

Food Safety Guidelines for Events

Guidelines should be reviewed by the event organizer at the time the event is submitted to the Buckeye Event Network (BEN) or Scheduling Office

These guidelines pertain to groups planning to give away food for free or for a non-required donation at their events. Ohio State University encourages all groups to use licensed caterers for all food preparation and service. Bake sales are not permitted under any circumstance. Only pre-packaged baked goods may be sold. Groups SELLING food, or events that charge admission and offer food, must apply for a temporary food vendor license through the Columbus Public Health department http://publichealth.columbus.gov/uploadedFiles/Public_Health/Content_Editors/Environmental_Health/Food_Protection_for_Businesses/Food_Safety_at_Temp_Event.pdf and follow all applicable laws and regulations. In addition, be sure to confirm the food policies set forth by the department or facility you are reserving the space from as their specific requirements may differ slightly from these guidelines.

Groups are solely responsible for food safety at their events. These guidelines are intended as an informational resource only. Ohio State University does not warrant or certify the safety of any food served by groups in accordance with these guidelines. Under no circumstances shall The Ohio State University or its trustees, employees or agents assume liability for any food provided by groups at their events. Consult your event coordinator for more information.

All groups serving or providing food at events should:

- Keep the food menu simple, and avoid potentially hazardous foods (meats, eggs, dairy products, potato salad, cut fruits, and vegetables, etc).
- Use disposable gloves, tongs, napkins, deli tissues or other tools to handle food. Food servers should not touch food with their bare hands. Only healthy workers can prepare and serve food. Workers must wear clean outer garments and must not smoke in the food area. Have hand sanitizer on site. Water stations may also be rented from outside vendors. Appoint a “person in charge” to be available at all times to monitor the food operation.
- Have extra utensils on hand. Wash equipment and utensils in hot, soapy water, rinse in hot water, and sanitize in a bleach/water solution of one capful of bleach per gallon of water. Utensils and dishes should be air dried.
- Use hot and/or cold containers for holding ALL food once it's prepared. Use a food thermometer to check cooking and cold temperatures of all food to ensure compliance with recommended guidelines. Refer to temperature guidelines in the document above from Columbus Public Health.
- Store ice used for drinks separately. Ice used to cool cans and bottles should not be used in drink cups. Use a scoop to serve ice, not the hands or cup.
- Keep foods covered to protect them from insects. Trash should be properly handled and arranged through Facilities Operations and Development. Protect the area from any food or grease spills. Tidy up the area after the event and dispose of all garbage in the proper location.
- Determine an action plan for the food operation when there is bad weather or power outage.
- Display a disclaimer at the event that the University is not responsible for the safety of the food or food preparation.

The Top 6 Causes of Food Poisoning:

- Poor personal hygiene and sick food employees
- Not keeping cold foods at 41°F
- Not keeping hot foods at 135°F
- Not reheating foods to 165°F
- Not cooling hot foods the right way
- Contaminated raw foods and ingredients

Clean Hands For Safe Food:

- Use soap and water
- Wash all surfaces including: back of hands, wrists, between fingers, under fingernails
- Rinse your hands well
- Dry hands with a paper towel
- Turn off the water using paper towel instead of your bare hands