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POTLUCK COMMUNAL MEAL FACT SHEET

PROCEDURES FOR A POTLUCK MEAL

A potluck meal is a communal meal where the attendees bring food to share. Unfortunately, potluck meals can present a public health hazard due to the large variety of foods offered. Foods known as “Potentially Hazardous Foods,” (PHFs), also called “Time and Temperature Control for Safety Foods” (TCS) foods can make people sick. PHF or TCS foods are those that are prepared in non-commercial kitchens and can support bacterial growth and become unsafe which can then result in life threatening foodborne illnesses. Good planning with temperature control and proper sanitation practices reduce the likelihood of a foodborne illness occurring. Food allergies may also be life threatening and caution must be taken when planning, preparing and serving foods that contain allergens in their ingredients. Organizers and sponsors of any food event must not neglect good food protection and sanitation practices when planning, organizing, and holding the food event.

Notification and approval for an event potluck meal must be obtained from both University Food Services, “Auxiliary Enterprises” (AE) and the University Environmental Health & Safety Department (EH&S) via the submittal of an Adobe E-Sign Food Waiver Application process. Please also note that the Campus Center Administration prohibits potluck meals from being held in the Campus Center Building complex.

PROCEDURES FOR FOOD SAFETY FOR A POTLUCK MEAL

Good personal hygiene such as proper handwashing, not touching foods with bare-hands or with contaminated gloves, and not handling or preparing foods when you are sick are all things to keep in mind when you are working with food.

Other good food handling conditions include attention to proper temperatures for food storing, cooking, and holding as well as proper timeframes for using foods for your event.

If you or a member of your household or residential unit is sick with diarrhea or vomiting or is jaundiced, you may not handle or prepare food for others! Additionally, if you have a cut or lesion on your hands, you cannot handle or prepare food for others.

Food Handler/Volunteer Agreement forms are required to be signed by all food handler/volunteers and then the forms are sent to EH&S after the event and held on file for at least 90 days.

Potentially Hazardous Foods, (PHFs) also known as Time Temperature Control for Safety Foods (TCS) include: meats, poultry, seafood, dairy products, eggs and bacon, raw seed sprouts, sliced melons, tofu, partially and fully cooked vegetables, cooked potatoes, cooked squash, cooked onions, cooked rice, cooked peppers, sliced fruit and salads, including tomatoes, and can all cause life threatening illnesses if they are not handled safely during transportation, storage, preparation, and delivery process.

Cross-contamination, improper food holding temperatures, and improper cooking temperatures are all conditions which may contribute to unsafe food and potential foodborne illness. Prior to preparing any foods, everyone should thoroughly wash their hands with soap and warm water. Hand washing is to be

repeated after any act that could contaminate hands, such as coughing, eating, handling garbage, or using the toilet. Food safe (non-latex) gloves should be used and changed frequently along with hand washing.

Prior to preparing any foods, all surfaces should be thoroughly cleaned. Do not prepare different food types such as raw meats and then fruits and vegetables without cleaning all counters, cutting boards, wares, and utensils in-between uses with hot soapy water followed by a kitchen disinfectant cleaner. Preparing food on a surface or with a utensil and then putting another food on that surface or using the same utensil is known as cross-contamination because unsafe micro-organisms could be transferred to foods. Always clean the food surfaces and utensils in between different types of food preparation.

Tongs or other utensils or tissues shall be used for necessary handling of any unwrapped Ready-To-Eat food product. **Bare-Hand-Contact with Ready-To-Eat Foods is not allowed.** Food-grade safe non-latex gloves shall be used. Cross contamination shall be completely avoided.

TIME AND TEMPERATURE REQUIREMENTS FOR A POTLUCK MEAL:

- Chilled ingredients must be used for all cold dishes.
- Cooking times and temperatures must be maintained at 15 seconds for food safety using a calibrated food thermometer:
 - 165° F – Poultry; stuffing; stuffed meat, seafood, poultry or pasta
 - 155° F – Ground meats; ground seafood; shell eggs hot held for service
 - 145° F – Seafood, fish, shell & shellfish; steak/chops, beef, pork, veal, lamb
 - 145° F – Roast of pork, beef, veal, and lamb cooked and holding 145°F for 4 minutes.
 - Food is delivered and held at the proper temperatures, 41° F for cold foods, 140° F for hot foods. Keep **HOT FOODS HOT**, above 140°F, and **COLD FOODS COLD**, below 41°F.

Food must be purchased just prior to preparation.

- Food is held for not more than 30 minutes and kept at the proper temperature.
 - Food is served within the proper time, (served immediately for service, serving time not to exceed 1.00 hours).
 - Food shall be discarded if total travel and service time exceeds **2.0 hours**.
 - Food that is leftover shall be discarded.
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- All foods containing allergens such as milk and dairy products, eggs or egg products, fish, shellfish, wheat, soy or soy products, peanuts and tree nuts must be **LABELED CLEARLY** - see below.
 - The student event organizer must retain a list of who donated what food item in case of any necessary follow-up and provide a copy to EH&S per the instructions below for Food Volunteer Forms;
 - Protect food from dust, flies, and people by covering the food;
 - Extension cords must be used carefully to avoid a tripping hazard;
 - SINGLE USE** utensils and plates only;
 - Alcohol is never allowed.
 - Provide sufficient trash containers for all waste.

FOOD ALLERGEN CONCERNS & REQUIREMENTS FOR A POTLUCK MEAL:

All foods containing ALLERGENS such as tree nuts, peanuts, dairy, soy, eggs, fish, wheat, and shellfish must be labeled. As an alternative to an ingredients label, table tent cards listing the ingredients for each food item may be used. No home canned foods, pickled or brined foods are allowed. Also, no admission fee may be charged for the food or the potluck meal. A sign must accompany the meal that the food and event have not been inspected by EH&S or the Health Department.

Any corrective action deemed necessary by EH&S must be taken by the person in charge of the operation and/or the right to continue the event or future events may be forfeited. The signed Food Handler/Volunteer Agreement forms, along with the list of foods & preparers, must be held at the event, and immediately following the event shall be sent via campus mail to EH&S, Environmental Health Services, 117 Draper Hall.

Please see the following policies and fact sheets for more information:

Description of Food Types & Events

Basic Food Safety Fact Sheet

Food Allergy Fact Sheet

Campus Allergy Fact Sheet

Food Handler/Volunteer Agreement

**Private potluck meals shared by members of a Residence Hall or Department, which are not advertised, are private events and not part of the food waiver registration process. Fees may never be charged for any potluck meal. However, all safe food handling guidelines noted in the above fact sheet(s) should be followed.*