

POTLUCK FACT SHEET

A potluck meal is a communal meal where all 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 known as Time/Temperature for Safety Control (TCS) foods prepared in non-commercial kitchens, can result in life threatening foodborne illnesses. Good planning and proper sanitation practices reduce the likelihood of a foodborne illness. 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 event.

Notification and approval for an event potluck meal must be obtained from the University Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) and Food Services, (Auxiliary Enterprises) via the submittal of the Food Waiver and Registration Application process through the Campus Pulse event planning program in the Student Activities and Involvement office. Please also note that the Campus Center Administration prohibits potluck meals in the Campus Center Building complex, **unless** the Auxiliary Enterprises Director of Sales approves the event. A student Potluck meal requires attendance at an EH&S food safety training workshop prior to the event. Please call the Assistant Director for Environmental Health Services for an appointment at 545-2682. This appointment date is required to be entered as part of the Food waiver event Registration form.

- A person who is sick, has diarrhea, vomiting or is jaundiced, or has a cut or lesion on their hands, must NOT handle food!
- 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. Any illness shall be reported to EH&S immediately.

Potentially Hazardous Foods, (PHFs) also known as Time/Temperature for Safety Control (TCS) foods include: meats, poultry, seafood, dairy products, eggs and bacon, raw seed sprouts, sliced melons, tofu, partially and fully cooked vegetables, potatoes, squash, onions, rice, peppers, sliced fruit and salads and can all cause life threatening illnesses if they are not handled safely during transportation, storage, preparation and cooking, and delivery process. Cross contamination, improper food holding temperatures, and improper cooking temperatures are all conditions that may contribute to unsafe food and potential foodborne illnesses.

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-grade 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.

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. Communal bowls are not allowed and cross contamination shall be completely avoided.

REQUIREMENTS FOR A POTLUCK MEAL - All participants must ensure that:

- Chilled ingredients must be used for all cold dishes.
 - Cooking times and temperatures must be maintained at 15 seconds for food safety:
 - 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 is delivered at the proper time, (delivered immediately for service after preparation, travel time shall be not more than 30 minutes).
 - 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**
 - The student event organizer must retain a list of who donated what food item in case of any necessary follow-up;
 - 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.

All foods containing ALLERGENS such as tree nuts, peanuts, dairy, soy, eggs, fish 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 has not been inspected by University EH&S or the local Health Department.

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Any corrective action deemed necessary by EH&S shall be taken by the person in charge of the operation or the right to continue the event or future events may be forfeited. Auxiliary Enterprises staff may provide input regarding food safety for any event that is held in or adjacent to an Auxiliary Enterprises facility. The signed Food Handler/Volunteer Agreement forms, along with the list of foods & preparers, must be held at the event, and 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:

[Food Safety BASICS Fact Sheet](#)

[Food Allergy Fact Sheet](#)

[Campus Allergy Fact Sheet](#)

[Food Handler/Volunteer Agreement](#)

If you have any questions, please feel free to call the Environmental Health Program at EH&S at 545-2682.

**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. However, all safe food handling guidelines noted in the above fact sheet(s) should be followed.*