

## **Commercial Outdoor Cooking Requirements**

This guide summarizes the basic site plan approval and/or permits required by the Department of Public Works for commercial outdoor cooking that is done on a regular basis as an outdoor accessory use associated with a restaurant, bar, grocery store, or similar occupancy located within Unincorporated County.

**Approved Site Plan Required** – Any restaurant, bar, grocery store, or similar occupancy that conducts outdoor cooking on a regular basis must have a site plan approved by either the Public Works Zoning Section or the Planning Department showing the location of the outdoor cooking area and any associated equipment and/or structures. This requirement applies to all commercial outdoor cooking activities (both existing and proposed).

**When Permits Required** - Depending on the size, nature, and type of outdoor cooking equipment or structure and/or associated structures, permits from the Department of Public Works may or may not be required.

The following identifies examples of when permits are not required (Note: even though a permit may not be required an approved site plan showing the location of the outdoor cooking area and equipment is still required):

- A permit is not required for portable self-contained cooking structures or equipment (portable grill, oven, smoker, etc. that do not have any utility connections) that can be manually moved by a human being without assistance.
- A permit is not required for a canopy affixed to the equipment or for a free-standing canopy provided the canopy does not exceed 120 square feet in area.

The following identifies examples of when permits are required:

- A building permit is required for any permanent type cooking structure constructed of masonry.
- A building and/or mechanical permit is required for a cooking grill, oven, smoker, or similar cooking equipment that is large enough that it cannot be manually moved by a human being without assistance. This includes grills or other equipment attached to trailers with wheels. These larger kinds of equipment or structures, including trailers, shall be anchored down to a concrete slab or foundation.
- Appropriate permits (mechanical, electrical, and/or plumbing) are required for any utility connections made to outdoor cooking structures or equipment.
- A building permit is required for any canopy type structure that exceeds 120 square feet in area.

**Health Department Requirements** - The proprietor must obtain the approval of the Health Department before conducting any outdoor cooking. Among other things, the Health Department will require a protective canopy above the cooking area and that food be transported to-and-from the outdoor area in covered containers.

**Fire District Requirements** - The proprietor must obtain the approval of the location of the outdoor cooking equipment/structure from their local Fire District before conducting any outdoor cooking. Most fire codes generally require a minimum of ten (10) feet between open-flame cooking devices and combustible construction.

Temporary commercial outdoor cooking activities are also regulated. A Special Event Permit is required for activities/events such as BBQ fund raisers, celebrations, church/company picnics, etc. that include commercial outdoor cooking. Generally Special Events are restricted to a maximum of ten (10) days/event and a maximum of two (2) events/year, unless on a shopping center site which is permitted to have 4 events/year. For additional information see our Special Event Planning and Permit Guide. A temporary structures permit is required for temporary cooking equipment/structures including equipment on trailers. These temporary permits are limited to a maximum of 6 months. Commercial outdoor cooking associated with activities that do not qualify as a Special Event and/or temporary structure must comply with the above requirements for regular usage.