



Guidelines for Food Preparation and Serving

This is a summary of some of the requirements to ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to ensure that food is stored, prepared and served on Church premises in ways that will not compromise the safety and suitability of food for human consumption.

Note that your Local Authority/Council may also have food regulations which need to be adhered to.

SUPERVISION

1. **FOOD SUPERVISOR:** When food preparation is carried out from time to time, a Food Supervisor will be appointed who has control of decisions regarding food storage, preparation and serving standards.
2. **PREPARERS:** The Food Supervisor must be satisfied that food Preparers have the skills and knowledge in food safety and hygiene matters relevant to the work to be carried out.
3. **FOOD:** The Food Supervisor must be satisfied that the food purchased, supplied or donated is suitable for preparation and/or serving. If there is any cause for doubt, the food is to be discarded.
4. **PREPARATION AREA:** The Food Supervisor has the responsibility for ensuring that the food preparation area is suitably clean, that preparation/cooking/heating equipment is in good condition, and that the entry of flies and any insects is minimised.
5. **CLEAN-UP:** The Food Supervisor will ensure that the kitchen area and all equipment are properly cleaned and tidied after the function is over.
6. **PRODUCTS:** The Food Supervisor will ensure that adequate supplies of cleaning products are on hand – e.g.: Clean tea towels, washing up detergent, cleaning cloths, hand sanitation, paper tissues, disposable gloves, soap, single-use paper towels and floor cleaning equipment.

UNSUITABILITY

7. **ILLNESS:** A person will not handle food if they are ill or are developing symptoms relating to vomiting, diarrhoea, a fever or a food-borne illness such as salmonella.
8. **INFECTION:** A person will not handle food if they have an infectious illness such as a cold, a cough or any illness which would make food unsafe or unsuitable.
9. **SKIN SORES:** A person must ensure that any skin sores are completely covered by a bandage and clothing, or by a waterproof covering.

PREPARATION REQUIREMENTS

10. **FOOD CONTACT:** Food preparers are required to do whatever is reasonable to prevent unnecessary human contact with prepared food.
11. **CLOTHING:** Clothing is to have a level of cleanliness appropriate to the preparation of food.
12. **HAIR AND NAILS:** Hair is to be clean and long hair tied back and/or restrained using caps. Fingernails must be short and clean.
13. **JEWELLERY:** Wearing of accessories and jewellery is discouraged, as they may contaminate food and harbour bacteria.



14. PETS: No pets are to enter food preparation or serving areas.
15. SMOKING: There is to be no smoking in any food preparation or serving areas.
16. HAND WASHING: Food preparers are expected to wash their hands whenever their hands are likely to contaminate food. For example:
 - Before starting to handle food.
 - Before working with cooked food after handling raw food.
 - Before handling food after doing other work.
 - After handling money.
 - After using the toilet.
 - After smoking, coughing, sneezing, using a handkerchief/tissue or eating.
 - After touching their hair, scalp or a body opening.
 - After clearing tables and cleaning up.
 - After handling rubbish and other waste.

Food preparers should use soap and warm running water, and dry their hands thoroughly on a single-use towel or in another way that is not likely to transfer disease-causing organisms on to the hands.

17. TEA TOWELS: Kitchen tea towels must be fresh and clean. They must never be used as a hand towel or for cleaning/wiping an area or spillage. They must be washed after each function's use.

FOOD PREPARATION

18. KITCHEN CAPABILITY: The kitchen and its equipment should not be used to prepare food beyond its capability, size and equipment (and licence requirements if relevant).
19. FOOD STANDARD: Food to be prepared or served must be of a standard suitable for safe eating. If in doubt, discard. Particular reference is made to:
 - Frozen food which has been defrosted for too long.
 - Prepared food which may have been refrigerated for too long.
 - Food where the use-by date has expired, including refrigerated items such as milk.
 - Food in containers opened previously, but is likely to have deteriorated.
 - Food prepared privately elsewhere, transported and donated.
 - Food suspected of having been open to flies and/or insect spray.
 - Any food that develops an unusual colour or odour.
20. CONTAMINATION: Each food handler must take all precautions to ensure that food or surfaces that come in contact with food are not contaminated by his or her body or anything he or she is wearing. This includes hair, saliva, mucus, sweat, blood, fingernails, clothes, jewellery or bandages.
21. CROSS-CONTAMINATION: Cooked or ready-to-eat food must not come in contact with raw food as it can be contaminated by bacteria from the raw food, referred to as "cross-contamination".
22. SHARED USE: the same knives, chopping boards, spoons or other equipment should not be used for both raw food and cooked/ready-to-eat food, or for different types of dishes. Equipment must be thoroughly washed and sanitised after each use.
23. GLOVES: If gloves are used, they must be used only for the one continuous task before being discarded. Gloves must be removed, discarded and replaced with a new pair before working with prepared food after handling raw food, and in cases listed under Clause 16. The use of tongs is encouraged.



24. **HIGH RISK FOODS:** High risk foods are those which can support the growth of bacteria and which are going to be eaten without any further cooking. For a church activity, these high risk foods might include:
- Sandwiches with fillings like cooked meats, egg, tuna
 - Cooked meats and meat products like chicken wings/drumsticks, sausages
 - Pies and savoury pastries such as sausage rolls, pasties, quiche
 - Barbeque foods, once they are ready to eat
 - Cream cakes and desserts containing cream.

Refrigerate these as soon as possible, and as long as possible – preferably below 8°C.

25. **FOOD WASHING:** All fruit and vegetables are to be washed before preparation and/or serving.
26. **THAWING:** If using a microwave oven to thaw food, cook it immediately after defrosting. If you have to cook food that is still frozen, make sure that the food is cooked right through, and that its core temperature reaches 75°C.
27. **RE-FREEZING:** Do not re-freeze thawed food. Bacteria do not die when food is refrozen and are still there when the food is thawed again.
28. **BARBECUES:** Groups intending to hold a barbeque should seek further advice, as barbeques can result in additional risks to food safety.

FOOD SERVING

29. **CROCKERY:** Make sure that all crockery, cutlery and other items used in serving and presenting food are clean and undamaged.
30. **SERVING ITEMS:** Each food should have its serving spoon, ladle, tongs etc. on a separate dish.
31. **PROMPTNESS:** Food should be served promptly after its removal from a refrigerator or cooking/heating unit. This is quite important when weather conditions are hot and humid.
32. **HOT ITEMS:** Large hot dishes should be carried to tables away from people. This includes pots of hot tea and coffee. Trolleys are an advantage.
33. **REPLENISHMENT:** A fresh batch of food should not be mixed with some that has been out for some time.
34. **TOUCHING:** Bare hands are not to be used to serve food, nor to touch the inside rim of cups or glasses. A tray is helpful here. Use tongs to place ice in glasses or jugs, not hands.
35. **ALLERGIES:** It is advisable for servers to be able to answer a question (or find out) about the contents of food which may contain products to which a person might be allergic, such as eggs, nuts and wheat flour.
36. **SPILLAGES:** Cleaning gear including mops and buckets should be on hand to clean up any food or drinks spilled on to the floor.
37. **CLEAN-UP:** Immediately after the event, tables must be wiped clean and sanitised, and floors cleaned. Arrangements must be made for linen to be laundered.



WASTE DISPOSAL

38. **WASTE COLLECTION:** Food waste is to be disposed of promptly, preferably wrapped. Uneaten served food, even if it was untouched, must never be set aside for re-use.
39. **WASTE BINS:** Food waste and other refuse must be deposited in closable containers, preferably pedal bins. Bins must never be allowed to overflow or to not shut properly.
40. **ACCUMULATION:** Waste should not be left in the kitchen after a function or left overnight, but should be transferred into larger bins with lids ready for collection.

FOOD PROBLEMS

41. **COMMUNICATION:** To minimise the possibility of problems, these guidelines should be communicated in advance to all people involved in food preparation and serving.
42. **FIRST AID:** Any instance of served food apparently being the cause of a health problem should be handled as a matter for first aid or preferably ambulance involvement.
43. **REPORTING:** The matter should be reported immediately to the Food Supervisor, the Site Manager or a member of the Committee of Management. An investigation is required. For a serious case, it will be necessary to complete an Incident Report Form.