

Effective Date: March 1, 2025



RETAIL FOOD PROTECTION PROGRAM

DISTRICT ORDER 2024-2

NET HEALTH · ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT · 815 N. BROADWAY AVE. TYLER, TX 75702

DISTRICT ORDER No. 2024-2
NORTHEAST TEXAS PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT

REVISING THE PROVISIONS OF DISTRICT ORDER No. 2023-1

AN ORDER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE NORTHEAST TEXAS PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT ESTABLISHING THE PERMITTING AND ENFORCEMENT OF STATE LAW AND STATE RULES FOR FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS, RETAIL FOOD STORES, MOBILE FOOD UNITS, ROADSIDE FOOD VENDORS, AND TEMPORARY FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS; ESTABLISHING A VARIABLE FEE SCHEDULE FOR ISSUING OR RENEWING PERMITS; AND REQUIRING EMPLOYMENT OF CERTIFIED FOOD MANAGERS AND CERTIFIED FOOD WORKERS BY CERTAIN FIXED OR MOBILE LOCATION RETAIL FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS IN WHICH FOOD IS PREPARED OR OFFERED TO THE PUBLIC; PROVIDING A SEVERABILITY CLAUSE; PROVIDING FOR A PENALTY; AND ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, it is the intent of the Northeast Texas Public Health District to promote and protect the public health, safety, and welfare; and

WHEREAS, it is the intent of the Northeast Texas Public Health District to work with the Mobile Food Truck Industry in a cooperative manner to safeguard public health and provide to consumers food that is safe, unadulterated, and honestly presented; and

WHEREAS, [Texas Health and Safety Code, Section 437.002](#) et. seq. provides public health districts with authority to enforce state law and rules adopted under state law concerning food establishments, retail food stores, mobile food units, roadside food vendors and temporary food establishments; and

WHEREAS, [Texas Health and Safety Code, Section 437.010](#) provides that public health districts may require permits, plan reviews, and inspections; and may deny, suspend, or revoke the permit of the food establishment, retail food store, mobile food unit, roadside food vendor, and temporary food establishment if not in compliance with state laws or state rules; and

WHEREAS, [Texas Health and Safety Code, Section 437.012](#) (c) and (d) provides that fees collected by a public health district shall be deposited to the credit of a special fund created by the cooperative agreement under which the district operates. Fees deposited as provided by this section may be spent only for conducting inspections required by this chapter and issuing permits; and

WHEREAS, [Texas Health and Safety Code, Section 437.012](#) (a) and (f), and the rules approved and adopted by the Health and Human Services Commission titled, “Inspection Fees for Retail Food Establishments – [25 Texas Administrative Code \(TAC\), Chapter §229, Subchapter Z,](#)” allow for the collection of a fee for providing food establishment inspections to childcare center food establishments and school food establishments; and

WHEREAS, [Texas Health and Safety Code, Section 437.0185](#) provides public health districts with authority to impose an administrative penalty on a person the district requires to hold a permit under Chapter 437.004 if the person violates state law and rules adopted under state law concerning food establishments, retail food stores, mobile food units, roadside vendors, and temporary food service establishments; and

WHEREAS, [Texas Administrative Code Title 25, Part 1, Chapter §228,](#) Subchapter B, in accordance with [Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 438,](#) Subchapter G, Certification of Food Managers, supports demonstration of food safety knowledge, thereby reducing the risk of foodborne illness outbreaks caused by improper food preparation and handling techniques; and

WHEREAS, [Texas Health and Safety Code, Section 437.010](#) provides for the submission of plans and subsequent inspections necessary to determine if the applicant is in compliance with state law and rules adopted under state law governing the applicant; and

WHEREAS, “[Texas Food Establishment Rules,](#)” [25 TAC §228.222\(a\)](#) provides that the regulatory authority may impose additional requirements to protect against health hazards related to the conduct of the temporary food establishment, may prohibit the sale of some or all foods requiring time or temperature control for safety (TCS foods), and when no health hazard will result, may waive, or modify requirements of these rules; and

WHEREAS, [FDA Food Code 8-102.10](#) provides for additional requirements to prevent health hazards and for conditions not addressed by “Texas Food Establishment Rules;” and

WHEREAS, [FDA Food Code 8-301.11.1](#) requires a permit as a prerequisite for operation of a food establishment, [FDA Food Code 8-304.20](#) the regulatory authority permit is non-transferable and in the event a food establishment plans to remodel, change ownership, or change the nature of the operation, [FDA Food Code 3-201.11](#) the permit holder shall contact the Northeast Texas Public Health District prior to a remodel, a change of ownership, or a change in the nature of the operation including, but not limited to a change in menu, processing style, or concept;

WHEREAS, [Texas Health & Safety Code Section 121.043\(a\)](#) provides that a public health district may perform any health function that any of its members may perform unless otherwise restricted by law;

WHEREAS, [Texas Health & Safety Code Section 121.006\(a\)](#) states that a the administrative board of a public health district may adopt ordinances or rules to charge fees for public health services;

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of the Northeast Texas Public Health District previously adopted District Order No. 2023-1, which established various regulations regarding food service establishments and related fees;

WHEREAS, it is important that Board of Directors know and update the regulations in District Order 2023-1 related to food service establishments and associated fees;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Northeast Texas Public Health District Board hereby adopts the following Northeast Texas Public Health District Food Establishment Rules, Regulations, Fees, and orders as follows:

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PART 1. RETAIL FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS

Section 1. General Provisions

A. State Regulations

- 1) Texas Department of State Health Services (TX DSHS), Consumer Protection Division, Food and Drug Section, Retail Food Safety Operations Unit: “Texas Food Establishment Rules,” [25 TAC §228](#).
- 2) Texas Health & Safety Code [Chapters 431](#) through [438](#) and amendments thereto.

B. Definitions

- 1) **Accredited Food Handler Certification** – certification is obtained by completing a TX DSHS approved course teaching the principles of food safety to produce safe food products and prevent food borne illness.
- 2) **Accredited Food Safety Manager Certification** – certification is obtained by passing a TX DSHS approved certified food manager certification examination. Certification is valid for five (5) years.
- 3) **Administrative Hearing** – a non-judicial hearing conducted between the complainant and NET Health Chief Executive Officer or designated appointees.
- 4) **Administrative Penalty** – a civil penalty imposed by NET Health for a contravention of an act, regulation, or by-law. It is regulatory in nature, rather than criminal, is intended to secure compliance with a regulatory scheme, and can be employed with the use of other administrative sanctions such as demerit points and license suspensions.
- 5) **Bake Sale** – a fundraising event selling baked goods allowed by law of which all proceeds go toward the nonprofit organization.
- 6) **Baked Good** – foods that do not require time or temperature control for safety, such as breads, cakes and pastries that are cooked in an oven.
- 7) **Catered Event** – a catered feeding location where food is provided by a food establishment permitted by NET Health to provide a contracted amount of food directly to a private and pre- determined number of consumers. A catered event is not an agreement to provide foods prepared for an unknown number of consumers or provided for retail sale, by ticket or for service by the plate to consumers at a public event.
- 8) **Caterer** – a permitted food establishment, under inspection by NET Health, hired or contracted to provide food service for a pre-determined number of consumers at a private event. A caterer must undergo a plan review to provide information to NET Health for the catering operations including: menu, processing style, transportation equipment, service equipment and storage.
- 9) **Central Preparation Facility** - An approved and permitted retail food establishment or space where food is prepared, stored and packaged.

- 10) **Commissary Facility** – a facility that is an approved and permitted retail food establishment that provides support to mobile food units, caterers, food manufacturers. A commissary can include a servicing area and a central preparation facility. Support services include adequate equipment, storage, parking, utility, and prep area for businesses using its facility.
- 11) **Child Care Center/Facility** – any facility licensed by the regulatory authority to receive thirteen (13) or more children for childcare which prepares or serves food for on-site consumption. A child care center is classified as a food establishment. [25 TAC Chapter §229](#) Subchapter Z, §229.471.
- 12) **Core Item** – a provision in the FDA Food Code that is not designated as a Priority item or a Priority Foundation item and includes an item that usually relates to general sanitation, operational controls, sanitation operating procedures, facilities or structures, equipment design or general maintenance.
- 13) **Cottage Food Production Operation** – An individual, operating out of the individual's home, who:
- (a) produces at the individual's home:
 - (i) a baked good that is not a time and temperature control for safety food (TCS food), as defined in [§229.661\(b\)\(13\)](#) of this title (relating to Cottage Food Production Operations);
 - (ii) candy;
 - (iii) coated and uncoated nuts;
 - (iv) unroasted nut butters;
 - (v) fruit butters;
 - (vi) a canned jam or jelly;
 - (vii) a fruit pie;
 - (viii) dehydrated fruit or vegetables, including dried beans;
 - (ix) popcorn and popcorn snacks;
 - (x) cereal, including granola;
 - (xi) dry mix;
 - (xii) vinegar;
 - (xiii) pickled fruit or vegetables, including beets and carrots, that are preserved in vinegar, brine, or a similar solution at an equilibrium pH value of 4.6 or less;
 - (xiv) mustard;
 - (xv) roasted coffee or dry tea;
 - (xvi) a dried herb or dried-herb mix;
 - (xvii) plant-based acidified canned goods; fermented vegetable products, including products that are refrigerated to preserve quality;
 - (xviii) frozen raw and uncut fruit or vegetables; or
 - (xix) any other food that is not a TCS food, as defined in [§229.661\(b\)\(13\)](#)
 - (b) has an annual gross income of \$50,000 or less from the sale of food described by subparagraph (a) of this paragraph,

- (c) sells foods produced under subparagraph (a) of this paragraph only directly to consumers; and
 - (d) delivers products to the consumer at the point of sale or another location designated by the consumer.
- 14) **Chief Executive Officer** – the director of the public health district.
 - 15) **Donated Food Distributing Organizations.** (DFDOs) are charitable organizations under section 501(c) of the federal Internal Revenue Code that distribute food free of charge.
 - 16) **Donor.** A person, corporation, association, or other organization that donates food to a Donated Food Distributing Organization.
 - 17) **Donor Kitchen.** A kitchen that is used by a Donor to handle, store, or prepare food for donation through a Donated Food Distributing Organization and which is not a residential kitchen in a private home.
 - 18) **Drinking water (TFER §228.2 (11))** - Traditionally known as "potable water" and that meets the standards set forth in [30 TAC Chapter §290](#), Subchapter F (relating to Drinking Water Standards Governing Drinking Water Quality and Reporting Requirements for Public Water Systems). Drinking water includes the term "water" except where the term used connotes that the water is not potable, such as "boiler water," "mop water," "rainwater," "wastewater," and "non-drinking water."
 - 19) **Event** – commonly termed as a “single event or celebration;” a unique public gathering of persons at which food products will be served directly to consumers, such as a festival, bazaar, carnival, circus, fund-raiser, public exhibition, celebration, sporting event, or other mass public gathering which can be civic, political, public or educational for which an appropriate regulatory authority would grant permission for the operation of the event. An event shall have a promoter, sponsor or coordinator that is responsible for the organization and facilitation of utilities to vendors throughout the event.
 - 20) **Event Coordinator/Promoter** – person responsible for sponsoring or organizing and/or advertising the activities of the event and for facilitation of utilities to vendors throughout the event.
 - 21) **Farmer** - A person or entity that produces agricultural products including, but not limited to, fruits, vegetables, fungi, grains, fiber, honey, dairy products, meat, poultry, or eggs, by practice of the agricultural arts upon land that the person or entity owns, rents, leases, or to which the person or entity otherwise has access.
 - 22) **Farm Stand** – a premises owned and operated by a producer of agricultural food products at which the producer or other persons may offer for sale produce or foods described by Subdivision [2-b \(A\) of Section 437.001 of the Texas Health and Safety Code](#).

- 23) **Farmers Market** – A designated location used for a recurring event at which a majority of the vendors are farmers or other food producers who sell food directly to consumers. A farmers’ market must include at least two vendors who meet the definition of “Farmer” as defined in this section and may include vendors who meet the definition of “Food Producer” as defined in this section. In addition, a farmers market may include vendors who are not “Farmers” or Food Producers,” provided that the “Farmers” and “Food Producers” constitute the majority of vendors who participate in the market throughout the year. [Reference 25 TAC §229.702\(3\)](#).
- 24) **FDA** – means the [U.S. Food and Drug Administration](#).
- 25) **Floor Plans** – a computer drafted professionally drawn to scale diagram or drawing of a room or building drawn as if seen from above. Equipment schedules; finish schedules; plumbing and electrical diagrams; and calculations may be requested along with any other information to complete a proper plan review.
- 26) **Food Establishment** - A food establishment is an operation that: stores, prepares, packages, serves, or vends food directly to the consumer, or otherwise provides food for human consumption, such as a restaurant, retail food store, satellite or catered feeding location, catering operation if the operation provides food directly to a consumer or to a conveyance used to transport people, market, vending machine location, self-service food market, conveyance used to transport people, institution, or food bank; and relinquishes possession of food to a consumer directly, or indirectly through a delivery service, such as home delivery of grocery orders or restaurant takeout orders, or delivery service that is provided by common carriers.
- (a) A Food establishment includes:
- (i) an element of the operation, such as a transportation vehicle or a central preparation facility that supplies a vending location or satellite feeding location unless the vending or feeding location is permitted by the regulatory authority; and
 - (ii) an operation that is conducted in a mobile, stationary, temporary, or permanent facility or location and where consumption is on or off the premises regardless if there is a charge for the food.
 - (iii) A nonprofit organization
- (b) A Food establishment does not include:
- (i) an establishment that offers only prepackaged foods that are not TCS foods;
 - (ii) a produce stand that only offers whole, uncut fresh fruits and vegetables;
 - (iii) a food processing plant, including one that is located on the premises of a food establishment;
 - (iv) a cottage food production operation;
 - (v) a bed and breakfast limited as defined in this section; or
 - (vi) a private home that receives catered or home-delivered food.

- 27) **Food Producer** – A person who grew, raised, processed, prepared, manufactured, or otherwise added value to the food product the person is selling. The term does not include a person who only packaged or repackaged a food product.
- 28) **Group residence (TFER §228.2(17))** --A private or public housing corporation or institutional facility that provides living quarters and meals. The term includes a domicile for unrelated persons, such as a retirement home, correctional facility, or a long-term care facility.
- 29) **Harvest Cut** – the raw cut to remove produce from the field and any erroneous foliage.
- 30) **Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) Plan** – a written document that delineates the formal procedures for following the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point principles developed by The National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods.
- 31) **Hold Order** – temporary detainment of foods believed to have been compromised or tampered with that must not be moved or destroyed until cleared by NET Health.
- 32) **Human Foods Program (HFP)** – Federal Program that became effective October 1, 2024. The [Human Foods Program](#) oversees all FDA activities related to microbiological food safety, food chemical safety and nutrition.
- 33) **Imminent Health Hazard** – significant threat or danger to health that is considered to exist when there is evidence sufficient to show that a product, practice, circumstance, or event creates a situation that requires immediate correction or cessation of operation to prevent injury based on the number of potential injuries, and the nature, severity, and duration of the anticipated injury. Examples include but are not limited to sewage or wastewater backup or improper discharge, breakdown of refrigeration system, lack of water, no hot water, an outbreak of foodborne illness, lack of electricity, pest infestation, lack of sanitation and control.
- 34) **Nonprofit Organization** –Defined in [§229.371 \(4\) of 25 TAC Part 1](#), A civic or fraternal organization, charity, lodge, association, proprietorship, or corporation possessing a 501 (c) exemption under the Internal Revenue Code; or a religious organization.
- 35) **Northeast Texas Public Health District (NET Health)** – is a Public Health District established, according to [Texas Health and Safety Code 121 Subchapter E](#), in 1994 by the City of Tyler and Smith County. All other incorporated cities of Smith County have opted in as a member of the Northeast Texas Public Health District for the services of the retail food inspection program.
- 36) **No Bare Hand Contact** – the use of a physical barrier between clean bare hands and ready to eat food items is required when handling foods (examples include, but are not limited to spoons, tongs, tissue paper, disposable food grade gloves, etc.).
- 37) **Out of Jurisdiction Caterer** – a permitted food establishment from an area outside of NET Health jurisdiction. Before food service may begin in NET Health jurisdiction a food establishment permit must also be obtained from NET Health.

- 38) **Permit** - means the document issued by NET Health that authorizes a PERSON to operate a FOOD ESTABLISHMENT.
- 39) **Person** - means an association, a corporation, individual, partnership, other legal entity, government, or governmental subdivision or agency.
- 40) **Preliminary Inspection** – a site visit and inspection conducted in preparation for submittal of an application for a Retail Food Establishment Permit.
- 41) **Priority Foundation Item.**
- (a) "Priority foundation item" means a provision in this Code whose application supports, facilitates, or enables one or more PRIORITY ITEMS.
 - (b) "Priority foundation item" includes an item that requires the purposeful incorporation of specific actions, equipment, or procedures by industry management to attain control of risk factors that contribute to foodborne illness or injury such as personnel training, infrastructure or necessary equipment, HACCP plans, documentation or record keeping, and labeling; and
 - (c) "Priority foundation item" is an item that is denoted in this Code with a superscript Pf - Pf.
- 42) **Priority Item.**
- (a) "Priority item" means a provision in this Code whose application contributes directly to the elimination, prevention or reduction to an acceptable level, hazards associated with foodborne illness or injury and there is no other provision that more directly controls the hazard.
 - (b) "Priority item" includes items with a quantifiable measure to show control of hazards such as cooking, reheating, cooling, handwashing; and
- 43) "Priority item" is an item that is denoted in this Code with a superscript P-P.
- 44) **Promoter** – person responsible for sponsoring or organizing and/or advertising the activities of an event and for facilitation of utilities to vendors throughout an event.
- 45) **Public Health District** – a special district government entity established by two (2) or more counties and/or cities, as per Texas Health and Safety Code, [Title 2, Subtitle F, Chapter 121](#), Subchapter E. Any government entity including a school district may become a member of a public health district. A public health district will at a minimum provide the essential public health services listed for a local health department. A public health district may perform any public health function that any of its members may perform unless restricted by law.
- 46) **Producer** – defined pursuant to [19 USCS Section 2401 \(2\)](#). [Title 19. Customs Duties]. The term agricultural commodity producer means a person that shares in the risk of producing an agricultural commodity and that is entitled to a share of the commodity for marketing, including an operator, a sharecropper, or a person that owns or rents the land on which the commodity is produced.

- 47) **Ready to Eat Food** – foods that are in a form that is edible without additional preparation to achieve food safety. No further washing, cooking, or additional preparation by the food establishment or the consumer is required. These foods are intended for immediate consumption either for on-premises consumption or carry-out and it is reasonably expected to be consumed in that form.
- 48) **Remodel** – to change the structure, finishes, layout, or design of the originally approved floor plan of any retail food establishment.
- 49) **Revocation** – the permit issued is terminated for an indefinite period of time.
- 50) **Risk Category** – a hierarchical scale of the likelihood of foodborne illness to occur based on the menu, processing style and history of operations inside the food establishment.
- 51) **Sewage** - means liquid waste containing animal or vegetable matter in suspension or solution and may include liquids containing chemicals in solution.
- 52) **School Food Establishment** – A food establishment where food is prepared or served and intended for service primarily to students in institutions of learning including, but not limited to, public and private schools, including kindergarten, preschool and elementary schools, junior high schools, high schools, colleges, and universities. A school food establishment is classified as a food establishment. [25 TAC §229, Subchapter Z, §229.471.](#)
- 53) **Suspension** – the temporary discontinuance or withdrawal of a permit issued by NET Health for the period of suspension.
- 54) **Temporary Food Establishment** – a food establishment that operates at a fixed location for a period of time of no more than fourteen (14) consecutive days in conjunction with a coordinated single event or celebration.
- 55) **Time/Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) Food** (formerly defined as Potential Hazardous Food) – food that requires time/temperature control for safety to limit pathogenic microorganism growth or toxin formation.
- 56) **Variance** – a written document issued by NET Health that authorizes a modification or waiver of one or more requirements of the Texas Food Establishment Rules if, in the opinion of NET Health, a health hazard or nuisance will not result from the modification or waiver.
- 57) **Vending Machines** – Self-service devices which, upon insertion of a coin, paper currency, token, card or key, dispenses unit servings of food, either in bulk or in packages, without the necessity of replenishing the device between each vending operation.

Section 2. Fee Schedule

A. Variable Permit Fee Schedule Based on Risk Category.

1) Retail Food Establishments

(a) Very Low Risk	\$275.00
(b) Low Risk	\$325.00
(c) Medium Risk	\$400.00
(d) High Risk	\$525.00
(e) Very High Risk	\$675.00

2) Mobile Food Units

(a) Very Low Risk	\$230.00
(b) Low Risk	\$280.00
(c) Medium Risk	\$330.00
(d) High Risk	\$430.00
(e) Very High Risk	\$680.00
(f) Very Low Risk Pushcart	\$150.00
(g) Low Risk Pushcart	\$250.00

3) Temporary Food Establishments

(a) Temporary Food Vendor 1st three (3) days	\$75.00
(b) Temporary Food Vendor - Additional Days (each day)	\$15.00
(c) Temporary Food Vendor - High Risk 1st three (3) days	\$100.00
(d) Temporary Food Vendor - NET Health permitted Mobile Food Unit	\$75.00

B. Set Permit Fee Schedule for Other Retail Food Permits.

1) Retail Food Permits

(a) 30 Day Change of Ownership - Temporary Permit	\$200.00
(b) Annual Variance / HACCP / Special Process	\$100.00
(c) Licensed Care Center - Food Establishment	\$225.00
(d) Commissary Agreement Permit	\$75.00
(e) Food Truck Park	\$100.00
(f) School	\$375.00

2) Farmers Market Vendor

(a) Low Risk - Farmers Market Vendor	\$25.00
(b) Medium Risk- Farmers Market Vendor	\$50.00
(c) High Risk - Farmers Market Vendor	\$100.00
3) Vending Machine Permit Fee	
(a) Prepackaged TCS Foods or Beverages. Each machine	\$25.00
(b) Prepared Foods Vending Machine - Each machine	\$250.00
4) Self-Service Market	\$50.00

C. Other Associated Fees.

1) Initial Permit Proration Calculation

The Annual Fee is divided over twelve (12) months and adjusted to align the initial permit expiration date with annual billing cycle or with any other existing permit expiration date for other inspection services at the same establishment. Examples include but are not limited to: A hotel with a Commercial Pool/Spa Permit and a Continental Breakfast Food Establishment.

2) Nonprofit Fees for Service.

Nonprofit organizations as defined in Part 1 Section 1.B. 34) are exempt from payment of the permit fee. Any civic or fraternal organization, charity, lodge, association, proprietorship, corporation, or church not meeting the definition of "nonprofit organization" must obtain a permit and pay the permit fee.

3) Plan Review

(a) Coordinator Application Plan Review for Single Event or Celebration	
(i) Nonprofit	Fee Exempt
(ii) 1-5 Vendors	\$25.00
(iii) 6-10 Vendors	\$75.00
(iv) 11 plus vendors	\$175.00
(b) Food Truck Park Plan Review	
(i) 2-4 vehicles	\$75.00
(ii) 5-10 vehicles	\$125.00
(iii) 11 plus vendors	\$175.00

(c) Farmers Market Plan Review	\$25.00
(d) Mobile Food Establishment Plan Review	\$200.00
(e) Retail Food Establishment Plan Review Fee Based on Square Footage	
(i) New Construction, Conversion, Change of Ownership with Modifications	
a. 0-999 square feet	\$175.00
b. 1,000 - 4,999 square feet	\$200.00
c. 5,000 - 24,999 square feet	\$400.00
d. 25,000 plus square feet	\$600.00
(ii) Change of Ownership - No Menu Change, Concept Change or Equipment Layout	\$175.00
(iii) Remodel	\$175.00
4) Duplicate Permit Fee	\$25.00
5) Late Fees	
(a) Annual Food Establishment Late Fee	\$100.00
(b) Event Coordinator Late Fee	\$100.00
(c) Temporary Food Vendor Late Fee	\$100.00
6) Permit Re-Instatement Fee	\$150.00
7) Re-Inspection Fee	\$100.00
8) Administrative Penalty Fees	
(a) Level 1	\$100.00
(b) Level 2	\$200.00
(c) Level 3	\$300.00
(d) Level 4	\$400.00
(e) Level 5	\$500.00

Section 3. Requirements Applicable to Certain Types of Food Establishments

A. Catered Event Requirements. A Catered Event as defined in [Part 1 Section 1. B. 7\)](#) must follow the permitted chain of inspection and must include the following:

- 1) NET Health Permit. Any person hired to cater for a private event within NET Health jurisdiction must hold a valid NET Health Retail Food Establishment Permit.
- 2) Plan Review. A caterer must undergo a plan review before business begins or before adding catering services to retail food establishment. The plan review must provide information for the catering operations including: menu, processing style, transportation equipment, service equipment and storage of equipment and supplies.
- 3) Documentation. Caterers and event coordinators need to complete a contract that includes an offer, acceptance, and consideration. This contract would describe the details for providing a specific amount of food and method of service directly to consumers at a private event.
- 4) Capacity to Contract. Caterers and event coordinators must be of legal age; must have the mental capacity to enter into an agreement and the contract must not violate the law.

B. Donated Food Distributing Organizations. All DFDOs within NET Health jurisdiction must register with the Environmental Health Department of NET Health.

C. Farmers Market Requirement. Regulations for Texas farmers markets are contained in [Title 25, Chapter 229.701-704](#) of the Texas Administrative Code.

- 1) Farmers Market Application Required. The purpose of this application is for verification the activity qualifies as a farmers market and to ensure foods and beverages requiring time or temperature control for safety are inspected and permitted accordingly. This applies to traditional in person and virtually organized farmers markets.
- 2) Farmers Market Coordinator Responsibilities. The Farmers Market Coordinator or person designated as the market promoter must submit application for any farmers markets located within NET Health jurisdiction to the Environmental Health Department. The farmers market coordinator shall provide a written statement describing the event and listing all proposed farmers market vendors.
 - (a) Display of Permits and Licenses. The farmers market must display NET Health Farmers Market Certificate. The farmers market coordinator must ensure all

- vendors seek and obtain and publicly display applicable permits or licenses from regulatory governing the foods or beverages offered for consumption.
- (b) Facility Sanitation. The farmers market coordinator must ensure prevention of public nuisance or conditions that contribute to the spread of communicable disease.
 - (c) Utilities to Support Farmers Market Vendors. The farmers market coordinator must establish, coordinate and maintain utilities according to farmers market application submitted and approved by NET Health. Utilities including but not limited to maintaining access to potable water connections, backflow prevention, proper wastewater and grease disposal, electrical needs of vendors, toilet facilities, crowd control, trash control.
- 3) Farmers Market Vendors Operating at a Farmers Market Within NET Health Jurisdiction.
- (a) Permit Required. Vendors that offer consumable foods or beverages defined as TCS foods requiring time or temperature control for safety, are required to obtain a valid permit before operating at a farmers market within NET Health Jurisdiction.
 - (b) Application. Prior to operating, a Farmers Market Vendor Permit Application form must be obtained from NET Health and returned with the required fee as per [Part 1 Section 2](#) of this District Order. The application shall contain such information necessary for NET Health to determine adequate food safety operations will be implemented for public safety.
- 4) Types of Farmers Market Vendors Categories.
- (a) Exemptions. Vendors that offer whole produce, cottage food producers operating under cottage law, or vendors offering shelf stable commercially manufactured foods that are labeled for individual sale to consumers, and it remains in original packaging.
 - (b) Low Risk. Packaged foods that require time or temperature control.
 - (c) Medium Risk. Ready to eat foods that require simple prep or assembly for service. Minimal menu items (5 or less) that are all ready to eat and require little preparation for service to the customer.
 - (d) High Risk. Foods that are ready to eat and require time or temperature control for safety and that will be reheated and served or reheated and held before being served.
 - (e) High Risk Complex Foods. Complex food preparation that requires time or temperature control for safety, are received or stored in the raw not ready to eat state and require preparation and cooking before being served.

- 5) Equipment. Equipment necessary to control risks known to contribute to foodborne illnesses must be provided to control contamination by environment or associated pathogens in foods, health and sanitation of food handlers, adequate temperature controls to denature pathogens or limit their growth and by sourcing foods from approved safe sources.
- 6) Handwashing and warewashing sinks. Refer to [Part 1 Section 3 E. 2\) \(d\)](#)
- 7) Duration. A Farmers Market Vendor Permit is valid for a maximum of one year.

D. Mobile Food Units, Commissary and Food Truck Park. Refer to [Part 2](#) of this District Order.

E. Nonprofit Organizations. Food establishments, the net earnings of which are used **in whole** for charity, church funds or public welfare, **shall meet all requirements of this District Order with the exception of the fee and permit.** Application, review and inspections are performed to demonstrate food safety compliance necessary to protect public health.

- 1) Proof of 501(c). A valid copy of the [501\(c\) IRS](#) determination letter must be submitted with application to apply the permit fee exemption.
- 2) Plan Review. Applications will be reviewed to review plans for menu, capacity for preparation of foods and beverages and the equipment layout to accommodate contamination prevention and volume. Reference [Part 1. Section 4](#) of this District Order.
- 3) Posting of Certificate of Inspection and Inspection Report. NET Health will issue a Certificate of Inspection upon successful inspection completion. The Certificate of Inspection and most recent inspection must be prominently posted visible to the public consumers.
- 4) Compliance with Texas Food Establishment Rules. [Reference TAC §228](#)

F. Self-Service Food Markets. A market that is unstaffed and offers prepackaged non-TCS food and prepackaged refrigerated or frozen TCS food that is stored in equipment that complies with the [Texas Food Establishment Rules. §228.225](#).

G. Temporary Event Requirement. A single event or celebration that offers food or beverages to the public is responsible for the health and welfare of the consumers. Permits and inspections are required if foods and beverages are offered to the public for consumption regardless if there is a charge for the foods and regardless of registration for entrance to the event. There are two (2) components required to organize such an event:

- 1) Coordinator Application for a Single Event or Celebration.

- (a) Application Required. The purpose of the application is to verify the activity is a “single event or celebration.” When food vendors are invited to participate in the event, the event promoter or event coordinator defined in [Part I, Section 1, B, \(17\)](#) of this District Order must make an application to NET Health at least two (2) weeks prior to the date of the event. Applications received within two (2) weeks of the event date may be denied or charged a late fee as described in [Part 1 Section 2](#) of this District Order.
 - (b) Responsibility of Event Coordinator. The event coordinator shall provide a written statement describing the event and listing all proposed temporary food establishments. The event coordinator of an event at which a temporary food establishment is operated shall ensure a permit is obtained for each temporary food establishment. The event coordinator must identify and ensure each vendor has utilities including but not limited to maintaining access to potable water connections, backflow prevention, proper wastewater and grease disposal, electrical needs of vendors, toilet facilities, crowd control, trash control, securing qualified temporary food vendors and coordinating the health and safety of the invited guests.
 - (c) Limitations. Events shall occur once a month or less frequently per property. Events that occur daily, weekly, or more frequently than once a month are considered continuous operations and thus do not constitute a “single event or celebration.”
 - (d) Location Exception. For city or county owned locations, such as parks, or convention centers and like venues with Food Establishment Permits, more than one “single event or celebration” may occur at that location per month so long as the fees are paid for each event per [Part 1 Section 2](#) and the appropriate “single event or celebration” Coordinator’s Application and a Temporary Food Establishment Permit Application and if applicable a city or county issued special use permit verifies each “single event or celebration” is unique in the fact the single event or celebration is the only one of its kind.
- 2) Temporary Food Establishments Operating at a Single Event.
- (a) Permit Required. A temporary food establishment shall obtain a permit with NET Health prior to offering foods or beverages to the public. The single event permit is valid for one individual food booth or unit at one specific event and is valid for the dates and times of the coordinated event up to a maximum of fourteen (14) consecutive days from the initial effective date. After being secured as a food vendor for a “single event or celebration” contact must be made with NET Health to submit a Temporary Food Establishment Permit Application. Exception: A temporary food establishment event set up at a farmers’ market may be permitted to set up for the dates of the farmers’ market up to a maximum of one year.
 - (b) Application. Prior to operating a temporary food establishment, a Temporary Food Establishment Permit Application form must be obtained from NET Health and returned with the required fee as per [Part 1 Section 2](#) The application shall

contain such information necessary for NET Health to determine if a permit should be issued and under what conditions the application shall be approved or disapproved. The Temporary Food Establishment Permit Application must be received by NET Health at least seven (7) calendar days prior to the event. Applications accepted less than seven (7) calendar days prior to an event must pay a one hundred dollar (\$100.00) late application fee. Applications submitted within three (3) business days prior to the event may be denied.

- (c) Liability. The owner/operator of a temporary food establishment has liability for the operation of the temporary food establishment. The owner/operator may be responsible should a patron/customer be harmed by the operation of the temporary food establishment. The owner and the operators involved in food preparation must take extraordinary care to prevent risk/hazard to the community.
- (d) Hand sinks and ware washing sinks for Temporary Food Establishments. An adequate supply of tempered potable water is required for each temporary food establishment to effectively wash hands and wash, rinse and sanitize utensils and food equipment throughout the event. Adequate supply will be determined based on types of foods offered and the duration of the event.
 - (i) Temporary Food Establishments that offer foods in packaged form may be exempt from ware washing and hand washing requirements if approved by NET Health.
 - (ii) Hand washing equipment must be at least a tempered container with spigot capable of constant waterflow into a catch basin to capture all wastewater generated. Hand sink locations must be accessible and convenient for use by food workers.
 - (iii) Low risk or Process 1 type foods and beverages offered at Coordinated Events shall have at a minimum three food grade tubs of adequate capacity to effectively wash utensils and food equipment.
 - (iv) Medium risk or Process 2 type foods and beverages offered at Coordinated Events with a duration of 4 hours or less shall have at a minimum three food grade tubs of adequate capacity to effectively wash utensils and food equipment.
 - (v) Medium risk or Process 2 type foods and beverages offered at Coordinated Events with a duration greater than 4 hours shall have at a minimum a three-compartment sink with hot and cold water under pressure to effectively wash utensils and food equipment. Each compartment must be able to accommodate food equipment needing to be washed.
 - (vi) High risk or Process 3 and Complex Menu Temporary Food Vendors must have adequate supply of hot and cold water under pressure plumbed to a three-compartment sink and to a hand sink. Water capacity shall be adequate last the duration of the event and all wastewaters shall be contained and discharged to prevent public nuisance or risk to health and safety.

- (e) Additional Requirements. NET Health may impose additional requirements to protect against health hazards related to the conduct of the temporary food establishments and may prohibit the sale of some or all food that requires time/temperature control for safety.
- (f) Complex Menu at a Temporary Food Establishment. Process 2 or Process 3 foods received raw and prepared for service in a temporary food establishment presents a higher risk of contamination. Additional requirements shall be required to protect the health of the public. A plan review will be conducted to determine food worker training, prevention of contamination of ready to eat foods, prevention of contamination from the environment, and safe preparation, storage, and handling of foods.
- (g) Requirements for Temporary Food Vendors. A temporary food vendor attending greater than twelve (12) events per year is required to obtain a permit for a central food preparation/commissary with servicing area for equipment cleaning, storage, and supply storage.

H. Vending Machines. Vending machines that contain foods that require temperature control for safety will require application and permit.

- 1) Permits Required. No person or firm may operate vending machines without obtaining a valid permit for vending machines that contain foods that require temperature control for safety. These requirements do not apply to operators of machines that only vend shelf stable beverages in sealed cans or bottles or shelf stable commercially manufactured foods.
- 2) Food Vending Machine Operator. The vending machine operator is the person, who by contract, agreement or ownership, takes responsibility for furnishing, installing, servicing, operating, or maintaining one or more food vending machines.
 - (a) The food vending machine operator must submit an application to NET Health identifying the location and number of each food vending machine.
- 3) Employee Certifications. The primary person in charge must hold a valid certified food manager certificate. All other employees must maintain a valid food handler certification within 30 days of employment.
- 4) Inspections. Upon request by the inspector, the food vending machine operator must give the inspector access to the interior of all of its vending machines for inspection. If the vending machine does not comply with the Texas Food Establishment Rules, the operator must remove the vending machine from service until compliance is verified.

Section 4. Plan Review of Facility, Operating Plans and Preliminary Inspections of Retail Food Establishments

A. General. The required plans and specifications related to the proposed layout shall include scope of work, site plan, overall building layout, equipment arrangement, plumbing plans, mechanical plans, lighting and finish materials of food areas, and the type and model of proposed fixed equipment and facilities. A commissary shall additionally submit plans showing refrigerated and dry storage areas reserved for mobile food unit use. The prepared plans and specifications shall be submitted to NET Health with any supporting documentation required by NET Health for review and approval before construction, remodeling or conversion begins. The regulatory authority or its designated agent or involved local authority shall approve the plans and specifications if they meet the requirements of these rules.

B. Submission of Plans Required. No food establishment shall be constructed, extensively remodeled, or converted except in accordance with plans and specifications approved by NET Health. The Conference of Food Protection (CFP) Plan Review for Food Establishments shall be used to prepare plans and specifications for submittal to NET Health with a plan review application, menu, and appropriate fee before any food establishment within NET Health jurisdiction shall:

- 1) be constructed;
- 2) undergo a major remodel;
- 3) change equipment arrangement or food flow;
- 4) change type or size of equipment;
- 5) change ownership; or
- 6) convert an existing structure, not previously used as a food establishment, into a food establishment or retail food store, fee specified in Part 1 Section 2 of this District Order.

C. Size and Scale of Floor Plans. Floor Plans must be submitted on at least 11-inch x 17-inch paper. Floor Plans submitted on paper larger than 11-inch x 17-inch paper must include an electronic copy. All Floor Plans must be scaled. The minimum scale shall be ¼ inch.

D. Revisions. Changes to the original permitted design approved by NET Health must be submitted in like manner as the original set.

E. Scalable and Readable Floor Plans. Each new permit application must have an approved floor plan to submit for plan review. When an Architect or Engineer Stamp of approval is not required by the Texas Architectural Board or local ordinance, a computer drafted floor plan that has been professionally drawn to scale by draftsman or other similar credential must be submitted to NET Health to fulfill the needs for a proper and accurate plan review.

- 1) The floor plan and application must include details as indicated in (F) of this section.
- 2) Hand drawings, drawings that are not accurate, drawings that are incomplete or that are not scaled are prohibited and shall not be accepted or approved for plan review.

F. Floor Plan Details:

- 1) Required Detail.
 - (a) Seating capacity, projected daily meal volume and menu;
 - (b) The location of the refuse, recyclable, and/or returnable containers;
 - (c) Location of all food equipment. Each piece of equipment must be clearly labeled, marked, or identified. Food equipment schedule which includes the make and model numbers and listing of equipment that is certified or classified for sanitation by an ANSI accredited certification program (when applicable) may be requested to be submitted. Elevation drawings may be requested by NET Health;
 - (d) Identify auxiliary areas such as storage rooms, garbage rooms, toilets, employee storage/breakroom, mop sink and/or curbed cleaning facility, any outlying wait stations, or satellite food service areas in relation to the food service and kitchen area must be detailed;
 - (e) Entrances, exits, loading/unloading areas and delivery docks;
 - (f) Complete finish schedules for each room including floors, walls, ceilings, and baseboard coving;
 - (g) Plumbing schedule including location of floor drains, floor sinks, water supply lines, overhead waste-water lines, hot water generating equipment with capacity and recovery rate, backflow prevention, wastewater line connections;
 - (h) Calculations are required for sizing and location of the grease interceptor. When required by the building department or water pretreatment authority, must be installed outside the building whenever possible, but in no case can they be located where food is prepared or stored, or where utensils or tableware is washed or stored.
 - (i) Location and type of lighting fixtures;
 - (j) Source of potable water supply and method of sewage disposal; and
 - (k) The design must be compliant with plumbing, electrical and structural regulations to include the applicable provisions under the American Disabilities Act.

- 2) Flow Chart. A color-coded flow chart may be requested by NET Health demonstrating flow patterns for:
 - (a) Food (receiving, storage, preparation, service)
 - (b) Dishes (clean, soiled, cleaning, storage); and
 - (c) Trash and garbage (service area, holding, storage, disposal).
- 3) Ventilation Schedule. A schedule of the location of vent hoods may be requested by NET Health.

G. Remodel

- 1) Minor Remodel. A Minor Remodel as described herein does not require a plan review application to be submitted to NET Health. Examples of a minor remodel would be the “like-for-like” exchange of equipment, for similar equipment in design, function, use, and maintenance that requires no additional alteration or modification of existing layout or fixtures to install and occupies the same or similar footprint of the replaced equipment, or the basic repair of the finishes of the floors, walls, ceilings, or lights.
- 2) Major Remodel. A Major Remodel meeting this definition requires a Plan Review Application to be submitted in compliance with [Part 1 Section 4](#) When the scope of work for the proposed remodel of a food establishment rises to the level of requiring a major remodel permit: such work requires a permit from the building authority; the food establishment is adding new permanent plumbing, drainage or direct electrical connections; installation of new equipment is proposed; the modification of existing structure to accommodate the new equipment is required; the food flow or order of operations is changing; extensive replacement of finishes such as wall, floor or ceiling materials or fixtures are planned; or other qualifying events are deemed a Major Remodel by NET Health. A Major Remodel made to the original approved floorplan without proper application for plan review by NET Health is subject to an administrative penalty.
- 3) Changing Food Flow or Location of Equipment. The original floor plan approved and permitted shall not be changed or altered without submitting proposed changes for review to NET Health.

Section 5. Permits and Fees

A. Nonprofit Organization Inspections and Issuance of Certificate of Inspection. Refer to [Part 1 Section 3 E](#) of this District Order.

B. Permit Requirement, Prerequisite for Operation. No person shall operate a food establishment in NET Health jurisdiction without a valid permit issued by NET Health. Only a person who complies with these rules shall be entitled to receive or retain such a permit. No person holding a permit shall sell, lend, lease or in any manner transfer a food establishment permit.

C. Permit Fees. The annual permit fee shall be adjusted and increased by 3% unless otherwise modified by lawful order of the Board of Health. Refer to [Part 1 Section 2](#) for the current fee schedule.

D. Risk Categorization of Food Establishments.

- 1) Risk Assessment. Food Establishments are periodically evaluated to determine an overall potential for causing foodborne illness. The three main factors assessed are inspection history, risk category associated with the food services, and demonstration of active managerial controls. The risk assessment is used to assist in assignment of the annual permit fee.
- 2) Risk Category. The purpose of classifying food establishments according to risk category is to allow the regulatory agency to prioritize inspections based on the risk assessment.
 - (a) Very Low Risk. This risk category typically involves the vending or service of foods that pose minimal risk of causing foodborne illness. Examples include pre-packaged foods and beverages requiring temperature control for safety. It can be assigned to food establishments based on risk assessment.
 - (b) Low Risk. This risk category typically involves the preparation, vending or service of foods and beverages and involves no cooking to kill pathogens. Generally, the steps in this process are: Receive-Store-Prepare-Hold-Serve-Vend. It can be assigned to food establishments based on risk assessment.
 - (c) Medium Risk. This risk category typically involves food preparation for same day service. Generally, the steps in this process are: Receive-Store-Prepare-Cook-Hold- Serve. It can be assigned to food establishments based on risk assessment.
 - (d) High Risk. This risk category is typically assigned to food establishments that have complex food preparation. Generally, the steps in this process are: Receive-Store-Prepare-Cook-Cool-Reheat- Hot Hold-Serve. This high risk category is also assigned to food establishments that have:
 - (i) Any prepared foods that require a Variance and/or HACCP Plans as defined by [2017 FDA Food Code §8-201.13](#);

- (ii) Any foods prepared for highly susceptible populations; or
- (iii) It can be assigned to food establishments based on risk assessment.
- (e) Very High Risk. This category is typically reserved for food establishments with high volume, service to a highly susceptible population; or conducting special processes. This category can be assigned to food establishments whose risk assessment determines poor managerial controls, poor inspection history.

E. Permit Issuance. Food establishments shall be inspected by NET Health immediately prior to the issuance of a permit. Upon successful completion of a permit approval/opening inspection, NET Health shall issue a permit to the applicant if its inspection reveals that the proposed food establishment complies with these rules.

F. Valid permit. A valid permit is one that is not expired, revoked, or suspended. The permit shall not be defaced, removed, or otherwise altered without written permission from NET Health. Any permit may be revoked or suspended by NET Health at any time if it is deemed food establishment is not operating in compliance with the provisions of this District Order or in any emergency when, in the judgment of NET Health, any food establishment has become a public health nuisance or menace.

G. Conditions of Retention, Responsibilities of the Permit Holder. The permit holder shall comply with the provisions of the Texas Food Establishment Rules and the NET Health District Order; and

- 1) If required, submit, and comply with HACCP plan or variances;
- 2) Immediately contact the regulatory authority to report an illness of an employee as required by the Texas Food Establishment Rules;
- 3) Immediately discontinue operations and notify the regulatory authority if an imminent health hazard may exist;
- 4) Allow representatives of the regulatory authority access to the food establishment;
- 5) Replace existing facilities and equipment, as required by the Texas Food Establishment Rules, with acceptable replacements;
- 6) Comply with NET Health directives including time frames for corrective actions specified in inspection reports, notices, orders, warnings, and other directives issued to the permit holder's food establishment or in response to community emergencies;
- 7) Accept notices issued and served by NET Health according to law;
- 8) Be subject to the administrative, civil, injunctive, and criminal remedies authorized in law for failure to comply with these rules or a NET Health directive, including time

frames for corrective actions specified in inspection reports, notices, orders, warnings, and other directives; and

- 9) Notify customers that a copy of the most recent establishment inspection report, valid framed food establishment permit, and other required signage and documents are available and/or posted in a conspicuous location visible to consumers.

H. Permit Renewal. Except for the initial permit issued, each permit fee shall be required and will cover a twelve (12) month period from the date of issuance, except for temporary food establishments which are limited to fourteen (14) consecutive days. Permit renewals are valid from the anniversary date. NET Health may renew a permit if the applicant is in compliance with the Texas Food Establishment Rules and all fees accrued are paid. Failure to submit the invoice balance before the expiration date will result in a late fee. A permit shall only be issued when all past due and delinquency fees have been paid. This applies to any delinquent penalties due under an order issued by NET Health.

I. Permit Renewal Following Establishment Closure for More Than Three (3) Months. Any person who voluntarily discontinues the operation of any food establishment for no longer than three (3) consecutive months may secure a renewal of an existing permit before the permit expiration date by meeting all the requirements of this District Order. Under this provision, an additional permit fee will not be required. Upon discontinuing the operation of a food establishment or if there is a change of ownership, the owner shall notify NET Health in writing at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the discontinuing of operations or change of ownership.

J. Late Fee. The permit holder shall submit payment of invoice prior to the expiration date of the permit. Failure to pay the annual permit renewal fee on a timely basis shall result in a late charge indicated in [Part 1 Section 2](#) of this order. The annual renewal permit fee and the late charge must be paid prior to the expiration of the permit, or the establishment shall cease operations.

Section 6. Certifications, Active Managerial Control and Incentives

A. General. It shall be unlawful for any person to work or accept employment in a food establishment, within NET Health jurisdiction without securing a

food handler’s training certificate. It shall be unlawful for any person in control of, operating or managing any food establishment, to employ or allow any person to work in a food establishment within NET Health jurisdiction unless that person has obtained a valid food handler’s training certificate within 30 days of employment.

B. Administration. NET Health may administer a food handler’s training course and certified food manager’s training course and examination. Any person who is required to have a certificate shall attend and successfully complete a training approved by NET Health, TX DSHS, or by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). It is the responsibility of the certified food manager of the food establishment to keep a certificate of completion of the training course for all employees of the food establishment available on site for compliance review by the inspector.

C. Food Handler Certification and Requirement.

- 1) Required. Each person, within (30) thirty calendar days of becoming an employee, conditional, volunteer or otherwise, of a food establishment shall obtain a valid accredited food handler certification. Certification is obtained by completing an accredited food handler training course approved by TX DSHS.
- 2) Valid Certificate. A valid certificate is one that is not expired and is issued by an accredited food handler training program approved by the Texas Department of State Health Services.
- 3) NET Health certification and certificate Issuance. Upon successful completion of a training course administered by NET Health, NET Health will issue a food handler’s training certificate,
- 4) Expired Certificates. After the food handler certification expiration date, the person must complete a new accredited food handler's training course.
- 5) Exemptions. An employee of a food establishment that has satisfactorily passed an accredited food safety manager course and examination approved by the TX DSHS shall be exempt from this requirement for a food worker certification.

D. Certified Food Manager Certification and Requirement.

- 1) Certified Food Manager Certification. Certification must be obtained by successfully completing an Accredited Food Safety Manager Certification course and passing an examination. This course must be approved by the Texas Department of State Health Services and meet all requirements in [Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 438](#), Subchapter G, and [25 TAC §228.1](#) (relating to Certification of Food Managers).
- 2) Required. The words “certified food manager” means the person in charge or an individual who conducts, manages, operates, and maintains active managerial

control of a food establishment. At least one certified food manager must be present during all hours of operation at each permitted food establishment. At the time a food establishment permit is issued, the appropriate number of certified food managers must be employed to cover all operation hours of the food establishment. The number of certified food managers is to be determined by the operating hours of the food establishment and the number of operating shifts. Failure to maintain at least one Certified Food Manager per establishment shall be considered an imminent hazard and cause for a permit to be suspended.

- 3) Responsibilities of a Certified Food Manager. Any food manager or person in charge of a food establishment within NET Health jurisdiction must hold a valid Certified Food Manager's certificate. The certified food manager has responsibilities that include but are not limited to:
 - (a) Maintaining employment records, food handler certifications and certified food manager certifications accessible to NET Health during inspections or audits.
 - (b) Identifying hazards in the day-to-day operation of a food establishment that provides food for human consumption;
 - (c) Developing or implementing specific policies, procedures, or standards to prevent foodborne illness;
 - (d) Supervising or directing food preparation activities and ensuring appropriate corrective actions are taken as needed to protect the health of the consumer;
 - (e) Training the food establishment employees on the principles of food safety;
 - (f) Performing in-house self-inspections of daily operations on a periodic basis to ensure that policies and procedures concerning food safety have been implemented and are being followed;
 - (g) Demonstration of knowledge of [Chapter 2 of FDA Food Code](#) and
 - (h) Maintaining active managerial control.
- 4) Registration of certifications with NET Health. Registration of certifications into the NET Health database is voluntary.
 - (a) Individuals that attend a Food Safety Manager Certification Program administered by NET Health will be automatically registered into the registry system by NET Health.
- 5) Certificate Reciprocity. A certificate issued to an individual who successfully completes an examination of an Accredited Food Safety Manager Program approved by the Texas Department of State Health Services shall be accepted as meeting the training and testing requirements under Health and Safety Code, Subchapter G

- 6) Certificate Posting. The original food manager certificate(s) of the primary retail food manager (s) shall be posted in a location in the food establishment that is conspicuous and visible to consumers. All certificates of other certified food managers need to be in an accessible location for NET Health review during inspections and audits.
- 7) Exemptions.
 - (a) The following food establishments are exempt from the food manager certification requirements of this order:
 - (b) Establishments that offer only prepackaged foods that are not time/temperature control for safety (TCS);
 - (c) Child care facilities, as defined by [Section 42.002, Human Resources Code](#);
 - (d) Establishments that do not prepare or handle exposed time/temperature control for safety (TCS) foods as defined in [2017 FDA Food Code](#) Chapter 1 Subpart 1-201 ; or
 - (e) Nonprofit organizations as defined in [25 TAC §229.371\(9\)](#) (relating to Permitting Retail Food Establishments).
 - (f) Temporary food establishments not serving complex foods such as raw poultry or raw seafood.

Section 7. Inspections

A. Risk Based Inspections. Inspections for the retail food program are based on Hazard Analysis at Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles. Compliance procedures concerning inspections are as follows:

B. Inspection Report Form. NET Health will use an inspection report form developed by the Texas Department of State Health Services that conforms to HACCP principles. The inspection report form design includes the following information.

- 1) The inspection report form identifies foodborne illness risk factors and Food Code interventions,
- 2) It documents actual observations using the convention IN (in compliance), OUT (out of compliance), NA (not applicable), and NO (Not observed), and
- 3) The inspection report form documents compliance and enforcement activities.

C. Inspection Frequency. An inspection frequency of a food establishment shall be based on a risk category associated with the types of foods and the food preparation procedures. Before a food establishment is placed into a risk category, a food establishment risk assessment must be assigned. Additional inspections of the food establishment shall be performed as often as necessary for the enforcement of these rules.

D. Access. NET Health agents, after proper identification, shall be permitted to enter any food establishment at any reasonable time, for the purpose of making inspections to determine compliance with these rules. The agents shall be permitted to examine records to obtain information pertaining to food and supplies purchased, received, or used, or to persons employed.

E. Report of Inspections. The inspection report is scored using a demerit system, with zero (0) demerits denoting no Priority Item/Priority Foundation Item/Core Item violations. This means that there may be violations that are not assigned point values. Whenever an inspection of a food establishment is made, the findings shall be recorded on the inspection report form set out as described in paragraph (E) of this section. The inspection report form shall summarize the requirements of these rules and shall set forth a weighted point value for each requirement. The score will be reported in demerits. Inspection remarks shall be written to reference, by section number, the section violated and shall state the correction to be made. A copy of the inspection report form shall be furnished to the person in charge of the food establishment at the conclusion of the inspection. The completed inspection report form is a public document that shall be made available for public disclosure to any person who requests it according to law. The inspection report from the most recent inspection shall be posted in a conspicuous place for the public to see in the food establishment. Inspection reports may be posted on the NET Health website.

F. Correction of Violations.

- 1) The food establishment shall, at the time of the inspection or as soon as possible, implement appropriate corrective actions for violation items found during an inspection.
- 2) The inspection report form shall indicate a notice of violation and specify a reasonable time for the correction of the violations found, and correction of the violations shall be accomplished within the period specified, in accordance with the following provisions:
 - (a) If an imminent health hazard exists, such as, but not limited to, complete lack of refrigeration or surfacing wastewater, lack of electricity, pest infestation or sewage backup, the food establishment shall immediately cease food service operations and contact NET Health. Operations shall not be resumed until authorized by NET Health.
The food establishment shall cease operations for a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours or until verified safe by NET Health.

- (b) All Priority Item violations of three (3) point weighted items shall be corrected as soon as possible, but in any event, within three (3) calendar days following the inspection.
- (c) All Priority Foundation Item violations of two (2) point weighted items shall be corrected as soon as possible, but in any event, within ten (10) calendar days following the inspection.
- (d) All Core Item violations of one (1) point weighted items shall be corrected by the date and time agreed to or specified by NET Health, but no later than ninety (90) calendar days after inspection.
- (e) NET Health may approve a longer time frame or a compliance schedule exceeding the time limitations specified under this section if the potential hazard involved, the complexity of the corrective action needed, or it is deemed no health hazard exists or will result from allowing an extended schedule of compliance.
- (f) When the food establishment rating score exceeds thirty (30) demerits, corrective action on all identified violations shall be initiated immediately and corrected within forty-eight (48) hours. One (1) or more re-inspections will be conducted at reasonable time intervals to assure correction.
- (g) In the case of temporary food establishments, all violations shall be corrected within twenty-four (24) hours. If violations are not corrected within twenty-four (24) hours, the temporary food establishment shall cease food service operations until authorized to resume by NET Health.
- (h) The inspection report shall state that failure to comply with any time limits for corrections may result in cessation of operations.

G. Continuing Violations. Each day or fractional part thereof that such violation(s) continues shall constitute a separate offense.

- 1) Re-inspection. At the end of the specified period of time, NET Health shall verify corrections of the violations, document the information on an inspection report, and record the inspection report into the NET Health database. Subsequent re-inspections required due to non-compliance may be subject to a re-inspection fee.
- 2) Written Plan of Corrective Action. NET Health may require a written corrective action plan or schedule of compliance to be submitted by the food establishment to the Environmental Health Department.
- 3) Repeat Violations. Repeated violations that occur over several routine inspections are subject to the application of administrative penalties.
- 4) Inspection Frequency Risk Assessment. The assigned inspection frequency can be increased or decreased based on the previous inspection history.
- 5) Suspension of Permit. NET Health shall suspend a permit based on an imminent health hazard, repeated critical violations, lack of a Certified Food Manager, and/or any other serious violation of State law for which NET Health is responsible to

enforce. A suspended food establishment permit shall remain suspended for a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours to remediate the imminent health hazard.

- (a) A retail food inspection supervisor of the Environmental Health Department of NET Health will confirm the hazard before suspension is effective when possible. Suspension is effective upon service of the written notice. When a permit is suspended, all food operations shall immediately cease and shall not resume until NET Health conducts a follow up inspection and determines that the health hazard has been resolved and the suspension should be lifted.
 - (b) Whenever a permit is suspended, the holder of the permit or the person in charge of the food establishment at the time of suspension shall be notified in writing that the permit is, upon service of the notice, immediately suspended.
- 6) Immediate Cessation of Operations. Upon receipt of a notice of permit suspension the food establishment shall immediately cease operations. Nothing in this section shall prevent NET Health from requiring a food establishment to cease operations immediately pursuant to law. This is equivalent to a suspension.
 - 7) Re-inspection Required After Permit Suspension. Prior to resuming operation after a permit suspension, the food establishment must be inspected to verify correction of any violations and for compliance with these rules.
 - 8) Re-instatement. Upon successful completion of a re-inspection and payment of a permit re- instatement fee, NET Health shall re-instate the food establishment permit for the permit holder if its inspection reveals that the food establishment complies with these rules.

Section 8. Examination and Condemnation of Food; and Maintenance of Equipment

A. Procedures Concerning Examination and Condemnation of Food. Food may be examined or sampled by NET Health as often as necessary for enforcement of these rules. NET Health shall issue a receipt for the samples. NET Health may, upon written notice to the owner or person in charge specifying reasons with particularity, issue a hold order on any food, which it believes is in violation of any of the “Texas Food Establishment Rules” or other relevant federal, state or local regulations. NET Health shall tag, label or otherwise identify any food subject to the hold order. No food subject to a hold order shall be used, served or moved from the food establishment. NET Health shall permit storage of the food under conditions specified in the hold order, unless storage is not possible without risk to the public health, in which case immediate destruction shall be ordered and accomplished. The hold order shall state that a

request for an administrative hearing may be filed within ten (10) calendar days and that if no hearing is requested, the food shall be destroyed. An administrative hearing shall be held if so requested, and based on evidence produced at that hearing, the hold order may be vacated, or the owner or person in charge of the food may be directed by written order to denature or destroy such food or to bring it into compliance with these rules.

B. Maintenance of Equipment and Utensils. All equipment and utensils used in the preparation, storage, and serving of food shall be kept in good repair and in proper working condition. NET Health may tag, which means to mark, identify or otherwise forbid the use of equipment or utensils found to be in violation of this subsection, and it shall be unlawful to use any equipment or utensils that have been so tagged, until approved to do so by NET Health.

Section 9. Procedure When Disease Transmission or Infection is Suspected

A. Necessary Actions. When NET Health has reasonable cause to suspect the possibility of disease transmission from any food establishment, retail food store, mobile food unit, roadside food vendor or temporary food establishment employee, it may secure the morbidity history of the suspected employee or make any other investigation as needed and shall take appropriate action. NET Health may require any or all of the following measures:

- 1) The immediate exclusion of the employee from all food establishments;
- 2) The immediate closing of the food establishment concerned until, in the opinion of NET Health; no further danger of disease outbreak exists;
- 3) Restriction of the employee's services to some area of the food establishment, where there would be no danger of transmitting disease; and
- 4) Adequate medical and laboratory examination of the employee(s) and their bodily discharges.

B. Removal of Restriction or Exclusion. NET Health shall release a food employee or conditional employee from restriction or exclusion according to [Texas Health and Safety Code 438.033](#), and the conditions of [Chapter 2 of the FDA Food Code](#).

C. Reporting of Communicable Diseases. Certain persons shall report certain confirmed and suspected foodborne diseases to NET Health as required in [25 TAC 97.2 through 97.6](#) and [Chapter 2 of the FDA Food Code](#).

Section 10. Enforcement and Administrative Penalty Procedures

A. Remedies. Violations of the Texas Food Establishment Rules, the permitting rules or relevant federal, state, or local laws are subject to the penalties and remedies listed in this District Order and otherwise provided by state law. NET Health employees are hereby authorized to enforce provisions herein and to issue citations for violations of this District Order.

B. Penalties. Any permit holder, responsible officer of the permit holder, or other person found guilty of violating any provision of this District Order shall be punished in accordance with applicable law.

- 1) Fines. A violation of any provision herein shall be classified as a Class C misdemeanor and violators are subject to a fine of up to two thousand dollars (\$2,000.00) per violation per day for each violation.
- 2) Administrative Penalties. Administrative penalties may be assessed pursuant to [Texas Health and Safety Code, Sections 437.0185-185.0186](#), which:
 - (a) Authorizes the Chief Executive Officer of NET Health to impose an administrative penalty on a person NET Health requires to hold a permit under [Texas Health and Safety Code, Section 437.003 or 437.004](#) if the person violates this District Order.
 - (b) Prohibits the amount of the penalty from exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500.00) per day and provides that each day a violation continues or occurs is a separate violation for the purpose of imposing a penalty. The amount of the penalty is to be based on certain factors set forth by criteria such as history of previous violations, seriousness of the violation, hazard to the health and safety of the public, demonstrated good faith efforts to correct, economic harm to property or the environment, amounts necessary to deter future violations, enforcement costs relating to the violation, and any other matter justice may require.
 - (c) The violations shall be categorized by severity level from those with minor health and safety significance to the most serious violations.
 - (d) Five Levels of penalties for retail food establishments will be imposed not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$500.00).

(i) Level 1	\$100.00
(ii) Level 2	\$200.00
(iii) Level 3	\$300.00
(iv) Level 4	\$400.00

- (v) Level 5 \$500.00
- (e) Authorizes the enforcement of the penalty to be stayed during the time the order is in judicial review if the person pays the penalty of the clerk of the court. Authorizes a person who cannot afford to pay the penalty to stay the enforcement by filing an affidavit in the manner required by the Texas Rules of Procedure for a party who cannot afford to file security for costs.
- (f) Authorizes a person, not later than the twentieth (20th) calendar day after the date the person receives notice of the penalty, to accept in writing the determination and pay the recommended penalty of the Chief Executive Officer or make a request for an administrative hearing on the occurrence of the violation, the amount of the penalty or both.
- (g) Requires a court to order that penalty is not owed if the court does not sustain the findings that a violation occurred.
- (h) Requires a court to order, when the court's judgment becomes final, that the appropriate amount be remitted to the person if the person paid the penalty to the clerk of the court and if the amount of the penalty is reduced or the penalty is not upheld by the court.
- (i) Authorizes an administrative penalty to be imposed for a violation of this District Order under [Chapter 437, Texas Health and Safety Code](#), by the state under 437.018, or by the director of a public health district of a county under Section 437.185, but not both.
- 3) Service of Notice. A notice provided for in these rules is properly served when it is delivered to the holder of the permit, or the person in charge, or when it is sent by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the last known address of the permit holder (owner). A copy of the notice shall be filed in NET Health records.
- 4) Administrative Hearing. NET Health shall conduct hearings provided for in this Section at a time and place designated by NET Health. Based on evidence of such hearing, NET Health shall make final findings and shall sustain, modify, or rescind any notice or order considered in the administrative hearing. Within ten (10) calendar days, NET Health shall furnish a written report of the hearing decision to the holder of the permit.
- 5) Revocation of a Permit. NET Health may, after providing an opportunity for an administrative hearing, revoke a permit for serious or repeated violations of any of the rule requirements of this District Order or for interference with NET Health in the performance of its duties. Upon revocation of a permit, operations of the food establishment shall cease immediately. Prior to revocation, NET Health shall provide written notice to the holder of the permit, or the person in charge of the food establishment at the time of revocation, stating the reason(s) for the proposed revocation and that the permit shall be revoked at the end of ten (10) calendar days following service of such notice unless the holder of the permit files a written request for an administrative hearing with NET Health within such ten (10) calendar day period. If no request for an administrative hearing is filed within the ten (10) calendar day period, the revocation of the permit becomes final.

- 6) Application after Revocation. Whenever a revocation of a permit has become final, the holder may make a written application for a new permit. The applicant is required to meet any conditions of a new food establishment.
- 7) Injunction. Whenever NET Health has reason to believe that any person is engaging in, has engaged in, or is about to engage in any act or practice declared to be unlawful or in violation of this chapter, NET Health may bring an action pursuant to state law against each such person to restrain the unlawful act or practice by temporary restraining order, temporary injunction, or permanent injunction.
- 8) Public Record. NET Health may publish the permit, name, and address of any food establishment whose permit has been revoked or suspended, together with the reasons for the revocation or suspension.

Section 11. Appeals of Decisions Made Under Sections 1 through 10

A. Filing an Appeal. Any person aggrieved by a decision of a NET Health employee concerning the granting or refusal to grant a permit, or any privilege as provided in Sections 1 through 10 may appeal such decision in writing to the Chief Executive Officer of NET Health within ten (10) calendar days after the decision. The Chief Executive Officer shall render a decision within thirty (30) calendar days after receipt of the appeal, either affirming the decision of the employee or entering an appropriate decision.

PART 2. MOBILE FOOD UNITS

Section 1. General Provisions

A. State Regulations:

- 1) Texas Department of State Health Services (TX DSHS), Consumer Protection Division, Food and Drug Section, Retail Food Safety Operations Unit: “[Texas Food Establishment Rules](#),” 25 TAC §228.
 - (a) Under [Chapter 8 of the FDA Food Code](#), a person may not operate a food establishment without a valid permit or license to operate issued by the regulatory authority.
 - (b) Mobile Food Units shall also comply with the provisions of Subchapter H, [Section §228.221 of the Texas Food Establishment Rules](#) and shall meet the requirements of the District Order of the Northeast Texas Public Health District.
 - (c) Mobile food units shall meet all other applicable local requirements to offer food for human consumption on private or public property, including any applicable zoning restrictions of the municipality in which the operation occurs.
- 2) Texas Health & Safety Code Chapters 431 through 438 and amendments thereto.

B. Definitions:

- 1) **Accredited Food Handler Certification** – certification is obtained by completing a TX DSHS approved course teaching the principles of food safety to produce safe food products and prevent food borne illness.
- 2) **Accredited Food Safety Manager Certification** – certification is obtained by passing a TX DSHS approved certified food manager certification examination. Certification is valid for five (5) years.
- 3) **Administrative Hearing** – a non-judicial hearing conducted between the complainant and NET Health Chief Executive Officer or designated appointees.
- 4) **Administrative Penalty** – a civil penalty imposed by NET Health for a contravention of an act, regulation, or by-law. It is regulatory in nature, rather than criminal, is intended to secure compliance with a regulatory scheme, and can be employed with the use of other administrative sanctions such as demerit points and license suspensions.
- 5) **Central Preparation Facility** – An approved and permitted retail food establishment or space where food is prepared, stored and packaged.
- 6) **Commissary Facility** – a facility that is an approved and permitted retail food establishment that provides support to mobile food units, caterers, food manufacturers. A commissary can include a servicing area and a central preparation facility. Support services include adequate equipment, storage, parking, utility and prep area for businesses using its facility.

- 7) **Commercially Manufactured Mobile Food Unit** – a vehicle that was originally manufactured or converted by a commercial food truck manufacturer who employs licensed professionals to design and install each system onboard the mobile food unit to meet the specifications of the Texas Food Establishment Rules, local building code and this District Order. The systems include, but are not limited to electrical, plumbing, mechanical, structural, etc. A commercially manufactured mobile food unit must have a letter of authenticity from the commercial builder certifying the work.
- 8) **Conversion** – a motor vehicle not previously designated as a mobile food unit, received at a commercial food truck manufacturer employing licensed professionals, with intent to modify substantially the motor vehicle for use as a commercial mobile food unit.
- 9) **Converter** – a licensed professional who assembles, installs, or affixes a body, cab, or special equipment to a chassis, or who substantially adds, subtracts from, or modifies a previously assembled or manufactured motor vehicle.
- 10) **Core Item** – a provision that is not designated as a Priority item or a Priority Foundation item and includes an item that usually relates to general sanitation, operational controls, sanitation operating procedures, facilities or structures, equipment design or general maintenance.
- 11) **Chief Executive Officer** – the director of the public health district.
- 12) **Drinking Water** – Traditionally known as "potable water" and that meets the standards set forth in 30 TAC Chapter 290, Subchapter F (relating to Drinking Water Standards Governing Drinking Water Quality and Reporting Requirements for Public Water Systems). Drinking water includes the term "water" except where the term used connotes that the water is not potable, such as "boiler water," "mop water," "rainwater," "wastewater," and "non-drinking water."
- 13) **Event** – commonly termed as a “single event or celebration;” a unique public gathering of persons at which food products will be served directly to consumers, such as a festival, bazaar, carnival, circus, fund-raiser, public exhibition, celebration, sporting event, or other mass public gathering which can be civic, political, public or educational for which an appropriate regulatory authority would grant permission for the operation of the event. An event shall have a promoter, sponsor or coordinator that is responsible for the organization and facilitation of utilities to vendors throughout the event.
- 14) **Event Coordinator/Promoter** – person responsible for sponsoring or organizing and/or advertising the activities of the event and for facilitation of utilities to vendors throughout the event.
- 15) **Floor Plans** – a computer drafted professionally drawn to scale diagram or drawing of a room or building drawn as if seen from above. Equipment schedules; finish schedules; plumbing and electrical diagrams; and calculations may be requested along with any other information to complete a proper plan review.

- 16) **Food Establishment** – A food establishment is an operation that: stores, prepares, packages, serves, or vends food directly to the consumer, or otherwise provides food for human consumption, such as a restaurant, retail food store, satellite or catered feeding location, catering operation if the operation provides food directly to a consumer or to a conveyance used to transport people, market, vending machine location, self-service food market, conveyance used to transport people, institution, or food bank; and relinquishes possession of food to a consumer directly, or indirectly through a delivery service, such as home delivery of grocery orders or restaurant takeout orders, or delivery service that is provided by common carriers.
- (a) A Food establishment includes:
- (i) an element of the operation, such as a transportation vehicle or a central preparation facility that supplies a vending location or satellite feeding location unless the vending or feeding location is permitted by the regulatory authority; and
 - (ii) an operation that is conducted in a mobile, stationary, temporary, or permanent facility or location and where consumption is on or off the premises regardless if there is a charge for the food.
- (b) A Food establishment does not include:
- (i) an establishment that offers only prepackaged foods that are not TCS foods;
 - (ii) a produce stand that only offers whole, uncut fresh fruits and vegetables;
 - (iii) a food processing plant, including one that is located on the premises of a food establishment;
 - (iv) a cottage food production operation;
 - (v) a bed and breakfast limited as defined in this section; or
 - (vi) a private home that receives catered or home-delivered food.
- 17) **Food Truck Park** – A property with an area designed to accommodate two or more mobile food units with the primary use as an outdoor food court offering food and/or beverages for sale to the public and functioning as a single business. A Food Truck Park property has been improved with an all-weather surface, and permanent restrooms with running water,
- 18) **Full Service Mobile Food Unit** – a motorized vehicle manufactured for retail food service upon which food is cooked, wrapped, packaged, processed, or portioned for service or sale in a fully equipped Texas Food Establishment Rules compliant unit. A common term is an unrestricted mobile food unit or a Gourmet Food Truck.
- 19) **Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) Plan** – a written document that delineates the formal procedures for following the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point principles developed by The National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods.
- 20) **Hold Order** – temporary detainment of foods believed to have been compromised or tampered with that must not be moved or destroyed until cleared by NET Health.

- 21) **Imminent Health Hazard** – significant threat or danger to health that is considered to exist when there is evidence sufficient to show that a product, practice, circumstance, or event creates a situation that requires immediate correction or cessation of operation to prevent injury based on the number of potential injuries, and the nature, severity, and duration of the anticipated injury. Examples include but are not limited to sewage or wastewater backup or improper discharge, breakdown of refrigeration system, lack of water, no hot water, an outbreak of foodborne illness, lack of electricity, pest infestation, lack of sanitation and control.
- 22) **Limited-Service Mobile Food Unit** – a motorized vehicle manufactured for retail food service that is equipped with Texas Food Establishment Rules compliant equipment designed to hold and transport pre-packaged prepared food. Foods sold from a limited-service mobile food unit shall be prewrapped, bottled, or packaged in individual servings. Beverages shall not require time/temperature control for safety and shall be dispensed from a covered urn or other protected equipment. Food shall not be prepared or processed by the vendor due to limited equipment onboard the truck. A common term is Catering Truck. This type of MFU requires the support of a central preparation facility.
- 23) **Mobile Food Unit (MFU)** – A vehicle-mounted, self or otherwise propelled, self-contained food service operation designed to be readily movable (including catering trucks, trailers, push carts, and roadside vendors) and used to store, prepare, display, serve or sell food. This is synonymous with the term Mobile Food Establishment used in the Texas Food Establishment Rules. An MFU must completely retain its mobility at all times. An MFU does not include a stand or a booth. The term Mobile Food Unit is used by NET Health to describe a Full Service Mobile Food Unit, Limited-Service Mobile Food Unit, Roadside Vendor, Process 1 Pushcart, or Process 2 Pushcart.
- 24) **Northeast Texas Public Health District (NET Health)** – a Public Health District established, according to [Texas Health and Safety Code 121 Subchapter E](#), in 1994 by the City of Tyler and Smith County. All other incorporated cities of Smith County have opted in as a member of the Northeast Texas Public Health District for the services of the retail food inspection program.
- 25) **No Bare Hand Contact** – the use of a physical barrier between clean bare hands and ready to eat food items is required when handling foods (examples include, but are not limited to spoons, tongs, tissue paper, disposable food grade gloves, etc.).
- 26) **Permit** - means the document issued by NET Health that authorizes a PERSON to operate a FOOD ESTABLISHMENT.
- 27) **Person** - means an association, a corporation, individual, partnership, other legal entity, government, or governmental subdivision or agency.
- 28) **Preliminary Inspection** – a site visit and inspection conducted in preparation for submittal of an application for a Mobile Food Unit Permit.
- 29) **Priority Foundation Item** – a provision whose application supports, facilitates, or enables one or more priority items.

- 30) **Priority Item** – a provision that contributes directly to the elimination, prevention, or reduction of hazards associated with food borne illness or injury to an acceptable level.
- 31) **Promoter** – person responsible for sponsoring or organizing and/or advertising the activities of an event and for facilitation of utilities to vendors throughout an event.
- 32) **Public Health District** – a special district government entity established by two (2) or more counties and/or cities, as per [Texas Health and Safety Code, Title 2, Subtitle F, Chapter 121](#), Subchapter E. Any government entity including a school district may become a member of a public health district. A public health district will at a minimum provide the essential public health services listed for a local health department. A public health district may perform any public health function that any of its members may perform unless restricted by law.
- 33) **Pushcart** – a non-self-propelled mobile food unit limited to serving foods or beverages requiring a limited amount of preparation as authorized by NET Health. The pushcart must be self-contained, and all food products, supplies and equipment must be on the pushcart. A pushcart is classified as a mobile food unit. This type of MFU requires the support of a central preparation facility.
- 34) **Ready to Eat Food** – foods that are in a form that is edible without additional preparation to achieve food safety. No further washing, cooking, or additional preparation by the food establishment or the consumer is required. These foods are intended for immediate consumption either for on-premises consumption or carry-out and it is reasonably expected to be consumed in that form.
- 35) **Remodel** – to change the structure, finishes, layout, or design of the originally approved floor plan of any mobile food unit.
- 36) **Revocation** – the permit issued is terminated for an indefinite period of time.
- 37) **Risk Category** – a hierarchical scale of the likelihood of foodborne illness to occur based on the menu, processing style and history of operations inside the mobile food unit or central preparation/commissary facility.
- 38) **Roadside Vendor** – a type of Limited-Service Mobile Food Unit. A roadside vendor is a motorized vehicle manufactured for operation as a packaged retail food store. A person who operates a mobile retail food store from a temporary location adjacent to a public road or highway. Food shall not be prepared or processed by a roadside food vendor. A roadside food vendor is classified as a mobile food unit. This type of MFU requires the support of a central preparation facility.
- 39) **Servicing Area** – A component of a Commissary Facility for mobile food units. An operating base location to which a mobile FOOD ESTABLISHMENT or transportation vehicle returns regularly for such things as vehicle and equipment cleaning, discharging liquid or solid wastes, refilling water tanks and ice bins, and boarding FOOD.
- 40) **Suspension** – the temporary discontinuance or withdrawal of a permit issued by NET Health for the period of suspension.

- 41) **Time/Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) Food** – (previously defined as Potential Hazardous Food) – food that requires time/temperature control for safety to limit pathogenic microorganism growth or toxin formation.
- 42) **Valid permit** – A valid permit is one that is not expired, revoked, or suspended. The permit shall not be defaced, removed, or otherwise altered without written permission from NET Health. Any permit may be revoked or suspended by NET Health at any time if it is deemed that the mobile food unit is not operating in compliance with the provisions of this District Order or in any emergency when, in the judgment of NET Health, any mobile food unit has become a public health nuisance or menace.
- 43) **Variance** – a written document issued by NET Health that authorizes a modification or waiver of one or more requirements of the Texas Food Establishment Rules if, in the opinion of NET Health, a health hazard or nuisance will not result from the modification or waiver.

Section 2. Operational Requirements of Mobile Food Units

A. Certifications. All employees are required to maintain valid food handler certifications unless they possess a certified food manager certificate. Refer to Part 2 Section 7 Certifications.

B. Contact Information. All mobile food units shall keep contact information current. Contact information includes the primary and secondary contact person(s) telephone number, email, and social media contact information on file with NET Health. It is the responsibility of the mobile food unit operator to notify NET Health if this information changes.

C. Electrical Systems and Components.

- 1) Maintenance. Mobile food unit owners/ operators are responsible for ensuring the safety of the electrical systems of the mobile food unit.
- 2) Installation. Remote compressor units that are not an integral part of the food equipment, auxiliary engines, generators, and similar equipment shall be installed on the mobile food unit in an area that is completely separated from the food preparation and food storage and that is accessible for proper cleaning and maintenance. A power supply cord, sized according to the vehicle's electrical demands with corresponding connections must be professionally installed that can carry the electrical load through peak demand. NOTE: With regard to electricity, wiring and electrical components, mobile food units operating within the Tyler City limits are also required to comply with any applicable requirements of the current edition of the International Fire Code or successor as adopted by the City of Tyler, Texas, and as enforced by the Tyler Fire Department.
- 3) Extension Cords. Extension cords shall not be a substitute for permanent wiring. Extension cords shall only be used with small portable appliances. Extension cords shall be properly rated for use according to the manufacturer's requirements and shall be free from any visible signs of damage.
- 4) Operations. Mobile Food Units will be allowed to connect to shore power at a central preparation/commissary facility, temporary event, or food truck park. Portable power supply of adequate capacity is required to provide power for operations and maintenance of temperature controls for water supply, lighting and food service.

D. Equipment. The layout of all equipment, including dispensing units, shall be consistent with the floor plan submitted for review and approved by NET Health and as amended.

E. Floors, Walls, Ceilings and Exterior Openings. Floors, floor coverings, walls, wall coverings, and ceilings shall be designed, constructed, and installed so they are smooth and easily cleanable. All junctures must be properly sealed. Exterior openings such as service windows and doors must be covered, screened or protected by other effective means to prevent entry of pests.

F. Identification. The business name, and phone number shall be legible, clearly visible to consumers whether opened or closed. Signage must be permanently affixed on two sides of the mobile food unit.

G. Mobility. Mobile food units are designed to be readily movable, controllable, and maneuverable. Mobile food units must completely retain their mobility at all times during operating hours. NET Health prohibits alteration, removal, attachments, additions, placement or change in, under, or upon the mobile food unit that would prevent or otherwise reduce ready mobility.

- 1) Mobile food units shall not be separated from its form of propulsion during operating hours unless located at a food truck park that has submitted application to and has been approved by NET Health as a food truck park.
- 2) Mobile food units shall be readily movable upon request.
- 3) Pushcarts shall be movable by one person when the unit is fully loaded.
- 4) Mobile food units operating at a coordinated event that does not allow removal of the mobile food unit daily shall obtain a temporary food establishment permit for the duration of the event.

H. Plumbing. Mobile food unit owners/operators are responsible for ensuring the safety of the plumbing of the mobile food unit.

- 1) Potable Water – The potable water system shall be compliant with [Chapter 5 Part 3 of the 2017 FDA Food Code](#). The tank must be permanently mounted. The mobile food unit tank inlet shall be $\frac{3}{4}$ inch inner diameter or less; and be provided with a hose connection of a size or type that will prevent its use for any other service. The fill hose and water holding tank shall be labeled as “Potable water.”
- 2) Wastewater Disposal. Unauthorized dumping of wastewater or grease into the sanitary sewer system, storm drains or on the ground in conjunction with the operation of a mobile food unit in any way is strictly prohibited and is unlawful. Sewage and other liquid waste shall be removed from the mobile food unit at the permitted servicing area. Wastewater tanks need to be at least fifteen percent (15%) larger than the total potable water capacity and the tank shall be a permanently mounted retention tank such as those installed on a recreational vehicle (RV). The liquid waste holding tank shall be labeled as “wastewater.”

- I. **Restroom Access.** Toilet rooms shall be located within 500 feet of the mobile food unit and accessible to employees during all hours of operation.
- J. **Utilities.** Any connection to utilities such as: electricity, potable water, or sewer is prohibited unless located at an approved food truck park in accordance with the park's rules or while the mobile food unit is being serviced or stored at its permitted central preparation facility.

Section 3. Types of Mobile Food Units

- A. **Full Service Mobile Food Unit.** Food is cooked, wrapped, packaged, processed, or portioned for service or sale on the mobile food unit. Menu changes and equipment changes are subject to prior approval from NET Health.
- B. **Limited-Service Mobile Food Unit.** Foods sold from a limited-service mobile food unit shall be prewrapped, bottled, or packaged in individual servings. Beverages shall be served from a covered urn prepared in the permitted central preparation/commissary facility or from commercially packaged bottles or cans from a licensed manufacturer. This is a process 1 risk category with a type 1 permit fee.
- C. **Roadside Vendor.** Retail foods must be obtained from an approved source, labeled appropriately for retail sale by a licensed manufacturer, and sold in packaged form. This is a process 1 risk category with a type 1 permit fee.
- D. **Pushcart.** Not to exceed six (6) feet in length, including any handles measuring six (6) inches or more in length, three (3) feet in width (exclusive of wheels), or eight (8) feet in height (including the unit's umbrella or roof if provided.) The bottom of the food service or storage unit should be at least six (6) inches above the ground. The pushcart must be self-contained and must be able to maintain a system to provide proper food temperature. All supplies and equipment necessary for the operation of the pushcart shall be contained on the pushcart or at the central preparation/commissary facility. Permit fee is determined by risk category.

Section 4. Central Preparation Facility, Commissary and Servicing Areas

The central preparation/commissary facility or other fixed food service establishment permitted for use as a base of operation for mobile food units shall be constructed and operated in compliance with the requirements of Part 1 of this District Order unless specified otherwise in this Section. Mobile food units shall operate from a permitted central preparation/commissary facility or other fixed food establishment and shall report to such location daily for supplies, cleaning, and servicing operations.

A. Size and Capacity. The Central Preparation Facility or Commissary Facility must be able to securely accommodate all storage needs and food preparation needs for both the facility and the mobile food units. All food and food equipment for each mobile food unit shall be stored at the central preparation/commissary facility at the end of the operating day. The mobile food unit is expected to be stored at the commissary when not conducting business or undergoing vehicle maintenance.

B. Servicing Area. All Central Preparation Facilities / Commissary Facilities supporting mobile food units must be equipped with a servicing area that is sized adequately to support all mobile food units. A mobile food unit servicing area shall include at least overhead protection for any movement of equipment or foods in or out of the facility or to support the supplying, cleaning, or servicing operation. Those areas used only for the loading of water and/or the discharge of sewage and other liquid waste, using a closed system of hoses, need not be provided with overhead protection.

1) The Servicing area must also provide:

- (a) Trash Service
- (b) Electricity to keep mobile food unit equipment powered when the vehicle is parked.
- (c) Employee restroom
- (d) Mop sink or cleaning bay for cleaning the vehicle.
- (e) Potable water supply with proper backflow prevention
- (f) Wastewater discharge to approved sewer system.

C. Responsibilities of the Commissary Manager. The person in charge of a central preparation/commissary facility is responsible for:

- 1) Identifying designated equipment, storage areas, and preparation areas used by a contracted permit holder;
- 2) Security, maintenance and operations of the facility;
- 3) Keeping a log of each mobile food unit's daily activities including time of arrival and departure. Maintain a sign in / sign out attendance log for all contracted permit holders. The attendance log must be true and accurate, updated daily, and made available upon request. The attendance log must include the following information:
 - (a) The commissary business name, address, phone number, and permit number,
 - (b) The contracted permit holder's business name and the name and signature of the person in charge,
 - (c) The vehicle identification number when there are more than one mobile food unit operating under the same business name, and
 - (d) The date, time in, and time out of each visit, or,
 - (e) Other approved tracking system.
- 4) Prohibit the use of the commissary by unpermitted operators.
- 5) Provide written notification within five business days to the local regulatory authority:
 - (a) When a contracted permit holder no longer has a valid agreement to use the commissary, or
 - (b) When a contracted permit holder's agreement or lease is changed in any way
- 6) Provide written notification to each contracted permit holder and to NET Health when an imminent health hazard exists and prohibit the use of the commissary until such time that the hazard is mitigated.
- 7) Provide an up-to-date list of contracted permit holders upon request to NET Health

D. Commissary Service Agreement. A Commissary Service Agreement is required to be filed with NET Health to verify facility use if the central preparation/commissary facility is not owned by the mobile food unit operator. The Commissary Agreement must be renewed annually or if the original commissary agreement is terminated a new agreement must be submitted to NET Health before a mobile food unit can resume food service.

E. Out of Jurisdiction Commissary. All out of county mobile food units shall operate from a permitted central preparation/commissary facility that has similar requirements as other central preparation/commissary facilities in NET Health jurisdiction for the menu items for which the NET Health permit was issued. Verification from the jurisdictions retail food program

department will be requested along with other supporting documentation to verify adequacy.

Section 5. Process for Obtaining a Mobile Food Unit Permit

No person, firm, or corporation shall be allowed to operate a mobile food unit where food or beverages are served to the public without a permit or license from the Northeast Texas Public Health District (NET Health) per [2017 FDA Food Code Chapter 8-301.11](#). Permits are non-transferable. No person holding a permit shall sell, lend, lease or in any manner transfer a mobile food unit permit. [2017 FDA 8-304.20](#)

A. Plan Review. A plan review is required of all mobile food units that are constructed, converted or remodeled. Mobile food units that have a valid permit from another jurisdiction for the same menu may be exempt from a plan review and may proceed directly to inspection unless NET Health determines that a plan review is necessary to ensure compliance. [2017 FDA 8-201.11](#). The plan review will be processed by NET Health within five (5) business days of receipt of a complete plan review application. A plan review is a prerequisite for scheduling a preliminary inspection of a mobile food unit.

- 1) Plan Review Application. Operators seeking approval for a mobile food unit must submit a plan review application with the appropriate fee to NET Health for assessment of the proposed business plan and vehicle. The initial plan review application for a mobile food unit is valid for one (1) year. If the plans are not implemented in the one (1) year period, the plans must be resubmitted for approval along with a plan review fee described in [Part 1 Section 2](#). If operation is to occur within the Tyler City limits, such plan shall be forwarded by NET Health to the Tyler Fire Department.
- 2) Menu. A listing of all types of foods and beverages offered will be requested to evaluate the business plan. The food production steps will also be important to discuss the equipment upon the mobile food unit, in the central preparation facility and the operation between both permitted areas.
- 3) Floor Plans. A set of plans will be requested for review consistent with the criteria provided in [FDA Food Code Chapter 8 Part 2](#) and [TFER §228.241](#) as applicable. The plans and specifications should include all information necessary to demonstrate conformance with, and an understanding of, food safety provisions within the Texas Food Establishment Rules. Supporting photos or diagrams can also be used to verify compliance during plan review. All Floor Plans must be clear, easily readable and scaled on a minimum of ¼ inch, preferably on an 11-inch x 17-inch piece of paper

and/or a digital copy. Changes to the original permitted design approved by NET Health during plan review shall be submitted in like manner as the original set.

- 4) Operating Plans. NET Health may determine that a variance and/or a HACCP plan is necessary based on the type of proposed operation, proposed menu items processed or proposed equipment to be used; or may restrict the menu based upon the limitations of the mobile food unit.

B. Preliminary Inspection – Completion of Plan Review Process. 2017 FDA Food Code 8-203.10 A preliminary inspection is the final step of the plan review process and is required for all mobile food units. A preliminary inspection will be scheduled to assess the proposed mobile food unit within five (5) business days after plan review completion. The preliminary inspection will identify what repairs or modifications are necessary to meet the requirements for a Texas Food Establishment Rules compliant mobile food unit. One (1) requested preliminary inspection is included in a plan review. Additional inspection(s) shall be subject to a re- inspection fee(s) as described in Part 1 Section 2. The mobile food unit permit application will be issued by the inspector to the person in charge for all mobile food units that have successfully completed the plan review process. A mobile food unit operator that has completed a plan review for a commercially manufactured mobile food unit that is being constructed, converted, or remodeled by a commercial manufacturer will be exempt from a preliminary inspection.

C. Mobile Food Unit Permits and Fees. Refer to Part 1 Section 5 for permit and fee details applicable to all types of retail food establishments including mobile food units. The permit application and annual permit fee are required to be completed and submitted by the mobile food unit owner. This application is a pre-requisite for the “opening” inspection.

D. Pre-Operational Inspection. One (1) permit approval/opening inspection is included in the cost of the plan review. If the mobile food unit does not meet the rules within this District Order, a permit will not be approved. Any additional permit approval/opening inspection shall be assessed a re-inspection fee as set forth in Part 1 Section 2. 2017 FDA Food Code 8-203.10

E. Issuance. Mobile food units shall be inspected by NET Health immediately prior to the issuance of a permit. Upon successful completion of a permit approval/opening inspection, NET Health shall issue a permit to the

applicant if its inspection reveals that the proposed mobile food unit complies with these rules. [2017 FDA 8-303.10 through 8-303.30](#)

F. Conditions of Retention, Responsibilities of the Permit Holder. [2017 FDA 8-304.11](#) The permit holder shall comply with the provisions of the Texas Food Establishment Rules and the NET Health District Order; and

- 1) If required, submit, and comply with HACCP plan or variances;
- 2) Immediately contact the regulatory authority to report an illness of an employee as required by the Texas Food Establishment Rules;
- 3) Immediately discontinue operations and notify the regulatory authority if an imminent health hazard may exist;
- 4) Allow representatives of the regulatory authority access to the mobile food unit;
- 5) Replace existing facilities and equipment, as required by the Texas Food Establishment Rules, with acceptable replacements;
- 6) Comply with NET Health directives including time frames for corrective actions specified in inspection reports, notices, orders, warnings, and other directives issued to the permit holder's mobile food unit or in response to community emergencies;
- 7) Accept notices issued and served by NET Health according to law;
- 8) Be subject to the administrative, civil, injunctive, and criminal remedies authorized in law for failure to comply with these rules or NET Health directives, including time frames for corrective actions specified in inspection reports, notices, orders, warnings, and other directives;
- 9) Notify customers that a copy of the most recent establishment inspection report, valid framed food establishment permit and other required signage and documents, are available and/or posted in a conspicuous location visible to consumers.
- 10) Notify NET Health immediately if changes are made to the primary or secondary contact person on file, and telephone number.
- 11) Obtain approval from NET Health before changing the type of service or the location of equipment; or before a major remodel.

G. Permit Renewal. With exception of the initial permit issued, each permit fee shall be required and will cover a twelve (12) month period from date of issuance. Such fee must be renewed and shall be payable in advance for each twelve (12) month period thereafter. Failure to pay the annual permit renewal fee on a timely basis shall result in a late charge as indicated in [Part 1 Section 2](#). The annual renewal permit fee and the late charge must be paid prior to the expiration of the permit, or the mobile food unit shall cease operations. The mobile food unit owner shall notify NET Health in

writing if the owner permanently discontinues operation of the mobile food unit.

H. Inspections and Appeals. The inspection and appeal process are the same for all food establishments, including mobile food units. Please refer to Part 2, Sections 8 through 12.

Section 6. Food Truck Parks

An area designed to accommodate two or more mobile food units, that has been improved with an all-weather surface, with access to running water and restrooms, offering food and/or beverages for sale to the public as the primary use of the property, and functioning as a single business. All food truck parks shall comply with all applicable federal state and local laws. All mobile food units shall be removed from the food truck park upon closing of the park unless the central preparation/commissary facility is located in the food truck park. Any property owner and/or food truck park manager desiring to open a food truck park shall make application to NET Health. The application shall include the following:

A. Site Plan.

- 1) The location and description of each proposed permanent structure on the site, restrooms, and pads for mobile food units.
- 2) The surface material of driving lanes and mobile food unit pads.
- 3) Location of refuse containers.
- 4) Location and type of electrical outlets provided for each corresponding pad site; and if water is supplied for use by a mobile food unit, then a sanitary sewer connection is also required.

B. Food Truck Park Manager. There must be a designated on-site manager that is responsible for the orderly organization of mobile food units, the cleanliness of the site, and the site's compliance with all rules and regulations during business hours. The on-site manager shall not allow a public health nuisance to exist.

C. Restrooms. At least one permanent restroom within 500 feet of each mobile food unit must be made accessible to mobile food unit operators at all hours. Restroom(s) shall be equipped with flush type toilets that are properly plumbed according to law to a sanitary sewage system with

sufficient capacity to meet the needs of the mobile food units. Restrooms shall be equipped with hand sinks; hot and cold water; soap and paper towels.

Section 7. Certifications, Active Managerial Control and Incentives

A. General. It shall be unlawful for any person to work or accept employment in a food establishment, within NET Health jurisdiction without securing a food handler's training certificate. It shall be unlawful for any person in control of, operating or managing any food establishment, to employ or allow any person to work in a food establishment within NET Health jurisdiction unless that person has obtained a valid food handler's training certificate within 30 days of employment.

B. Administration. NET Health may administer a food handler's training course and certified food manager's training course and examination. Any person who is required to have a certificate shall attend and successfully complete a training approved by NET Health, TX DSHS, or by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). It is the responsibility of the certified food manager of the food establishment to keep a certificate of completion of the training course for all employees of the food establishment available on site for compliance review by the inspector.

C. Food Handler Certification Requirement.

- 1) Required. Each person, within thirty (30) calendar days of becoming an employee, conditional, volunteer or otherwise, of a food establishment shall obtain a valid accredited food handler certification. Certification is obtained by completing an accredited food handler training course approved by TX DSHS.
- 2) Valid Certificate. A valid certificate is one that is not expired and is issued by an accredited food handler training program approved by the Texas Department of State Health Services.
- 3) NET Health certification and certificate Issuance. Upon successful completion of a training course administered by NET Health, NET Health will issue a food handler's training certificate.
- 4) Expired Certificates. After the food handler certification expiration date, the person must complete a new accredited food handler's training course.
- 5) Exemptions. An employee of a food establishment that has satisfactorily passed an accredited food safety manager course and examination approved by the TX DSHS shall be exempt from this requirement for a food worker certification.

D. Certified Food Manager Certification and Requirement.

- 1) Certified Food Manager Certification. Certification must be obtained by successfully completing an Accredited Food Safety Manager Certification course and passing an examination. This course must be approved by the Texas Department of State Health Services and meeting all requirements in [Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 438](#), Subchapter G, and [25 TAC §228.33](#) (relating to Certification of Food Managers).
- 2) Required. The words “certified food manager” means the person in charge or an individual who conducts, manages, operates, and maintains active managerial control of a food establishment. At least one certified food manager must be present during all hours of operation at each permitted food establishment. At the time a food establishment permit is issued, the appropriate number of certified food managers must be employed to cover all operation hours of the food establishment. The number of certified food managers is to be determined by the operating hours of the food establishment and the number of operating shifts. Failure to maintain at least one Certified Food Manager per establishment shall be considered an imminent hazard and cause for a permit to be suspended.
- 3) Responsibilities of Certified Food Manager. Any food manager or person in charge of a food establishment within NET Health jurisdiction must hold a valid Certified Food Manager’s certificate. The certified food manager has responsibilities that include but are not limited to:
 - (a) Maintaining employment records, food handler certifications and certified food manager certifications accessible to NET Health during inspections or audits.
 - (b) Identifying hazards in the day-to-day operation of a food establishment that provides food for human consumption;
 - (c) Developing or implementing specific policies, procedures, or standards to prevent foodborne illness;
 - (d) Supervising or directing food preparation activities and ensuring appropriate corrective actions are taken as needed to protect the health of the consumer;
 - (e) Training the food establishment employees on the principles of food safety;
 - (f) Performing in-house self-inspections of daily operations on a periodic basis to ensure that policies and procedures concerning food safety have been implemented and are being followed;
 - (g) Demonstration of knowledge of [Chapter 2 of FDA Food Code](#); and
 - (h) Maintaining active managerial control.
- 4) Registration of certifications with NET Health. Registration of certifications into the NET Health database is voluntary.
 - (a) Individuals that attend a Certified Food Manager Program administered by NET Health will be automatically registered into the registry system by NET Health.

- 5) Certificate Reciprocity. A certificate issued to an individual who successfully completes an examination of an Accredited Food Safety Manager Program approved by the Texas Department of State Health Services shall be accepted as meeting the training and testing requirements under Texas Health and Safety Code, Subchapter G
- 6) Certificate Posting. The original food manager certificate(s) of the primary retail food manager(s) shall be posted in a location in the food establishment that is conspicuous and visible to consumers. All certificates of other certified food managers need to be in an accessible location for NET Health review during inspections and audits.
- 7) Exemptions. The following food establishments are exempt from the food manager certification requirements of this order:
 - (a) Establishments that offer only prepackaged foods that are not time/temperature control for safety (TCS);
 - (b) Childcare facilities, as defined by [Section 42.002, Human Resources Code](#);
 - (c) Establishments that do not prepare or handle exposed time/temperature control for safety (TCS) foods;
 - (d) Nonprofit organizations as defined in [25 TAC 229.371\(9\)](#); or
 - (e) Temporary Food Establishments that do not serve complex foods or raw poultry or raw seafood.

Section 8. Inspections

Compliance procedures concerning inspections are as follows:

A. Inspection Report Form. NET Health will use an inspection report form developed by the Texas Department of State Health Services that conforms to HACCP principles. The inspection report form design includes the following information.

- 1) The inspection report form identifies foodborne illness risk factors and Food Code interventions,
- 2) It documents actual observations using the convention IN (in compliance), OUT (out of compliance), NA (not applicable), and NO (Not observed), and
- 3) The inspection report form documents compliance and enforcement activities.

B. Inspection Frequency. An inspection frequency of a food establishment shall be based on a risk associated with the types of foods, compliance history and the food preparation procedures. Before a food establishment is placed into a risk category, a food establishment risk assessment must be assigned. Additional inspections of the food establishment based on

performance shall be performed as often as are necessary for the compliance and enforcement of these rules. [2017 FDA 8-401](#)

C. Access. NET Health agents, after proper identification, shall be permitted to enter any food establishment at any reasonable time, for the purpose of making inspections to determine compliance with these rules. The agents shall be permitted to examine records to obtain information pertaining to food and supplies purchased, received, or used, or to persons employed. [2017 FDA 8-402](#)

D. Report of Inspections. [2017 FDA 403.10](#) The inspection reports the score by using a demerit system, with zero (0) demerits denoting no Priority Item/Priority Foundation Item/Core Item violations. This means that there may be violations that are not assigned point values. Whenever an inspection of a food establishment is made, the findings shall be recorded on the inspection report form set out as described in paragraph (E) of this section. The inspection report form shall summarize the requirements of these rules and shall set forth a weighted point value for each requirement. The score will be reported in demerits. Inspection remarks shall be written to reference, by section number, the section violated and shall state the correction to be made. A copy of the inspection report form shall be furnished to the person in charge of the food establishment at the conclusion of the inspection. The inspection report from the most recent inspection shall be posted in a conspicuous place for the public to see in the food establishment. The completed inspection report form is a public document that shall be made available for public disclosure to any person who requests it according to law. [2017 FDA Food Code 8-403.50](#)

E. Correction of Violations.

- 1) The food establishment shall, at the time of the inspection or as soon as possible, implement appropriate corrective actions for violation items found during an inspection.
- 2) The inspection report form shall indicate a notice of violation and specify a reasonable time for the correction of the violations found, and correction of the violations shall be accomplished within the period specified, in accordance with the following provisions [2017 FDA Food Code 8-405.11 and 8-406.11](#):
 - (a) If an imminent health hazard exists, such as, but not limited to, complete lack of refrigeration, surfacing wastewater, lack of potable water, no hot water, lack of electricity, pest infestation or sewage backup, the food establishment shall immediately cease food service operations and contact NET Health. Operations

shall not be resumed until authorized by NET Health. The food establishment shall cease operations for a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours or until verified safe by NET Health. [2017 FDA 8-404.11](#)

- (b) All Priority Item violations of three (3) point weighted items shall be corrected as soon as possible, but in any event, within three (3) calendar days following the inspection. [2017 FDA 8-405](#)
- (c) All Priority Foundation Item violations of two (2) point weighted items shall be corrected as soon as possible, but in any event, within ten (10) calendar days following the inspection. [2017 FDA 8-405](#)
- (d) All Core Item violations of one (1) point weighted items shall be corrected by the date and time agreed to or specified by NET Health, but no later than ninety (90) calendar days after inspection. [2017 FDA 8-406](#)
- (e) NET Health may approve a longer time frame or a compliance schedule exceeding the time limitations specified under this section if the potential hazard involved, the complexity of the corrective action needed, or it is deemed no health hazard exists or will result from allowing an extended schedule of compliance.
- (f) When the food establishment rating score exceeds thirty (30) demerits, corrective action on all identified violations shall be initiated immediately and corrected within forty-eight (48) hours. One (1) or more re-inspections will be conducted at reasonable time intervals to ensure correction.
- (g) In the case of temporary food establishments, all violations shall be corrected within twenty-four (24) hours. If violations are not corrected within twenty-four (24) hours, the temporary food establishment shall cease food service operations until authorized to resume by NET Health. [2017 FDA Food Code 8-404.12](#)
- (h) The inspection report shall state that failure to comply with any time limits for corrections may result in cessation of operations.

F. Continuing Violations. Each day or fractional part thereof that such violation(s) continue shall constitute a separate offense.

- 1) Re-inspection. At the end of the specified period of time, NET Health shall verify corrections of the violations, document the information on an inspection report, and submit the inspection report into NET Health database. Subsequent re-inspections required due to non-compliance may be subject to a re-inspection fee.
- 2) Written Plan of Corrective Action. NET Health may require a written schedule of compliance is submitted by the food establishment.
- 3) Repeat Violations. Repeated violations that occur over several routine inspections are subject to the application of administrative penalties.
- 4) Inspection Frequency Risk Assessment. The assigned inspection frequency can be increased or decreased based on the previous inspection history.

- 5) Suspension of Permit. NET Health shall suspend a permit based on an imminent health hazard, repeated critical violations, lack of a Certified Food Manager, and/or any other serious violation of State law for which NET Health is responsible to enforce. A suspended food establishment permit shall remain suspended for a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours in order to remediate the imminent health hazard.
 - (a) A supervisor at the regulatory authority will confirm the hazard before suspension is effective when possible. Suspension is effective upon service of the written notice. When a permit is suspended, food operations shall immediately cease and shall not resume operations until such time as a re-inspection NET Health determines that the suspension should be lifted.
 - (b) Whenever a permit is suspended, the permit holder or the person in charge of the food establishment at the time of suspension shall be notified in writing that the permit is, upon service of the notice, immediately suspended.
- 6) Immediate Cessation of Operations. Upon receipt of a notice of permit suspension the food establishment shall immediately cease operations. Nothing in this section shall prevent NET Health from requiring a food establishment to cease operations immediately pursuant to law.
- 7) Re-inspection Required After Permit Suspension. Prior to resuming operation after a permit suspension, the food establishment must be inspected to verify correction of any violations and for compliance with these rules.
- 8) Re-instatement. Upon successful completion of a re-inspection and payment of a permit re-instatement fee, NET Health shall re-instate the food establishment permit for the permit holder if its inspection reveals that the food establishment complies with these rules.

Section 9. Examination and condemnation of Food; and Maintenance of Equipment

Procedures Concerning Examination and Condemnation of Food. Food may be examined or sampled by NET Health as often as necessary for enforcement of these rules. NET Health shall issue a receipt for the samples. NET Health may, upon written notice to the owner or person in charge specifying reasons with particularity, issue a hold order on any food, which it believes is in violation of any of the “Texas Food Establishment Rules” or other relevant federal, state or local regulations. NET Health shall tag, label or otherwise identify any food subject to the hold order. No food subject to a hold order shall be used, served or moved from the food establishment. NET Health shall permit storage of the food under conditions specified in the hold order, unless storage is not possible without risk to the public health, in which

case immediate destruction shall be ordered and accomplished. The hold order shall state that a request for an administrative hearing may be filed within ten (10) calendar days and that if no hearing is requested, the food shall be destroyed. An administrative hearing shall be held if so requested, and based on evidence produced at that hearing, the hold order may be vacated, or the owner or person in charge of the food may be directed by written order to denature or destroy such food or to bring it into compliance with these rules.

A. Maintenance of Equipment and Utensils. All equipment and utensils used in the preparation, storage, and serving of food shall be kept in good repair and in proper working condition. NET Health may tag, which means to mark, identify or otherwise forbid the use of equipment or utensils found to be in violation of this subsection, and it shall be unlawful to use any equipment or utensils that have been so tagged, until approved to do so by NET Health.

Section 10. Procedure When Disease Transmission or Infection is Suspected

A. Necessary Actions. When NET Health has reasonable cause to suspect the possibility of disease transmission from any food establishment, retail food store, mobile food unit, roadside food vendor or temporary food establishment employee, it may secure the morbidity history of the suspected employee or make any other investigation as needed and shall take appropriate action. NET Health may require any or all of the following measures:

- 1) The immediate exclusion of the employee from all food establishments;
- 2) The immediate closing of the food establishment concerned until, in the opinion of NET Health, no further danger of disease outbreak exists;
- 3) Restriction of the employee's services to some area of the food establishment, where there would be no danger of transmitting disease; and
- 4) Adequate medical and laboratory examination of the employee(s) and their bodily discharges.

B. Removal of Restriction or Exclusion. NET Health shall release a food employee or conditional employee from restriction or exclusion according

to [Texas Health and Safety Code 438.033](#), and the conditions of [Chapter 2 Part 2 of FDA Food Code](#)

C. Reporting of Communicable Diseases. Certain persons shall report certain confirmed and suspected foodborne diseases to NET Health as required in [25 TAC 97.2 through 97.6](#) and [Chapter 2 Part 2 of the FDA Food Code](#)

Section 11. Enforcement and Administrative Penalty Procedures

A. Remedies. Violations of the Texas Food Establishment Rules, the permitting rules or relevant federal, state, or local laws are subject to the penalties and remedies listed in this District Order and otherwise provided by state law. NET Health employees are hereby authorized to enforce provisions herein and to issue citations for violations of this District Order.

B. Penalties. Any permit holder, responsible officer of the permit holder, or other person found guilty of violating any provision of this District Order shall be punished in accordance with applicable law.

- 1) Fines. A violation of any provision herein shall be classified as a Class C misdemeanor and violators are subject to a fine of up to two thousand dollars (\$2,000.00) per violation per day for each violation.
- 2) Administrative Penalties. Administrative penalties may be assessed pursuant to Texas Health and Safety Code, Sections 437.0185-185.0186, which:
 - (a) Authorizes the Chief Executive Officer of NET Health to impose an administrative penalty on a person NET Health requires to hold a permit under [Texas Health and Safety Code, Section 437.003 or 437.004](#) if the person violates this District Order.
 - (b) Prohibits the amount of the penalty from exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500.00) per day and provides that each day a violation continues or occurs is a separate violation for the purpose of imposing a penalty. The amount of the penalty is to be based on certain factors set forth by criteria such as history of previous violations, seriousness of the violation, hazard to the health and safety of the public, demonstrated good faith efforts to correct, economic harm to property or the environment, amounts necessary to deter future violations, enforcement costs relating to the violation, and any other matter justice may require.
 - (c) The violations shall be categorized by severity level from those with minor health and safety significance to the most serious violations.
 - (d) Five Levels of penalties for retail food establishments will be imposed not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$500.00).

- (i) Level 1 \$100.00
 - (ii) Level 2 \$200.00
 - (iii) Level 3 \$300.00
 - (iv) Level 4 \$400.00
 - (v) Level 5 \$500.00
- (e) Authorizes the enforcement of the penalty to be stayed during the time the order is in judicial review if the person pays the penalty of the clerk of the court. Authorizes a person who cannot afford to pay the penalty to stay the enforcement by filing an affidavit in the manner required by the Texas Rules of Procedure for a party who cannot afford to file security for costs.
- (f) Authorizes a person, not later than the twentieth (20th) calendar day after the date the person receives notice of the penalty, to accept in writing the determination and pay the recommended penalty of the Chief Executive Officer or make a request for an administrative hearing on the occurrence of the violation, the amount of the penalty or both.
- (g) Requires a court to order that penalty is not owed if the court does not sustain the findings that a violation occurred.
- (h) Requires a court to order, when the court's judgment becomes final, that the appropriate amount be remitted to the person if the person paid the penalty to the clerk of the court and if the amount of the penalty is reduced or the penalty is not upheld by the court.
- (i) Authorizes an administrative penalty to be imposed for a violation of this District Order under [Chapter 437, Texas Health and Safety Code](#), by the state under 437.018, or by the director of a public health district of a county under Section 437.0185, but not both.
- 3) Service of Notice. A notice provided for in these rules is properly served when it is delivered to the permit holder, or the person in charge, or when it is sent by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the last known address of the permit holder (owner). A copy of the notice shall be filed in NET Health records.
- 4) Administrative Hearing. NET Health shall conduct hearings provided for in this Section 11 at a time and place designated by NET Health. Based on evidence of such hearing, NET Health shall make final findings and shall sustain, modify, or rescind any notice or order considered in the administrative hearing. Within ten (10) calendar days, NET Health shall furnish a written report of the hearing decision to the permit holder.
- 5) Revocation of a Permit. NET Health may, after providing an opportunity for an administrative hearing, revoke a permit for serious or repeated violations of any of these rule requirements of this District Order or for interference with NET Health in the performance of its duties. Upon revocation of a permit, operations of the food establishment shall cease immediately. Prior to revocation, NET Health shall provide written notice to the holder of the permit, or the person in charge of the food establishment at the time of revocation, stating the reason(s) for the proposed revocation and that the permit shall be revoked at the end of ten (10) calendar days

following service of such notice unless the permit holder files a written request for an administrative hearing with NET Health within such ten (10) calendar day period. If no request for a hearing is filed within the ten (10) calendar day period, the revocation of the permit becomes final.

- 6) Application after Revocation. Whenever a revocation of a permit has become final, the holder may make written application for a new permit. The applicant is required to meet any conditions of a new food establishment.
- 7) Injunction. Whenever NET Health has reason to believe that any person is engaging in, has engaged in or is about to engage in any act or practice declared to be unlawful or in violation of this chapter, NET Health may bring an action pursuant to state law against each such person to restrain the unlawful act or practice by temporary restraining order, temporary injunction, or permanent injunction.
- 8) Public Record. NET Health may publish the permit, name, and address of any food establishment whose permit has been revoked or suspended, together with the reasons for the revocation or suspension.

Section 12. Appeals of Decisions Made Under Sections 1 through 11

A. Filing an Appeal. Any person aggrieved by a decision of a NET Health employee concerning the granting or refusal to grant a permit, or any privilege as provided in Sections 1 through 11 may appeal such decision in writing to the Chief Executive Officer of NET Health within ten (10) calendar days after the decision. The Chief Executive Officer shall render a decision within thirty (30) calendar days after receipt of the appeal, either affirming the decision of the employee or entering an appropriate decision.

PART 3. SEVERABILITY

That if any provision or any section of this District Order shall be held to be void or unconstitutional, such holding shall in no way affect the validity of the remaining provisions or sections of this District Order, which shall remain in full force and effect.

PART 4. PENALTY

That any person, firm, or corporation violating any of the provisions of this District Order shall be deemed guilty of a class C misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by a fine as provided by law. Each day such violation shall continue, or be permitted to continue, shall be deemed a separate offense. Any person, firm, or corporation violating any of the provisions of the District Order may also be subject to appropriate administrative penalties, if applicable. Since this District Order has a penalty for violation, it shall not become effective until proper notice to the public by publication of the notice that the District Order exists. Furthermore, the revisions to District Order No. 2024-2 shall not become effective until MARCH 1, 2025.

The NET Health Board of Health voted to approve this Order on the 3rd day of December 2024, with an effective date of March 1, 2025.

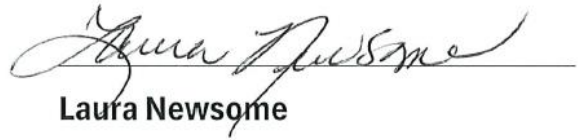
Signed this 3rd day of December 2024.

ATTEST:



Dr. Kent Booser, D.D.S

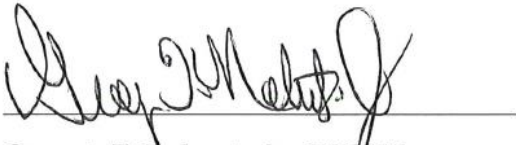
Northeast Texas Public Health District
Board Secretary



Laura Newsome


Northeast Texas Public Health District
Board Chair

RECOMMENDED:



George T. Roberts Jr., FACHE

Northeast Texas Public Health District
Chief Executive Officer



Sharon Roberts

Northeast Texas Public Health District
Board Attorney