



FOOD SAFETY GUIDELINES*

Safe steps in food handling, preparation, storage, and serving are essential to prevent foodborne illness and maintain proper hygiene. Follow these protocols to help you have a safe and well-planned event.

FOOD PREPARATION & STORAGE

- Preparation of samples should be done on smooth, clean surfaces (such as tables) that are protected from customer traffic. Consider having a table dedicated to food prep to give you more space and help keep your display area organized.
- Fruits and vegetables, if used, must be rinsed thoroughly in clean water. If a potable water supply not be available on-site, rinse products in advance and store in disposable food bags.
- Bring several clean knives and cutting boards. These items should be stored in protective plastic containers, food storage bags, or wrapped in plastic wrap.
- Slicing and food preparation should be done on clean cutting boards. Every two hours, replace soiled knives, cutting boards, etc. with clean items. Store items in use in closed containers.
- If you are cutting and preparing food, have a sanitizer bucket at your food station that contains a bleach and cold water solution (1 teaspoon to 1 gallon of water) and is positioned off the ground. Keep a towel or cloth in the bucket to use for wiping down blades and cutting surfaces. Do not use non-chlorine or scented bleach. Change the solution every 2 hours.
- Store soiled items in a closed bag or container to avoid attracting insects.

FOOD SERVING

- All food should be protected from customer handling, coughing, sneezing, or other contamination by wrapping, platter covers, or other effective barriers.
- Wear a face mask that fits well to prevent spread of respiratory illnesses such as the flu or COVID.
- Display food samples on clean plates, platters, or trays.
- Used utensils, paper cups or bowls, toothpicks, and napkins to distribute food samples.

MAINTAIN PROPER TEMPERATURES

- Before serving time, keep cold food at or below 40 °F. Place in a cooler with a cold source, such as ice or frozen gel packs. When serving, keep food cold by nesting dishes in bowls of ice or use small serving trays and replace often.
- Keep hot food hot — at or above 140 °F. Place cooked food in chafing dishes, preheated steam tables, warming trays, and/or slow cookers. When serving, keep food hot by using chafing dishes, slow cookers, and/or warming trays.
- Keep coolers closed. Once on-site, limit the number of times the cooler is opened so you can to keep the contents cold longer.
- Food samples should not sit out for longer than 2 hours — or 1 hour if the outdoor temperature is above 90° F. If food sits out longer than this, it's best to discard it.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

- Avoid bare-hand contact with food by wearing disposable gloves and using suitable utensils such as spatulas, spoons, and tongs.
- Wear clean clothes, and, if you have long hair, tie it back.
- Wash hands frequently when cutting, serving, and handling exposed food. ALWAYS wash hands thoroughly after using the restroom, coughing, sneezing, handling soiled equipment, or engaging in any other activity that contaminates your hands.
- If you don't have access to nearby hand-washing facilities or if you are outdoors, simply use a water jug, a soap dispenser, and paper towels setup in your area — or use moist, disposable towelettes for cleaning your hands.

Information gathered from the following sources:

1. Michigan Department of Agriculture: Guidelines for Providing Safe Food Samples (2015)
2. U.S. Food and Drug Administration: Food Facts; Eating Outdoors, Handling Food Safely (2018)
3. USDA's Safe Food Handling: 7 Food Safety Steps for Successful Community Meals (2010)

**This document provides an overview of food safety guidelines and is not a fully comprehensive resource. Last updated February 2022.*