



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES



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Food Safety Checklist for Emergency Shelters and Mass-Feeding Centers September 10, 2009

The following information will help you serve safe food to your customers.

Choose a Food-Safe Menu

- ❑ Keep your menu simple and keep potentially hazardous foods (meats, eggs, dairy products, cut fruits and vegetables, salads, etc.) to a minimum or take extra precautions for food safety. Use only foods from approved sources. Make sure that the ice used for drinks or as a cooling medium is made from potable water. Use precooked foods only if they have been properly chilled and reheated. Do not use leftovers. Keep raw foods and cooked foods separate.

Complete control of your food, from source to service, is the one key to safe, sanitary food service.

Cook to the Proper Temperature

- ❑ Use a food thermometer to verify that product is cooked to appropriate temperature.
- ❑ Potentially hazardous food must be maintained at 41°F or below or 140°F or above. Ground beef should be cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 160°F or above. Chicken should be cooked to an internal temperature of 165°F or above. Thawing: Potentially hazardous food must be thawed in a refrigerator or under running water.

Most illnesses from temporary events can be traced back to lapses in temperature control.

Reheat with Care

- ❑ Do not attempt to reheat foods in crock-pots, steam tables, or other hot holding devices or over sterno. Once they are heated in an oven or on a stove to the appropriate temperature, they can be maintained at 140°F in these hot holding devices.

Slow-cooking mechanisms used for reheating may activate bacteria and may never reach bacterial-killing temperatures.

Chill Food Promptly

- ❑ When cooked food will not be served immediately, it is essential to hold it properly (above 140°F) or to cool it as quickly as possible. Foods that require refrigeration must be cooled to 41°F as quickly as possible and held at that temperature until ready to serve. To cool foods quickly, use an ice bath or place food in shallow pans.

Allowing hazardous foods to remain unrefrigerated for too long has been the cause of many episodes of foodborne illness.

Transport with Care

- ❑ If food needs to be transported from one location to another, keep it well covered and provide adequate temperature controls. Use refrigerated trucks or insulated containers to keep cold foods cold (below 41°F) and hot foods hot (above 140°F).

Neglecting to consider food safety when transporting food can undo all the good of your measures to prevent foodborne illness. Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.

Take Care With Health and Hygiene

- ❑ Only healthy workers should prepare and serve food. Any workers who show symptoms of disease—cramps, nausea, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, jaundice, etc.—or who have open sores or infected cuts on their hands should not be allowed in the food booth. Workers should wear clean outer garments and should not smoke or eat in the booth. Food service workers should wear effective hair restraints, remove jewelry, and wash hands before preparing or serving food.

Ill or unclean personnel are a frequent cause of foodborne diseases. Smoking, besides being unhealthful and aesthetically unappealing in food preparation, contributes to the contamination of workers' hands.

Provide Proper Handwashing Facilities

- ❑ Clean running water, hand soap, and disposable paper towels are essential for proper handwashing. Cold water works, but warm water is better. If water under pressure is not available, use at least a 5-gallon capacity insulated container with a valve that allows a continuous flow of water over hands. Wash hands frequently—before starting work, before food preparation, after handling raw meat, after eating, smoking, coughing, sneezing, or using a tissue, after handling soiled items or garbage, and after using the restroom.

Frequent and thorough handwashing remains the first line of defense in preventing foodborne illness. The use of disposable gloves can provide an additional barrier to contamination, but gloves are no substitute for handwashing.

Handle Food Safely

- ❑ There should be no bare hand contact with ready-to-serve foods and food contact surfaces. Use disposable gloves, tongs, deli paper, or other utensils to handle food. Gloves used to handle food are single use only and should not be washed and re-used.

Change gloves:

- As soon as they become soiled or torn.
- Before beginning a different task (such as when you move from handling money to handling food).
- At least every 4 hours during continual use and more often as necessary.
- After handling raw meat and before handling cooked or ready-to-eat food.

Touching food with bare hands or dirty gloves transfers germs to the food.

Carefully Clean All Equipment

- ❑ Use disposable utensils for food service. Wash equipment and other utensils in a 4-step sanitizing process: wash in hot soapy water, rinse in hot water, sanitize and air dry. For sanitizing, use concentrations recommended by the manufacturer. For example, soak equipment and utensils in solution of 1 teaspoon of bleach for 1 gallon of water for at least 10 seconds.

Clean utensils provide protection against the transfer of harmful germs.

Properly Store and Handle Ice

- ❑ Ice used to cool cans and bottles should not be used in cup beverages and should be stored separately and be from an approved source. Use a scoop to dispense ice, never hands.

Ice can become contaminated with bacteria and viruses and cause foodborne illness.

Sanitize Work Surfaces and Tables

- ❑ Sanitize work surfaces and tables with a dilute bleach solution. First, wash surfaces with warm soapy water and rinse. Then use a cloth to wipe with a sanitizer (use concentrations specified by the manufacturer; for example 1 teaspoon bleach in 1 gallon of water). Rinse and store your wiping cloths in a bucket of sanitizer. Change the solution every 2 hours.

Clean and well-sanitized work surfaces prevent cross contamination and discourage flies.

Control Insects and Carefully Discard Waste

- ❑ Keep foods covered to protect them from insects. Store pesticides away from food. If you apply insecticides or other pesticides, follow label directions to avoid contamination of food, equipment, and other food contact surfaces. Place garbage and paper wastes in a refuse container with a tight-fitting lid. Dispose of wastewater in a sewer or public toilet.

Flies and other insects are carriers of foodborne diseases. The chemicals used to kill them can be toxic.

For specific concerns or questions, contact the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, Food Protection Section at 603-271-4589, 800-852-3345 x4589 or at foodprotection@dhhs.state.nh.us .

The Department of Health and Human Services' Mission is to join communities and families in providing opportunities for citizens to achieve health and independence.
