

## CONCESSION STAND BEST PRACTICES

Every spring, many agencies open concession stands at athletic fields and pools. Managing a concession stand brings numerous challenges. Operators must consistently deliver exceptional food and service, ensure employee safety, and manage a wide range of property and liability risks. It's crucial to have a comprehensive loss control program. This bulletin summarizes helpful strategies they can use to prevent potential claims.

### Food Safety

Poor food safety protocols can result in unsatisfied customers, foodborne illnesses, and wasted products due to contamination or spoilage. Therefore, to ensure appropriate food safety techniques, concession stand operators should follow these guidelines:

- Train employees on safe food-handling measures and avoiding cross-contamination issues when working with raw meat.
- Implement an effective food management system.
- Store food in fully sealed and properly labeled containers. Such labels should list the product name and expiration date.
- Organize products to ensure foods getting closer to expiration dates are used before spoiling, and expired products are never used and disposed of appropriately.
- Utilize an adequate housekeeping regimen to keep the kitchen clean and organized.
- Establish pest control procedures to prevent potential infestations.
- Keep refrigerators in good working condition through regular inspections and maintenance. Make sure refrigerators are kept at proper temperatures to avoid food spoilage issues.

### Fire Prevention

Concession stands often rely on various heat-producing appliances (e.g., stoves, deep fryers, grills, and more), so fire exposures are significant. As such, the following fire prevention protocols should be a top priority for restaurant owners:

- Consult the local fire official to determine what types of fire protection systems, fire suppression systems, and fire extinguishers are needed.
- Utilize commercial-grade kitchen hoods that are capable of capturing grease-laden vapors.
- Have kitchen hoods and ducts professionally cleaned on a routine basis based on the recommendations of a qualified vendor.
- Inspect, test, and maintain fire suppression systems as required by fire codes.
- Establish a fire safety plan that accounts for both preventive and evacuation strategies.
- Train employees on fire response procedures, including fire extinguishers, if authorized.

## Employee Safety

Concession stand operators are responsible for protecting their employees from illnesses and injuries on the job. Especially in food preparation, safeguarding employees from kitchen hazards (e.g., sharp objects, dangerous chemicals, and hot or slippery surfaces) is vital to prevent potential incidents. This can be especially challenging when volunteers are operating the stand. Operators should implement the following employee safety procedures:

- Provide employees with regular safety training. Key training topics should include cooking appliance safety, kitchen housekeeping, and safe cleaning chemical work practices.
- If volunteers staff the concession stand, consider posting safety best practices near equipment as a reminder of training.
- Require new staff to be mentored or supervised by experienced employees until they are fully competent in their roles and responsibilities.
- Always keep a fully stocked first-aid kit available to assist in the event of minor cuts or burns. Only allow trained employees to administer first aid.
- Install slip-resistant mats throughout the kitchen and other areas where walking surfaces could become wet or sticky.

## Liability

In addition to establishing a safe work environment, it's also important for concession stand operators to ensure that their properties are suitable for customers. To avoid liability concerns, restaurant operators should uphold these measures:

- Establish documented opening and closing procedures to inspect cooking, service, and eating areas.
- Establish a procedure and frequency of inspection of eating areas for hazards such as spills.
- Establish a log of inspections or checks for refrigerator and freezer temperatures.
- Train employees on proper spill management practices. Specifically, employees should be instructed to clean up spills immediately. In addition, when cleaning up spills, employees should display clear signage that warns passersby of potential hazards.
- Establish a response procedure for accidents involving patrons. The Safety Director strongly encourages the local law enforcement agency to be called to respond. Retain the video for at least two years if the incident was captured on closed-circuit television.