



## **COMMERCIAL IMU SANITARY REQUIREMENTS**

The imu is an underground oven and one of the simplest and most ancient cooking structures. Kālua, which means “to cook in an underground oven”, is a traditional Hawaiian cooking method that utilizes an imu. The word kālua may also be used to describe the food cooked in this manner, such as kālua pig or kālua turkey.

Today, Hawaii's visitor industry has made the imu an integral part of the demonstration and entertainment element of the commercial luau. Follow this guideline to prevent and minimize pathogenic bacteria and spores that can cause foodborne illness at your next event.

### LOCATION:

- At least 50 feet from any individual wastewater disposal system.
- Must not be located in an area prone to flooding.
- Located in an area with minimal airborne contaminants.

### CONSTRUCTION:

- Lining of the imu must be with fire-proof brick, mortar, steel, rock, or other durable nonabsorbent, cleanable material.
- The ground area immediately surrounding the imu must be sloped to drain away from the imu, wide enough to accommodate operations & constructed of durable, easily cleanable, nonabsorbent material.
- The imu must be covered and protected from contamination when not in use. The cover must be of a rigid, durable, easily cleanable, nonabsorbent material.
- All wastewater generated during washing of the imu must be emptied into an approved wastewater system.
  - Imu connected to a wastewater system: Must be sloped to drain into the wastewater system. The drain line must have an approved air gap.
  - Imu not connected to a wastewater system: Constructed for easy removal of liquids.

### APPROVED KITCHEN:

- The operator of the imu must have a valid food establishment permit. The imu is an extension of the food establishment kitchen.

- The operator must be able to replicate the imu cooked foods within the food establishment kitchen.
- All food prep before and after cooking must take place within the food establishment kitchen.
- The operator must submit and receive approval of their written Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). SOP must include:
  - Food product prep steps
  - How safe food product temperature will be maintained
  - Equipment to be used
  - Handwashing procedures
  - Cleaning & sanitizing procedures of imu
  - Wastewater disposal process

#### SANITARY FACILITIES:

- Handwash sink must be provided with soap and paper towels.
  - Potable water supply under pressure must be connected to an approved wastewater system.
  - Potable water supply not under pressure.
    - Water supply must be sufficient for hours of operation, but not less than 5 gallons.
    - Wastewater catchment must be 15% larger in capacity than potable water supply.
- Hard plumbed toilets for food handlers must be conveniently located and accessible.
- Garbage and rubbish must be in leak proof, nonabsorbent containers with tight-fitting lids.
- Effective measures taken to keep the premises vermin free.

#### OTHER FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS:

- Food contact ti and banana leaves must be free of pesticide and chemical contamination.
- Canvas and other cloth coverings must be laundered prior to and after each use.
- Use of wood treated with chemicals is prohibited during the heating of rocks and throughout the food preparation process.
- Soil may be used to seal/cover the outermost covering of the imu.
- Storage facilities for all equipment and supplies must be vermin-proof.
- Vehicle and equipment used to transport food from the imu to the food establishment kitchen must be able to maintain food at proper temperature and free from contamination.

For further questions, contact your local Department of Health, Sanitation Branch office:  
 Oahu 586-8000 • Hilo 933-0917 • Kona 322-1507 • Kauai 241-3323 • Maui 984-8230