

The Catering & Commissary Labeling Checklist

What has to be on every catering, tray, and grab-and-go label to stay compliant — at one location or across a commissary serving many.

Catering and commissary orders carry more food-safety risk than a single in-store transaction — higher volume, longer hold and transport times, and more chances for an allergen or date error to slip through. Use this as a pre-production and pre-dispatch check for any off-premise or centralized-kitchen order.

1 Every Label — The Non-Negotiables

on each package, tray & meal

- **Product / item name** — clear and consistent with the menu
- **Prep date & time** — when it was made
- **Use-by / expiration** — per your date-marking rule
- **MRD tracking** — Made, Ready, Discard
- **Employee initials** — who prepped it
- **Storage / handling** — keep refrigerated, etc.

2 Allergen & Nutrition

accuracy matters most at volume

- **Major allergens declared** — the 9, per current regs
- **Ingredient statement** — where required
- **Nutrition facts** — for packaged / grab-and-go
- **Recipe-driven data** — label reflects the current spec
- **State/local requirements** — confirm by jurisdiction
- **Cross-contact notes** — where applicable

3 Catering, Tray & Distribution

off-premise & multi-location

- **Catering order label** — order #, customer, event
- **Tray / buffet identification** — what's in the pan
- **"Made At" location** — origin kitchen
- **"Distributed To" location** — destination
- **QR / barcode** — for traceability & scanning
- **Branded packaging** — consistent off the counter

4 Before You Dispatch — Scale Check

the multi-unit questions

- **Same standard as in-store?** — one label spec, not a workaround
- **One system, not a patchwork?** — no bolt-on label tool
- **Prints from existing hardware?** — no new devices
- **Records captured for audit?** — prep, MRD, initials logged
- **Visible to HQ?** — regional view of every site
- **No retraining to scale?** — same tools staff already use

Works for more than restaurants. The same checklist applies to convenience-store grab-and-go, multi-location sushi programs, foodservice management (FSM) contracts across client sites, and casino banquet & buffet operations — anywhere centralized production or off-premise orders scale beyond a single counter.

General guidance for foodservice operators; label requirements vary by product and jurisdiction. Confirm allergen, nutrition, and date-marking rules with your local health department and current [FDA Food Code](#).