



Equipment and Food Handling Guidelines for Denver Nonprofit Food Operations

The information below describes different food handling allowances based on the availability of equipment in nonprofit food operations as well as related requirements. These allowances are based on the Denver Food Establishment Rules & Regulations and are in place to ensure Denver food operations take the measures required by law to keep consumers safe. The information below is intended to serve as general guidance only and is not exhaustive. Specific questions should be referred to the Public Health Inspection Division in the Denver Department of Environmental Health at 720-913-1311 or phicommments@denvergov.org. Like us on Facebook at Denver Public Health Inspections to receive program information and updates.

Equipment present	Related requirements	Allowances for food served
No hand sink is present in food handling area and/or no equipment is present for maintaining food temperatures	N/A	Facility can serve only prepackaged non-potentially hazardous foods like granola bars, nuts, dried fruit, and whole uncut fruit like whole apples, oranges, and bananas.*
Equipment for keeping food at proper temperatures	Nonprofits are allowed to use domestic refrigerators provided they hold foods at 41°F or less but must replace with commercial refrigeration when the domestic equipment fails. Hot holding equipment must hold food at 135°F or higher. A domestic oven cannot be used for hot holding. A food thermometer (0°F–220°F) must be available for use.	The site can serve yogurt, cheese, prepackaged meals and other potentially hazardous foods (PHF) obtained from a licensed caterer or approved commercial source. All PHF must be received and maintained at proper temperatures. Food must be served prepackaged unless a dedicated hand sink is available in the food handling area.
Hand-washing sink in food handling area	Hand washing sinks are required in all dish washing and food handling areas and should be used only for hand washing. If there is only one sink available in the food handling area, this must serve as a hand washing sink.	The site can conduct open food handling** such as portioning nuts, dried fruit, popcorn, etc. If refrigeration is also present, the site could handle cheese and deli meats outside of their packaging and conduct other limited food preparation.^

Equipment present	Related requirements	Allowances for food served
Dish washing sink or dish machine	If no dishwashing sink or machine is available, only single-use utensils/supplies can be used. Extensive food handling sites must have a commercial 3-compartment sink or commercial dishwasher [^] ; limited food handling operations may qualify to use a 2-compartment sink OR domestic dishwasher with 1-compartment sink for sanitizing	Facility can use reusable utensils, food storage containers, and serving equipment. All equipment used must fit in the sink or machine for proper cleaning and sanitizing.
Food preparation sink	A food preparation sink must have an indirect drain to prevent possible backflow. All food handling that is conducted in a sink must be conducted in the food preparation sink with the exception of the asterisked (*) information.	Facilities can wash, thaw, and drain foods in the food preparation sink and cut produce. If a food preparation sink is not present, the foods handled must not involve these steps with the exception of the asterisked (*) information.

* Produce like apples which are served whole and uncut should be rinsed in a food preparation sink when one is available; a ware washing sink when a food prep sink is not available; or any sink when neither of the first two options is available. Care should be taken to clean and sanitize the sink first and avoid direct contact between the food and the sink to reduce the risk of contamination.

** Employees serving food may not contact exposed, ready-to-eat food including fruits and vegetables, with their bare hands and must use suitable utensils such as deli tissue, spatulas, tongs, or single-use gloves.

[^] Extensive food handling includes full meal preparation; scratch cooking of dishes like salads, casseroles, and meats; and extensive chopping, portioning and mixing. If in doubt whether your operation engages in extensive food handling, contact the Public Health Inspection Division.

Other Resources for Nonprofit Food Operations

Denver licensing information for nonprofits:

<https://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/771/documents/PHI/Food/Food%20Licensing%20Info%20for%20Denver%20Non-Profits.pdf>

Food handling training handout for nonprofits:

<https://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/771/documents/PHI/Food/CACFP%20and%20Snack%20Food%20Safety%20Guidance.pdf>

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