

Bucks County Department of Health

Minimum Standards for the Limited Use of Coolers by Food Vendors at Flea/Farmer's Market

(These guidelines are fashioned after the PA Department of Agriculture March 2011 guidelines (www.EatSafePA.com). These are guidelines only and not the complete and detailed food safety requirements of the *Bucks County Department of Health Rules and Regulations for Conducting and Operating Food Facilities* or the PDA *Food Code Chapter 46*.)

All potentially hazardous (PHF) “cold” foods must be maintained at all times at or below 41 degrees F or in a frozen state (delivery, on-site storage, sale and return to the commissary or warehouse).

For optimum safety, this Department recommends that all PHF be maintained in approved mechanical refrigerators or freezers. However, “coolers” and other means of non-mechanical refrigeration will be accepted if they meet the guidelines listed below. The following guidelines have been developed in order to aid you in your submission for alternate cold holding units. Keep in mind that the type of food product (cold or frozen), the type of cooling media proposed, the length of transportation time to and from the market from your commissary/warehouse, the number of times the unit is opened during the operation for access, and the length of time your stand is in operation all have a bearing on whether the proposal is plausible. The outside air temperature also plays an important role in the maintenance of the food product at proper temperature. Generally “coolers” will not maintain frozen foods in a frozen state as required.

1. Temperature charts must be kept for Department review indicating the time and temperature of the product at loading of the unit, upon arrival at the market, every hour during operation, departure and arrival back at the commissary/warehouse.

2. All units must be supplied with accurate and accessible thermometers.
3. Probing thermometers must be available for product temperature determination during the storage and operation of the flea/farm market stand.
4. All units must be smooth, durable, easily cleanable and of proper capacity for the storage of all PHF. Styrofoam or dimpled metals are un-acceptable construction. All unit materials shall be safe for use in a food contact zone.
5. Units certified as ANSI-approved (NSF, UL-sanitation, ETL-sanitation) will aid you in this determination.
6. All units must be free of breaks, cracks and crevices, made of appropriate materials and adequate for the intended use.
7. Ice used as a cooling media shall not be used for human consumption and shall be considered non-potable.
8. There shall be no “wet storage” of food/drinks and units shall be self draining.
9. Foods can not cross contaminate other foods in the unit (i.e. raw chicken and raw beef or raw chicken and produce or ready-to-eat foods/drinks). Separate units shall be used for each food product in order to minimize the chance of cross contamination.
10. Foods/drinks shall be properly stored in food grade, leak proof containers.
11. Galvanized metal coolers shall not be used to store potable ice for human consumption. Scoops with handles shall be used for ice dispensing.
12. Any PHFs or drinks not maintained at the required food safety storage temperature shall be disposed of.