

Food Safety Guidelines for Onsite Feeding Locations, Food Shelves and Food Banks



Produced By:

State and Local Public Health Agencies and Community Food Providers



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Introduction

In recent years, there has been increased interest in how to provide adequate amounts of safe, nutritious food to people who lack the means to acquire it themselves. These guidelines have been developed to provide a method of redirecting surplus supplies of food, in a safe manner, to those in need following consistent and uniform interpretation of health codes. They are not a substitute for the Minnesota Food Code or other applicable statutes, rules or local ordinances, which may apply to these facilities.

These guidelines were developed in collaboration with community food providers (food banks and onsite feeding locations), the Minnesota Department of Health, local health agencies and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA). They provide minimum food safety measures that must be in place to make sure that food at these locations does not cause foodborne illness. These are the minimum standards and are based on the Minnesota Food Code for onsite feeding locations, food shelves, and pantries and the Current Good Manufacturing Practice for Manufacturing, Packing, or Holding Human Food (CGMPs) federal regulation adopted as Minnesota law for food banks. However, local agencies may have more restrictive requirements in local ordinances for onsite feeding locations, food shelves, and pantries.

The MDA has jurisdiction over food banks. Operators should contact the agency having regulatory authority for the establishment location to obtain licensing and building requirements. The Minnesota Department of Health or the Minnesota Department of Agriculture can be contacted for information regarding the agency having regulatory authority for a specific location. Agency contact information is listed in Section K of this guide.

Bound copies of the Minnesota Food Code, Chapter 4626, are available at:

The Minnesota Book Store
117 University Avenue, St. Paul, Minn.
(612) 297-3000 or (800) 657-3757

A link to the CGMPs is available on both the MDA and the Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Web sites.

Definitions

Onsite feeding location means a non-profit organization that:

- Operates with the intent of preparing/serving food to the hungry at reduced or no cost;
- Receives, holds, and processes food to be consumed on the premises; and
- Is analogous to a restaurant.

Food bank means a non-profit organization that:

- Operates with the intent of distributing food to other hunger relief organizations;
- Receives, holds, packages, repackages and distributes food to food shelves and onsite feeding locations. Food is not prepared onsite; and
- Is analogous to a manufacturer/processor, warehouse, and/or food salvage operation.

Food shelf/pantry means a non-profit organization that:

- Operates with the intent of distributing prepackaged food and personal care items to individuals and families at reduced or no cost;
- Receives, holds, and distributes prepackaged food and personal care items; and
- Is analogous to a grocery/convenience store.

Note: Food operations may consist of one or more of the categories above. Requirements will vary based on the nature of the operation. Requirements for onsite feeding locations are generally more restrictive, due to the increased potential of food contamination. If there is food preparation or repackaging, the regulatory authority should be contacted for equipment and facility requirements.

Employee Training

To minimize the risk of serving unsafe foods, it is very important that employees and volunteers are properly trained. Onsite feeding locations and other facilities preparing food must have:

- At least one State Certified Food Manager
- A designated person in charge during all hours of operation

The designated person in charge and/or the certified food manager is responsible for ensuring that the employees and volunteers preparing and serving food are adequately trained in safe food handling, including, but is not limited to:

- Obtaining food from approved sources;
- Proper personal hygiene practices;
- Proper handwashing procedures;
- Time and temperature control for potentially hazardous foods;
- Safe sanitization of equipment and utensils;
- Cross contamination prevention; and
- Approved salvaging methods, if applicable.

Food Safety

Foodborne Illness

Eating improperly processed, stored or handled foods may cause foodborne illness. Extra care must be taken to ensure sound food safety practices from preparation through transportation to receiving and service.

Bacteria, viruses, or parasites mainly cause foodborne illness. Many foodborne illnesses are a result of bacteria or viruses, which are microorganisms or "germs" that occur either naturally in foods or are spread as a result of poor practices, such as cross contaminating foods or improper handling during food preparation. Bacteria can rapidly multiply under the right conditions.

Bacteria need:

- Nutrients (Food), high protein foods, milk and dairy products, meat, fish, poultry, and cooked pasta;
- Moisture, which is in the food or added to the food;
- Time, bacteria need time to reproduce, some bacteria can double in number in approximately 20 minutes; and
- Temperature, the DANGER ZONE (41°F to 140°F), is the temperature range that is ideal for bacterial growth.

Handwashing is the key to preventing the spread of disease. Food workers must wash their hands using soap and running water, vigorously rubbing the hands together to be sure soap contacts all surfaces of the hands. Handwashing needs to occur for at least 20 seconds. Hands must be washed: immediately before beginning food preparation; during food preparation, as often as necessary to remove food soil and contamination and to prevent cross contamination when changing tasks; after using the toilet room; and after engaging in other activities that contaminate hands.

Infections that cause diarrhea or vomiting can be transmitted from food workers to customers. To help prevent illness transmission:

- Employees and volunteers must report to the manager of any incident of diarrhea, vomiting, or jaundice (yellow skin or eye color).
- Food employees who are ill with vomiting or diarrhea must be excluded from working in the establishment.

Potentially Hazardous Food

Potentially hazardous food includes foods that consist in whole or in part of: milk or milk products, eggs; meat; poultry; fish; shellfish; or other ingredients, in a form capable of supporting rapid and progressive growth of infectious or toxigenic microorganisms. These do not generally include foods that have a pH of 4.6 or lower or a water activity (a_w) value of 0.85 or lower.

Examples of potentially hazardous food include:

- Meat and meat products;
- Dairy products;
- Eggs and egg products;
- Seafood and seafood products;
- Tofu products;
- All soups;
- Sauces and gravies;
- Cooked rice, grains and cereal (e.g., moisture added);
- Cream-or meat-filled pastries;
- Pies (including meat and pumpkin pies, but not including fruit pies);

- Seed sprouts; and
- Cut melons

Examples of non-potentially hazardous foods include:

- Dried goods, (e.g., sugar, flour, etc.);
- Food products that do not require refrigeration;
- Whole, fresh fruit;
- Whole, fresh vegetables;
- Baked goods (not cream-or meat-filled); and
- Condiments (e.g., salt, sugar, ketchup, relish, mustard, jam).

Do's and Don'ts for Sources of Food

All potentially hazardous and non-potentially hazardous processed foods received by feeding locations must come from sources approved by regulatory authority (e.g., licensed restaurants, approved food processors). Feeding locations may also use donated foods that are not potentially hazardous. These foods do not pose the same health risk as the potentially hazardous foods listed below.

DO ACCEPT

- Dried goods, (e.g., sugar, flour, etc);
- Food products that do not require refrigeration;
- Whole, fresh fruit;
- Whole, fresh vegetables;
- Baked goods (not cream-meat-filled);
- (Unopened) commercially packaged or canned foods in sound condition; and
- Condiments (e.g., salt, sugar, ketchup, relish, mustard, jams and jellies).

DON'T ACCEPT

- Leftover food from a patron's table;
- Swollen, leaking, rusty, severely dented food containers;
- Unpasteurized dairy products;
- Spoiled foods;
- Processed potentially hazardous foods prepared in a private home;
- Home-canned foods of any kind;
- Potentially hazardous foods that were not stored/maintained at a temperature below 41°F or above 140°F;
- Ingredients that have not been stored according to the manufacturers' instructions;
- Physically or chemically contaminated foods;
- Ungraded/uncandled shell eggs;
- Custom processed meats or poultry; and
- Distressed foods damaged by fire, flood, or accident, unless licensed and approved by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

WILD GAME

Wild game animals lawfully taken and donated according to part 6214.0100 and Minnesota Statutes, section 97A.505, and donated to a charitable organization registered under Minnesota Statutes, chapter 309, are approved if:

- wild game are lawfully taken
- only pure wild game is donated;
- the intact animal is properly cleaned, stored, and processed in an establishment that complies with Minnesota Rules chapters 1540 and 1545, and Minnesota Statutes, chapters 28A, 31, 31A, and 157 as those rules and laws relate to the licensing (of food establishments), processing, and storage of food;
- evisceration was accomplished within two hours after harvest;
- game is cooked to at least 165°F (74°C); and
- a written sanitation standard operating procedure that includes the entire process used to eliminate the possibility of cross-contamination from wild game processing to retail products is implemented and available for inspection.

In addition, a receipt must be obtained from the donor at the time of transfer for donated wild game. The receipt must contain:

- the name and address of the donor;
- the name and address of the recipient;
- the date of transfer;
- a description of gift, including number and species; and
- a license number under which the animal was taken.

A food bank may accept donated game and distribute it to an onsite feeding program by complying with these requirements. A food bank should not distribute donated wild game to a food shelf and a food shelf should not accept donated wild game for distribution to a consumer unless prior written approval is received from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

Control Measures for Potentially Hazardous Food

- Maintain refrigerated foods at 41°F or below.
- Thaw foods in one of the following ways:
 - Under cool continuous flowing water;
 - Through the cooking process;
 - In a microwave as part of the cooking process; or
 - Under refrigeration at 41°F or below.
- Reheat foods to at least 165° F before placing in hot holding.

- Maintain hot holding temperature at 140° F or above.
- Cook foods thoroughly, reaching proper cooking temperatures as specified in the Food Code, for the required amount of time to kill pathogens.
- Cool cooked foods rapidly from 140° to 70° F within two hours and from 70° to 41° F within the following four hours. This may require the use of shallow pans and frequent stirring.
- Thoroughly clean and sanitize utensils and food contact surfaces.
- Eliminate cross contamination. Cross contamination is the transfer of contaminants by way of food-to-food, food-to-surface-to-food, and by employees contacting both raw and ready-to-eat foods without proper hand washing or use of suitable utensils. For example, cross contamination may occur when raw ready-to-eat vegetables contact a cutting board that had raw chicken on it and was not cleaned and sanitized between uses. Precautions to prevent cross contamination include the following:
 - Separate raw foods from ready-to-eat foods and/or cooked foods;
 - Wash, rinse, and sanitize cutting boards and food contact surfaces at workstations between uses when working with different foods;
 - Separate employee jobs to eliminate work with raw and ready-to-eat foods at the same time.

Food Delivery and Transportation

Vehicles used to transport food must be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition to protect food from contamination. A vehicle used for transporting refuse or garbage may not be used for transporting food. Appropriate hot and cold holding equipment must be provided to maintain temperatures of potentially hazardous food during transportation at 140°F or greater for hot foods and 41°F or less for cold foods. If food temperatures cannot be maintained then mechanical refrigeration or hot holding equipment is required.

Food Salvage

Food banks desiring to salvage distressed foods must contact the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Food salvage operations must be licensed and inspected to ensure compliance with Minnesota salvage law and rules. Distressed food means any food, the label of which has been lost, defaced, or obliterated, or food that has been subjected to possible damage due to accident, fire, flood, adverse weather, or to any other similar cause, or food that is suspected of having been rendered unsafe or unsuitable for food use. Food salvage operations are regulated under Minnesota Statute 31.495.

Any cans with the following must be discarded:

- Sharp dents
- Dents on seams on side or at junction of side and end
- Swollen or bulging
- Pitted rust or leaking
- Missing or illegible labels

Any jars with the following must be discarded:

- Loose cap or bulged safety seal
- Inner seal or tamper resistant tape missing or broken
- Leaking, cracked, or chipped containers
- Missing or illegible labels
- Unusual product separation or discoloration

Food Package Dates

Types of Dates

- A "**Sell-By**" date tells the store how long to display the product for sale. You should buy the product before the date expires.
- A "**Best if Used By (or Before)**" date is recommended for best flavor or quality. It is not a purchase or safety date.
- A "**Use-By**" date is the last date recommended for the use of the product while at peak quality. The manufacturer, packer or distributor of the product on the basis of product analysis, tests, or other information, selects the use-by date. It is also based on the conditions of handling, storage, preparation and use printed on the label.

Safety After Date Expires

Except for "use-by" dates, product dates don't always refer to home storage and use after purchase. Freezing before expiration date can extend expiration date. But even if the date expires during home storage, a product should be safe, wholesome and of good quality – if handled properly and kept at 41° F or below.

Infant Formula

Do not buy or use infant formula after its use-by date. Federal regulations require a use-by date on the product label of infant formula. If consumed by that date, the formula must contain not less than the quantity of each nutrient as described on the label. Formula must maintain an acceptable quality to pass through an ordinary bottle nipple. If stored too long, formula can separate and clog the nipple.

Dates on Egg Cartons

If the egg carton has an expiration date printed on it, such as "EXP May 1," be sure that the date has not passed when the eggs are purchased. That is the last day the store may sell the eggs as fresh. All shell eggs obtained from any source including, but not limited to a private farm, must be cleaned, candled, graded, and properly labeled and dated.

Storage Times

Ready to eat potentially hazardous foods prepared in the establishment or an opened original manufacturer's container must be dated and consumed within seven days of preparation or opening.

Pest Control

Interior receptacles and waste handling units for refuse, recyclables, and returnables and for use with materials containing food residue shall be durable, cleanable, insect- and rodent-resistant, leakproof, and nonabsorbent.

Outside refuse must be kept in leak-proof, non-absorbent containers, which should be kept covered with tight fitting lids.

Insects, rodents, and other pests must be controlled to minimize their presence on the premises. Inspect incoming shipments of food and supplies. Inspect the premises for pests and eliminate harborage areas. Properly seal all holes, gaps, and other openings to the outside to prevent pests from entering.

Construction/Maintenance of Physical Facilities

Food banks not preparing foods must meet the Current Good Manufacturing Practice in Manufacturing, Packing, or Holding Human Food (CGMPs) requirements for building construction and operations. The CGMPs are in the Code of Federal Regulations Title 21-Food and Drugs, Part 110, and have been adopted by reference into Minnesota law. These requirements include but are not limited to:

- Floors, walls and ceiling must be constructed to be easily cleanable and in good repair.
- Adequate lighting must be provided in handwashing areas, dressing and locker rooms, toilet rooms and all areas where food is examined, stored or processed.
- Adequate ventilation must be provided to minimize odors and vapors.
- Screening or other protection must be provided for pest control when necessary.
- Buildings, fixtures and other physical facilities must be kept in good repair.
- Accessible toilet facilities must be provided for employees.

- Handwashing facilities must be provided where good sanitary practices require workers to wash their hands.

The Minnesota Food Code requirements for food shelves, onsite feeding locations and other facilities preparing food include but are not limited to the following:

- Floors, walls, and ceilings that are smooth and easily cleanable and in good repair.
- Adequate shielded or shatter resistant lighting.
- Accessible toilet room with a handwash sink, hot/cold water, soap, fingernail brush, single use hand towels, toilet paper, and a covered garbage.
- Food must not be stored under plumbing pipes or other pipes that could leak their contents onto food or food preparation surfaces.
- All food products must be stored at least six inches (15 cm) above the floor to prevent contamination.

Less restrictive building, physical facility, and equipment requirements may apply to facilities such as food banks, food shelves, and food pantries that are not preparing, repackaging, or salvaging food. These facilities should contact the regulatory authority for specific requirements.

Equipment

For onsite feeding locations, food shelves/pantries and other facilities preparing food, when upgrading existing or purchasing new/used, all food and beverage equipment must meet the applicable standards of NSF International and have the identifiable marking from NSF. Used equipment must be in good repair and in good operating condition. Existing equipment that does not provide adequate public health protection must be upgraded. When upgrading equipment to meet NSF standards the suggested priority for upgrading should be, refrigerators, freezers, cooking and hot holding equipment.

- Food service equipment must meet NSF International Standards.
- Handwash sink with soap, fingernail brush, single use towels.
- Three compartment sink with integral drain boards to wash, rinse, sanitize, air-dry, or warewash machine with sanitizing rinse.
- Refrigeration units must maintain foods at 41°F or below. Provide thermometers in warmest location of units.
- Freezers must maintain foods frozen.
- Hot holding units must maintain foods at 140°F or above.
- Accurate thermometers must be provided to measure food temperatures i.e. metal stem.
- NSF approved hood above cooking equipment and dishwash machines. Ventilation must be enough so that condensation does not form and drip onto food or food preparation surfaces.
- NSF approved shelving that is smooth easily cleanable and bottom shelf at least six inches above the floor in food preparation areas.
- Equipment, utensils, and surfaces that come in contact with food must be smooth, nonabsorbent, non-toxic, and shall be easily cleanable.

- All single-service articles (disposable paper/plastic plates, cutlery, etc.) must be used only once.

Food shelves/pantries that are not preparing or repackaging foods are not required to have NSF shelving. Retail shelving and refrigeration and freezer display cases shall be designed for commercial use and constructed to be durable and to retain their characteristic qualities under normal use conditions.

Food banks must meet the requirements of the CGMPs. The requirements include: general provisions, buildings & facilities, equipment, production & process controls, and defect action levels. Food banks repackaging food are classified as manufacturer/processors. Food banks that handle distressed food shall also meet the requirements of Minnesota food salvage rules and law. Contact the MDA for additional information on these requirements.

Contacts

Minnesota Department of Agriculture
90 West Plato Boulevard
St. Paul, MN 55107
www.mda.state.mn.us
651.297-2200 or 800.967-2474

The Minnesota Book Store
117 University Avenue, Room 110A
St. Paul, MN 55155
651.297-3000 or 800.657-3757

Minnesota Department of Health
Division of Environmental Health, EHS
P.O. Box 64975
St. Paul, MN 55164-0975
www.health.state.mn.us
651.201-4500

Gateway to government food safety information:
www.foodsafety.gov

United States Department of Agriculture:
www.usda.gov

Emergency Food Shelf Network
6714 Walker Street
St. Louis Park, MN 55426
www.emergencyfoodshelf.org
952.925-6265

United States Department of Health and Human
Services Food and Drug Administration:
www.fda.gov

Reporting Illness in Food Workers

Food Worker Responsibilities

You MAY NOT WORK if you have:

- X** Diarrhea
- X** Vomiting

If you have been told you have one of the following infections, you must report the infection to your manager:

- E. coli 0157:H7
- Salmonella
- Shigella
- Hepatitis A

Because infections that cause diarrhea or vomiting can be transmitted from food workers to customers, you may temporarily be given work assignments that do not put customers at risk of infection.

Reporting Policy

You must report any incident of diarrhea, vomiting, jaundice (yellow skin or eye color) to your manager. You must also report to your manager if you have an open, infected wound so precautions can be taken to prevent food contamination.

For more information, contact:

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture at 651-296-2627 or visit the Minnesota Department of Health's Web site at (www.health.state.mn.us).

Manager Responsibilities

Ill Employee Policy

Exclude all ill employees from the establishment while they have:

- X** Diarrhea
- X** Vomiting

Restrict an employee from working with food or clean equipment, including utensils, if the person is infected with:

- E. coli 0157:H7
- Salmonella
- Shigella
- Hepatitis A

Notify the regulatory authority of any employee infected with any of the disease-causing organisms listed above.

Record all employee reports of diarrhea or vomiting. Upon request, report these illnesses to the regulatory authority.

Customer Complaint Policy

Notify the regulatory authority of complaints from customers who report becoming ill with diarrhea or vomiting after eating at the establishment.

Notify the regulatory authority of complaints from customers who test positive for *E. coli 0157:H7*, *Salmonella*, *Shigella*, or *Hepatitis A* after eating at the establishment.

Notify the following person in your establishment of any employee illness or customer complaint:

Name _____

Title _____

For further information contact the following MDH district offices:

Bemidji	◆	(218) 755-3820
Duluth	◆	(218) 723-4642
Fergus Falls	◆	(218) 739-7585
Mankato	◆	(507) 389-2501
Marshall	◆	(507) 537-7151
Metro	◆	(651)201-4500
Rochester	◆	(507) 285-7289
St. Cloud	◆	(320) 255-4216

To request this document in another format, call 651-215-0700, TDD 651-215-0707, or for greater Minnesota through the Minnesota Relay Service at 1-800-627-3529.



Environmental Health Services
 121 East 7th Place, Suite 220
 St. Paul, MN 55101
 651-201-4500
www.health.state.mn.us

Person In Charge

Managers and employees share in the responsibility to use safe food handling practices that reduce the potential for foodborne illness. Trained staff will be able to identify and take corrective action to eliminate high-risk practices that increase the potential for foodborne illness.

The food code requires a designated person to be in charge at the food establishment during all hours of operation. The person in charge is responsible for assuring safe food handling practices and must be able to demonstrate knowledge of foodborne disease prevention.

The person in charge must demonstrate knowledge of:

- ➔ The relationship between foodborne illness prevention and personal hygiene, control of cross-contamination and establishment maintenance.
- ➔ Prevention of the transmission of foodborne disease by a food employee who has a disease or infectious medical condition.
- ➔ The usual symptoms, typical incubation periods and modes of transmissions for the most common foodborne diseases.
- ➔ The hazards involved in the consumption of raw or undercooked meat, poultry, eggs and fish.
- ➔ Protecting the water source from backflow and cross connections.
- ➔ The required temperatures and times for safe cold holding, hot holding, cooling, cooking, reheating and transportation of potentially hazardous foods.
- ➔ The relationship between food safety and providing necessary equipment.
- ➔ The procedure for cleaning and sanitizing utensils and other food contact surfaces.

- ➔ Identifying toxic materials and ensuring safe storage, handling and disposal.
- ➔ If a HACCP plan is required, identify critical control points and explain the HACCP plan.

The person in charge must also ensure that:

- ➔ Employee handwashing is monitored.
- ➔ Employees properly cook potentially hazardous foods.
- ➔ Cooking temperatures are routinely monitored.
- ➔ Proper methods are used to rapidly cool potentially hazardous foods and monitor cooling.
- ➔ Proper methods are used to sanitize utensils and equipment.
- ➔ Ill employees are restricted or excluded as appropriate.

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Bemidji	◆	(218) 755-3820
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Handwashing

Handwashing is the single most effective means of preventing the spread of bacteria and viruses, which can cause infections and foodborne illness.

Employees can be a significant source of harmful microorganisms. Proper handwashing can be the most effective action workers can take to control direct and indirect contamination of food, utensils, and equipment.

When To Wash Hands:

- ➔ Before starting to work with food, utensils, or equipment.
- ➔ During food preparation, as needed.
- ➔ When switching between raw foods and ready-to-eat foods.
- ➔ After handling soiled utensils and equipment.
- ➔ After coughing, sneezing, using a tissue, or using tobacco products.
- ➔ After eating and drinking.
- ➔ After touching bare human body parts.
- ➔ After handling animals.
- ➔ After using the toilet, wash hands at a handsink in the bathroom; and again when returning to work.

Correct Way to Wash Hands-- Always Follow These Six Steps!

Before washing your hands, remove any jewelry and only wash your hands in sinks designated for

handwashing. Do not wash your hands in utensil, food preparation or service sinks.

1. Roll up sleeves and wet hands with warm water.
2. Using soap, not a hand sanitizer solution, work up a soapy lather that covers hands and forearms.
3. Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds; make sure to wash palms, back of hands, between fingers, and forearms.
4. Use a fingernail brush to clean under fingernails and between fingers.
5. Rinse hands and forearms in warm water. Keep fingertips pointed down while rinsing.
6. Dry hands with single-use paper towels or cloth roller towel. Turn off the faucet with paper towels to prevent re-contamination of hands.

For Further Information Contact the Following MDH District Offices:

Bemidji	◆	(218) 755-3820
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