Mass Feeding for Emergency Operations

FINDING AND EQUIPPING A MASS FEEDING SITE

The ideal site for a mass feeding operation is a licensed food establishment. Any site used must have suitable and adequate food service equipment.

Satisfactory sites might include a school lunchroom, a church, or a club facility where large meals are regularly prepared and served.

The site should include adequate refrigeration equipment, large ranges, sufficient work surfaces, adequate dishwashing areas, and handwashing facilities for staff and guests.

**Drinking water**

If your water has been contaminated or if you are unsure of its safety:

- Use only boiled or bottled water.
- Use only commercially packaged ice from approved sources.

**Food safety**

Keep perishable foods at room temperature for periods of 30 minutes or less. Otherwise, keep all perishable foods in refrigerators that can be maintained at 41° Fahrenheit or colder.

- Do not serve potentially hazardous foods such as ground meat or egg salad sandwiches, chicken or other fowl, potato salad and cream-filled desserts and pastries.
- Appropriate meal items include peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, smoked meat or cheese, hot soup or stews, and canned or peeled fruits and vegetables.
- Home-Prepared Foods
  Do not serve home-prepared meals or hot dishes. Non-hazardous homemade foods such as baked cookies, bars, fruit pies or cakes are acceptable.

**Sanitizing cooking and eating utensils**

Use disposable dishes and utensils whenever possible. Do not reuse plastic or paper items. If you must use washable dishes and utensils, clean them in a standard three-compartment sink, or a sink equipped with three separate containers that can serve as an improvised three-compartment sink.

Use the following procedure to sanitize your utensils:

1. Wash all items in the first sink, using a household detergent solution in clean, hot water.
2. Rinse in the second sink, in clean, hot water. Remove all detergent residues, to ensure that the final sanitizing step will be effective.
3. Sanitize your utensils in the third sink. Use a solution made with one tablespoon of bleach for each gallon of water. This will yield a chlorine concentration of 200 parts per million, which should be adequate to sanitize your dishes, even if the water you are using is contaminated. Make sure your dishwashing water is clear and free of sludge or sediment.
4. Air dry all dishes and utensils.

**Garbage handling**

Dispose of garbage frequently. If the local community disposal facility is not accessible, use a remote area for temporary storage. Clean these temporary storage areas.
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thoroughly, and transfer garbage to the regular facility when it reopens.

Food service workers
All persons volunteering to work in your mass feeding center should be properly oriented before they begin work.

Personal hygiene for food service workers:
- Food workers should wash their hands frequently, particularly after using the toilet, or after handling materials or equipment that may be contaminated.
- Keep yourself, and your clothing clean. Cleanliness is essential for all people who work in the mass feeding facility.
- People with fever, vomiting, diarrhea, or respiratory illnesses should not be allowed to work in a food service operation.
- No one with cuts, burns or other skin abrasions should be allowed to handle food unless wounds are covered with waterproof dressings or gloves.

The right way to wash hands
5. Wet hands with clean water.
6. Put soap on hands and wrists.
7. Keep fingers pointing down.
8. Rub soapy hands together for 20 seconds.
9. Wash all side of hands, fingers, wrists and thumbs.

Prevent bare hand contact with food
People in a disaster can be at greater risk for getting sick from unsafe food. One way of keeping food safe is for food workers to wear gloves while preparing food.

It is important that gloves be used the right way:
- Food workers should use utensils such as tongs, scoops, deli papers, or single-use gloves to keep from touching food whenever possible.

- It is very important to wear gloves when touching foods that will not be cooked (ready-to-eat food) such as sandwiches, carrot sticks and cookies.
- Food workers should wear single-use gloves when they are touching foods that have to be handled a lot. This includes making sandwiches, slicing vegetables, or arranging food on a platter.

It is also important to remember that both hands and gloves must always be clean.
- Always wash hands before putting on clean gloves.
- Change gloves that get ripped or torn.
- Change gloves that get dirty.
- Never wash or reuse gloves.
- Change gloves when you change jobs, such as when you move from making sandwiches to cutting raw vegetables.
- Throw gloves away after you use them.
- Wash your hands after taking gloves off.

Supervision
If possible, someone who has experience with large food service operations should supervise your mass feeding operation. Possible supervisors include school or institutional food service managers, or people who have worked as cooks, employees or managers in large restaurants.

For more information, contact:
Minnesota Department of Health Food, Pools, and Lodging Services
651-201-4500
Email: health.foodlodging@state.mn.us
Website: www.health.state.mn.us/foodsafety

To obtain this information in a different format, call 651-201-5000 or 1-800-657-3908

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