Food Safety Tips for Your Student Organization

Practicing proper food handling techniques will protect your organization and yourself from foodborne bacteria and cross-contamination that can lead to illness.

The information below has been adapted from the Food and Drug Administration. http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodborneIllnessContaminants/BuyStoreServeSafeFood/ucm109899.htm

General Tips

- Always wash your hands before touching any food.
- Always wash your hands after touching uncooked meat, seafood and poultry.
- Clean all surfaces with moist disposable antibacterial towelettes.
- Use clean utensils and plates to prepare and serve food.
- Rinse all fruit and vegetables, including those with skins and rinds under water before eating. Packaged fruits and vegetables labeled “ready-to-eat,” “washed,” or “triple washed” do not need to be washed.
- Wash all used cutting boards and utensils in hot, soapy water.
- Remember the “Danger Zone” (temperatures between 40°F and 140°F) is the temperature frame in which bacteria in food can double quickly!

Packing and Transporting Food

- Keep cold food below 40°F and hot food above 140°F.
- When packing organize your food:
  - Pack beverages in one cooler and perishable items in another, this way you can reduce the amount of time that the perishable items are exposed to the warm outdoor temperature.
  - Wrap meat, poultry and seafood securely and individually, and place in a separate container in order to keep their juices from contaminating other food items. Consider packing these items while they are still frozen so that they stay colder longer.
  - Keep your container in the air-conditioned car rather than the trunk.

Serving Food

- Keep food at proper temperatures at all times (hot food should be above 140°F and cold food should be below 40°F), remember the “Danger Zone.”
- Food should be served with gloves and separate service utensils.
- Foods like chicken salad and desserts in individual servings dishes can be placed directly on ice, or in a shallow container set in a deep pan filled with ice. Drain off the ice as it melts and add more ice.
- Do not let any food sit out longer than 2 hours.
- Keep all food covered when not being eaten.
- Ice used in beverages should be protected from contamination, do not use the ice used for refrigeration.
- Smoking should not be permitted around the food.
- Individuals who are sick or have cuts should not handle the food or beverages.
- Pets should be away from where the food is being served and stored.

Safe Grilling Tips

- Marinate foods in the refrigerator, never on the kitchen counter or outdoors. If you plan to use the marinade as a sauce on the cooked food separate a portion in advance, never reuse marinade.
- If you are partially cooking food to reduce grilling time, do so immediately before the food goes on the grill.
- Keep “ready” food hot by moving grilled food to the side of the grill rack away from the coals, that way it will stay hot but will not overcook.
- When cleaning your grill make sure to check that no foreign objects remain on the grill.
- Cook all food thoroughly. Use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature before serving to ensure the food is safe to eat.
  - Beef, veal and lamb steaks and roasts should be 145°F for medium rare, 160°F for medium and 170°F for well done.
  - Ground pork and ground beef should be 160°F.
  - Ground poultry should be 165°F.
  - Poultry breasts should be 170°F.
  - Whole poultry should be 180°F (take measurement in thigh).
  - Fin fish should be 145°F or until the flesh is opaque and separates easily.
  - Shrimp, lobster and crab should have meat that is pearly and opaque.
  - Clams, oysters and mussels are ready when the shells open.

Remember to always have a fire extinguisher available.

Food At On-Campus Events

In addition to these food safety tips from the Food & Drug Administration, remember the following when bringing food onto campus:

- Food from off-campus should be fully prepared and obtained from a licensed vendor.
- The amount of food from an off-campus vendor should not exceed $500.00.
- “Potluck” style events with homemade food is strictly prohibited.
- Food that is obtained prepared from a grocery store or licensed restaurant can be brought in as “potluck” food.
- Food from off-campus should not be distributed in a way that suggests that the vendor is a promoter of your organization. Vendor representatives are NOT allowed on campus to distribute their own product unless special permission has been received.