



FOODRAP



SPRING / SUMMER 2026



BBQ Use at a Food Premise

As the weather gets warmer, some food premises may want to use barbecues to cook outside. Barbecue use can be permitted by Durham Region Health Department as long as you get permission from both the Health Department and your local municipality. To use a barbecue for cooking your premise will require the following:

- All food items to be cooked outside must be prepared inside an inspected kitchen.
- A handwashing station must be near the BBQ station.
- All food items cooked and served must be protected from contamination by using appropriate food grade containers and coverings.
- Provide a canopy or tent if cooking equipment does not have a lid to prevent possible contamination during the process of cooking.
- Ensure cooked foods aren't contaminated by utensils that have touched raw meats, and do not return cooked food to the trays or dishes used to hold raw meat.
- Store all hazardous foods at either 4°C and below or 60°C and above.
- Place accurate thermometers in all temperature-controlled units.
- Use a probe thermometer to ensure raw meats are cooked to a safe internal temperature.
- Ensure your barbecue brush is in good condition so that bristles don't stick to food.

Following these requirements helps ensure food safety, protects your customers, and keeps your operation in compliance throughout the BBQ season.

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Dirty Hands? Not at This Event!

Special events are exciting, busy, and sometimes a little chaotic, which is exactly why proper hand hygiene is essential. With food vendors serving high volumes of customers and working in temporary setups, clean hands are one of the most effective tools for preventing contamination and keeping everyone safe.

To keep food safe, food handlers must wash their hands at these key moments:

- before starting food preparation
- after handling raw meat
- after using the washroom
- after taking out garbage
- after handling money
- anytime hands may become contaminated

Temporary handwashing sinks are required for vendors working under tents. A basic setup includes warm water in a spigot-style jug, liquid soap, paper towels, and a catch basin to collect wastewater. It may not be fancy, but it gets the job done!

Mobile food trucks must have a minimum of one built in handwashing sink. They should always be stocked with liquid soap, paper towels, and potable hot and cold running water. Mobile trucks also need a holding tank with a gauge to tell when the wastewater bin needs to be emptied.

Regular hand hygiene helps prevent contamination and keeps everyone safe. No matter where the food comes from—a tent, a truck, or a booth—proper handwashing helps protect everyone at the event!



Applying for a special event or farmers' market in Durham Region this year?

Make sure you submit your coordinator application to the Health Department at least 45 days prior to the event and vendor applications must be submitted at least 30 days prior to the event. Here's to a successful and safe special event season!



The Most Common Food Premise Infractions in Durham Region

Last year, there were a total of 8,622 infractions noted as out of compliance from food premises in Durham Region. Check out the chart for the top five infractions that have been noted on food premise inspection report.

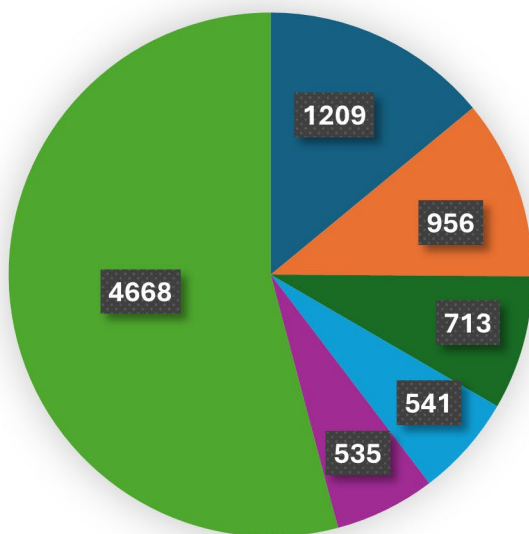
Follow these tips to avoid similar infractions:

- Implement a cleaning schedule to ensure that all equipment/non-food contact surfaces and food contact surfaces are cleaned and maintained in a sanitary manner and in good repair. When cleaning utensils/dishes, inspect each item for damage and discard any that are in disrepair.
- Cold holding units must be able to keep hazardous foods (meats, dairy, eggs, prepared fruits and vegetables, etc.) at 4°C or colder. Check the temperature of the cooler on a routine basis to verify that the required temperature is being met and record it on a log.
- At the start of each shift, verify that all hand washing basins are fully stocked with hot

- and cold water under pressure, liquid soap in a dispenser and single-use paper towels. When you notice missing supplies, restock them immediately. Always wash hands thoroughly before handling food.
- Protect food from contamination and adulteration by covering all food in storage and storing all utensils (including scoops) safely to prevent contamination of food. Inspect food bins and always use scoops/ladles with handles ensuring the handle never touches the food.
- Maintain floors in good repair and ensure they are cleaned regularly throughout the day. You should schedule regular deep cleaning of floors to clean hard to reach areas such as under and behind cooking equipment.



Number of Times Infraction Noted on Reports in 2025



- Equipment, non-food contact surfaces and linen are maintained, designed, constructed, installed and accessible for cleaning
- Food protected from potential contamination and/or adulteration
- Food contact surfaces properly designed, constructed, installed, and maintained
- Hand washing basin with supplies of hot and cold water, soap in a dispenser and single-use towels
- Floors clean and in good repair
- All Other Infractions

Behind the Inspection: The Role of Public Health Inspectors

When a Public Health Inspector visits your food premise, their goal is the same as yours: to keep food safe and customers healthy. Public Health Inspectors play an important role in preventing illness and promoting safe environments in our communities.

Becoming a Public Health Inspector requires specialized training. Inspectors complete a bachelor's degree in environmental or public health from a program accredited by the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors (CIPHI). Graduates then complete a supervised practicum with a public health agency and successfully pass the national certification exam to earn the Certificate in Public Health Inspection (Canada) that you may have seen in our email signatures or on our business cards: CPHI(C). This process ensures inspectors have the knowledge and practical skills needed to assess risks, interpret legislation, and work with operators to maintain safe kitchens.

At the Health Protection Division of the Durham Region Health Department, our team of Public Health Inspectors work closely with local food premise operators every day. We conduct routine inspections, respond to complaints, investigate potential health hazards, and provide guidance to help food premises meet the requirements under the Health Protection and Promotion Act and Ontario Regulation 493/17: Food Premises.

We recognize the effort that goes into running a food business, and we are here to support you in maintaining safe food handling practices and protecting the public. At the end of the day, we share the same goal: safe food and healthy communities! Working together, we help ensure residents and visitors in Durham Region can dine with confidence.



No Power, No Problem: Food Safety Tips for Restaurants in the Dark

When the power goes out in a restaurant, keeping food safe becomes an urgent priority. Without proper temperature control, perishable items can quickly enter the “danger zone,” increasing the risk of bacterial growth and foodborne illness. If your restaurant experiences a power outage, always close immediately.

Managing Food Safely During a Power Outage

A refrigerator will generally keep food safe for up to 4 hours if the door stays closed, while a full freezer can keep food safe for up to 48 hours (24 hours if half-full) if the door stays closed. Placing ice or gel packs around hazardous foods can help to extend this window. Use a thermometer to check internal temperatures of hazardous foods to ensure they were maintained at 4°C (40°F) or below. Once temperatures rise above this threshold for more than two hours, hazardous foods such as meat, dairy, eggs, and leftovers should be discarded.

Other Emergency Considerations

Dry goods, canned foods, and unopened shelf-stable items are generally safe, but any cans that are swollen, rusted, or dented should be discarded. Other emergencies such as fires or floods can bring additional hazards. Floodwater may contaminate food it touches if not stored in a tightly sealed container, and smoke or chemical exposure during a fire can make food unsafe even if it appears intact. Always contact your local Public Health Inspector if your food premise experiences an emergency such as a power outage, flood or fire.



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durham.ca/foodsafety



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Thank You,
Durham Region Health Department

