment and supplies more easily.

Equipment (plant) safety

Checking equipment before use is an essential part of ensuring it doesn't cause harm to anybody.

Good examples of this are making sure that:

- guarding is in place (e.g. dough rollers, slicers, mixers)
- there are no faults or defects with the equipment
- emergency stops are working (if applicable).

Train workers in safe working methods and continue to check equipment throughout the event.

Encourage your workers to report any equipment malfunctions to a supervisor or manager.

Structures and marquees

Ensure that:

- the structure or marquee has been properly erected
- access to underground services is not obstructed
- above-ground services are identified during installation and dismantling (e.g. overhead power lines)
- suitable anchor mechanisms are used (weights/stakes), taking into account adverse weather conditions (e.g. high winds)
- anchor mechanisms are suitably protected (e.g. against trips, impalement, traffic)
- the ground is suitable for the anchor mechanisms
- all guy ropes are in a sound condition
- you have a safety procedure for severe weather conditions and all workers have been trained in this procedure
- suitable exits are available and kept clear of tripping hazards at all times
- adequate lighting is provided for workers and the public.

Tips and advice

For tips and advice on work health and safety, SafeWork SA offers a free workplace advisory service. An experienced WHS advisor can visit your workplace to help you identify hazards and risks, and put in place practical safety systems that will suit your specific circumstances.

Our advisors have no inspector powers at all under the WHS Act so you can feel comfortable inviting them in to help.

To request a visit go to safework.sa.gov.au/freadvice or call 1300 365 255