



Food Safety Program Overview and Update on Unpermitted Food Vending

Dylan Orr

Environmental Health Services - Division Director

Dr. Eyob Mazengia

Food & Facilities - Assistant Division Director

King County Board of Health

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Mission: We improve food safety to protect the public from foodborne illness

Topics

- Food Safety Program overview
- Common permitting barriers
- Unpermitted street food vending
 - Interagency collaboration
 - Addressing unpermitted vending
- FIFA World Cup 2026



Program Overview

~60 staff (45 field staff) who speak 16 languages

Services Provided Annually:

Permit and inspect:

- More than 12,000 permanent food businesses such as restaurants, delis, groceries, meat shops, coffee shops
- 3,500 temporary food businesses
- 50 farmers markets
- 800 mobile food units (e.g., food trucks, carts)
- More than 400 donated food distributing organizations

Review and approve:

- 800 – 1,000 new plan review applications

Investigate and respond to:

- More than 1,000 complaints



Food Safety Training and Community Engagement

Select a tab by year below to display a list of King County investigations and state and national outbreaks with reported King County cases

2026 INVESTIGATIONS 2025 INVESTIGATIONS 2024 INVESTIGATIONS STATE AND NATIONAL OUTBREAKS

→ [Illnesses associated with the consumption of raw oysters](#)

Date posted	Last updated	Food business	Suspected organism
12-22-25	01-13-26	Tokyo Stop Teriyaki	Shiga toxin-producing <i>E. coli</i> O157
12-16-25	12-16-25	Mizuki Buffet	
12-09-25	01-13-26	Kanishka Cuisine of India	
11-14-25	11-14-25	Stripe's workplace cafe	
11-13-25	11-13-25	Seastar Restaurant & Bar	



- Food handler training (50k food worker cards issued annually)
- Community-based information sessions to provide 1:1 support to new food vendors
- Online quarterly stakeholder meetings
- Media engagement including interviews, blogs, and social media
- Visit **kingcounty.gov/foodsafety** to:
 - Search food safety ratings for every permitted food business
 - View public disclosures of food-related illness outbreaks
 - Subscribe to quarterly food safety newsletter (>14k subscribers)

RESTAURANT NAME Search

Filter by

Showing 1-25 of 12849

20 Corners Brewing Co. 14148 Ne 190th St Woodinville, WA 98072 (425) 375-5223	GOOD HISTORY
206 Burger 1329 N 45th St Ste 109 Seattle, WA 98103 (206) 805-9222	RATING NOT AVAILABLE HISTORY
2 Fingers Social 9211 Delridge Way Sw Seattle, WA 98106 (425) 281-0686	GOOD HISTORY

Unpermitted Street Food Vending

There are different types of unpermitted vendors. Some vendors lack knowledge or resources to obtain a permit, whereas others have both knowledge/resources but refuse to do so.

Concerns include:

- Increased risk of foodborne illness
- Public safety risks (fire and zoning)
- Illegal dumping of waste in stormwater drains
- Potential labor standards violations/labor trafficking
- Economic damage to permitted food businesses through unfair competition
- Lost revenue: licensing, taxes, jobs
- Food inspector safety
- Tensions between permitted & unpermitted vendors



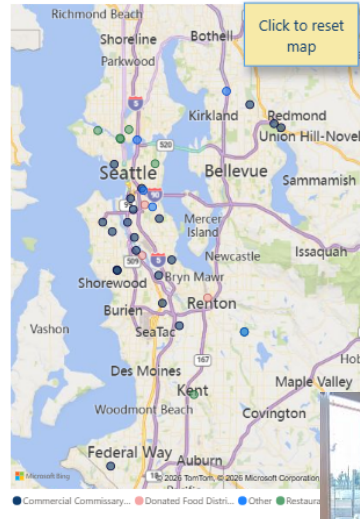
Permitting Barriers & Implemented Strategies

Barrier	Strategy
Navigating permitting process	Contract with community organizations to conduct outreach and support with permit applications; information sessions
Financial	Prorated permit fees
Access to commercial kitchens	6-month commissary kitchen vouchers for up to 15 hours per week (\$750); commissary kitchen map at kingcounty.gov/commissary
Lead time to obtain a license and permit	Reduced plan review turnaround time
Language barriers	Developing translated resources and offering interpretation

**Commissary Kitchen Map**
Public Health - Seattle & King County Food Safety Program

Number of Kitchens Selected
36
Click to clear all filters >>

Instructions: Use the FILTERS to the far right to search for a kitchen that meets specific criteria, or click on a dot on the map to get details about that location. To view details for multiple kitchens on the map, hold the 'Ctrl' key while using the mouse to click on multiple dots on the map. Use the scroll bar at the bottom or side of the table to see additional information.



Click to reset map

	Chop Kitchen (2 locations)	Clandestine Commissary	CuliNex Kitchens	Cultiva
Address	10231 16th Ave SW, Seattle, WA, 98146	3518 Fremont Pl N, Seattle, WA, 98103	360 Corporate Drive N, Tukwila, WA, 98188	1251 S C
Email	chopkitchens@gmail.com	zach@ripecatering.com	kitcheninfo@culinex.biz	crystal@
Phone	206-551-4584	206-387-1702	N/A	206-963
Website	https://www.chopkitchens.com/	NA	https://culinexkitchens.biz/contact/	
Kitchen Type	Commercial Commissary Kitchen	Restaurant/Caterer	Commercial Commissary Kitchen	Donated
Other Kitchen Type				
Rental Types			Monthly	Hourly, 1
Rate	5-month leases available. Two rental packages available. 1. Part-time with limit of 20 hrs per week and minimal storage 750/month + 5% utilities. 2. Full time with a dedicated prep station (more storage) 1300/month + 10% utilities	\$350/month for 1/day/week access to \$1800-\$2000 full-time access	Culinex Kitchens is not available for single event or ad-hoc rentals. Tenants sign month to month agreements that are based on the number of hours per week/month and type of resources needed (i.e., dry/refrigerated/frozen storage).	

Filters

Kitchen Name
All

Kitchen Zipcode
All

Kitchen Type
All

Rental Types
All

Days Open
All

24/7 Access
All

Cooking Equipment
All

Processing Equipment
All

Plumbing Equipment
All

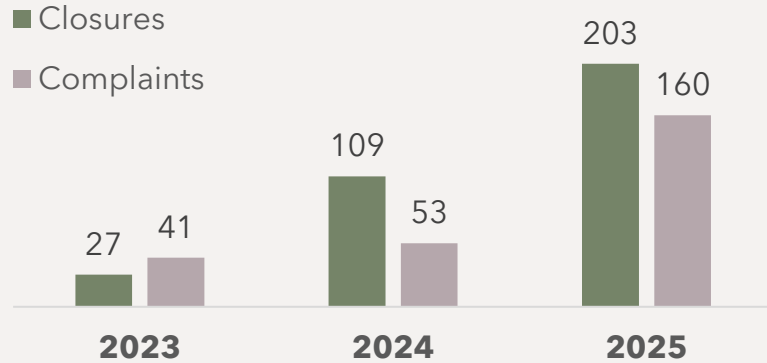
Cold Storage
All

Dry Storage
All

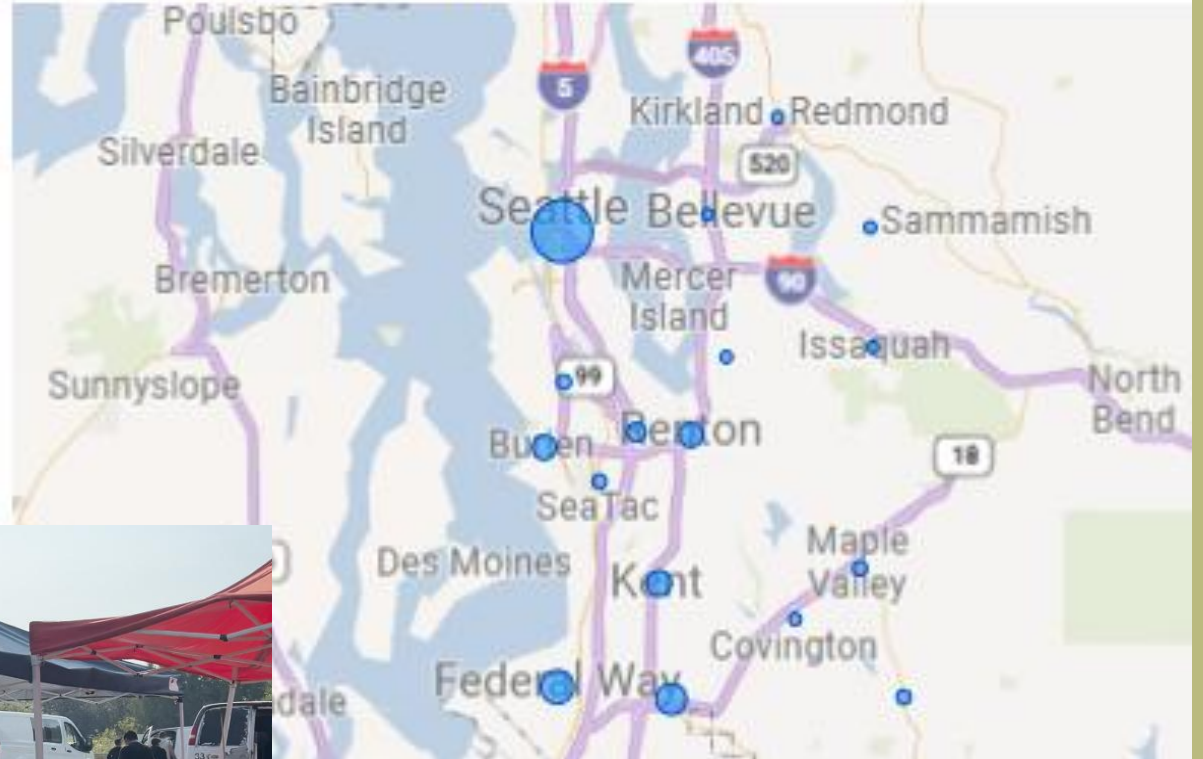


Unpermitted Street Food Vending Trends

Complaints and Closures



Count of Closures by City (2025)

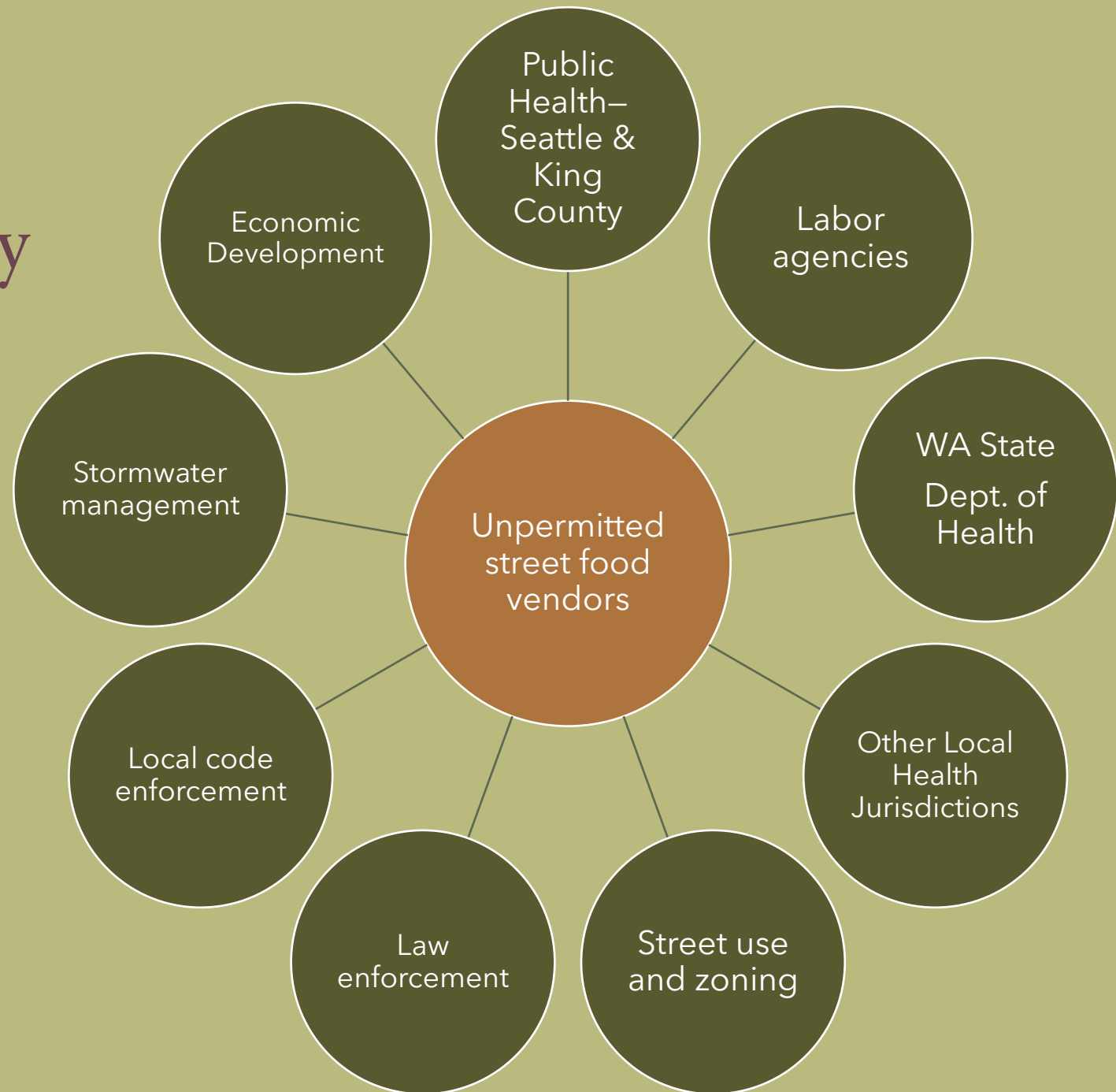


Annual increase in closures is driven mainly by what appear to be centrally organized networks of vendors who:

- Run large operations (not small “Mom-and-Pop” shops)
- Work out of makeshift residential units
- Prepare large amounts of food
- Work across county and state lines
- Refuse to engage with Public Health
- Reopen as soon as inspectors walk away



Interagency collaboration is key



Public Health Efforts to Address Unpermitted Street Food Vending



- Engagement with community-based organizations (CBOs), including information sessions with 1:1 support to reduce barriers to permitting
- Commissary kitchen voucher program
- Public education
- Engagement with Sound Cities Association
- Coordination with City of Seattle (OED, SDOT, SPD, SCDI, Fire, Parks, code enforcement) and other cities
- Collaboration with the Washington State Dept. of Health and other local health jurisdictions on state codes & potential interagency task force
- Progressive compliance plan

Community Voices

"Our primary concern is regarding public health and safety. Violations of the food code can make people very sick, or worse. **We don't want the public to ever question the safety of food prepared by mobile food vendors, which is why this issue is of such great concern and importance to us...**

The prevalence of unlicensed and unpermitted food vendors is a real slap in the face to legitimate food service establishments that are obtaining and paying for the required licenses and permits and are strictly complying with the food code."

- Lori Johnson, Executive Director, WA State Food Truck Association

"Until recently, I was preparing my food in a licensed commissary kitchen, but it closed a few months ago. Since then, I have been without a commissary, which has made it very difficult to prepare food safely and remain in compliance with health requirements. I am seeking a voucher to help cover commissary kitchen fees so I can continue operating responsibly and legally...**Receiving this voucher would be a big help... allowing me to focus on preparing food safely, supporting my family, and keeping my business going...**

Access to a commissary kitchen is essential for my business, and this support would make a meaningful difference for me and my family."

- Commissary Voucher Applicant

FIFA World Cup 2026



We are part of a broader effort on preparedness and response to support food safety for FIFA.

Public Health's focus is:

- Responding to an increase in food permitting requests
- Conducting an increased number of food safety inspections
- Responding to foodborne illness outbreaks
- Addressing unpermitted food vending activity



Thank you!

For questions contact:
KCBOHAdmin@kingcounty.gov