

GUIDELINES FOR SERVING FOOD AT EVENTS AND MEETINGS

Serving food at university events or meetings requires adherence to safety and food handling best practices to ensure the well-being of attendees and compliance with university policies. This guide provides essential information to help minimize risks and maintain high standards of safety and hygiene. This document is intended for those serving or coordinating food at events and is not a comprehensive food handling manual. It should be used in conjunction with other event guidelines outlined in the university's risk management framework.

Food Handling and Safety Guidelines

1. General Food Safety

- **Personal Hygiene:**
 - Wash hands thoroughly before and during food handling.
 - Avoid direct hand contact with food; use gloves, tongs, or serving utensils.
- **Food Preparation and Storage:**
 - Ensure food is cooked to safe internal temperatures (e.g., meats and poultry to their recommended levels).
 - Maintain cold food at or below 4°C (40°F) and hot food at or above 60°C (140°F).
 - Store food in covered containers and avoid leaving it out for extended periods.
- **Preventing Cross-Contamination:**
 - Use separate utensils and serving materials for raw and cooked food.
 - Clean and sanitize serving tools and surfaces frequently.
- **Allergen Awareness:**
 - Clearly label foods with ingredient lists, highlighting potential allergens (e.g., peanuts, shellfish, dairy).
 - Position foods containing allergens away from other items to prevent cross-contact.

2. Serving Guidelines

- **Display and Serving:**
 - Ensure food is displayed on clean, elevated surfaces.
 - Provide napkins, plates, and utensils for attendees to use.
 - Serve food in individual portions whenever possible.
- **Leftovers:**
 - Discard uneaten food that has been served or exposed to potential contamination.

3. Responding to Incidents

- Keep a first aid kit readily available for minor injuries.
- Clean up spills immediately to avoid slips or falls.
- Document injuries that occur during food service using this [report form](#)
- Any on-campus incidents or emergencies, contact Campus Security:
 - **905.721.3211 (mobile phone)**
 - **Ext. 2400 (Dial 2400 on any campus phone)**
- For more information, visit the [incident reporting website](#)

4. Waste Management

- **Waste Bins:**
 - Place clearly marked bins for recycling, compost, and general waste near serving areas.
 - Provide bins of appropriate size to handle the amount of waste expected during the event.

5. Providing Alternative Options

- **Dietary Variety:**
 - Offer vegetarian, vegan, and gluten-free choices to accommodate diverse dietary needs, including options for those with allergies or religious dietary restrictions.
 - Consider providing halal and kosher food options for attendees with religious dietary requirements.
- **Allergen Information:**
 - Include clear signage or menus indicating which items meet specific dietary requirements (e.g., "Gluten-Free," "Vegan," etc.).

6. Homemade Food

- **Ingredient and Allergen Labeling:**
 - Homemade food must be labeled with all ingredients and potential allergens.
- **Food Safety Responsibility:**
 - Participants are responsible for the safety and hygiene of the food they bring.
 - Food must be securely transported in sealed containers to avoid contamination.
 - Ensure proper hygiene practices are followed during preparation, including handwashing and clean utensils.
 - Ensure homemade food is stored at appropriate temperatures – hot foods at or above 60°C (140°F), cold foods at or 4°C (40°F).

Event Space and Equipment Safety

1. Safe Work Environment

- Ensure the event space is free of clutter, with clear walkways.
- Provide adequate room for food serving stations and attendee movement.

2. Equipment Use

- Inspect all serving equipment for cleanliness and proper function.
- Use only university-approved appliances for warming or serving food.
- Ensure electrical appliances are plugged in safely and inspect cords for damage.

Fire Safety and Emergency Preparedness

- Identify the location of fire extinguishers and fire blankets.
- Avoid using flammable materials or open flames near food service areas.
- Never leave warming appliances or serving stations unattended.

Compliance and Permissions

- Follow all university event policies, including obtaining necessary permissions and certificates (e.g., catering COI).
- Review the Ontario Tech Food Services Guidelines to ensure compliance.

External Resources

- Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care guidelines for food safety:
 - [Operational Approaches for Food Safety Guideline](#)

Risk management is a shared responsibility. By adhering to these guidelines and proactively identifying potential hazards, event organizers and participants contribute to creating a safe and inclusive environment for all attendees.

If you have any inquiries regarding this document, please contact the Office of Risk Management at orm@ontariotechu.ca