

Seven Food Safety Steps for Successful Community Meals

Whether preparing food for a disaster work crew, community gathering or family reunion, people who are great cooks at home don't necessarily know how to safely prepare and store large quantities of food for large groups. Food that is mishandled can cause food-borne illness. However, by following some simple steps, volunteer cooks can make the event safe and successful!

For more food safety information, call the toll-free USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at **1-800-535-4555**; TTY: 1-800-256-7072; www.fsis.usda.gov.

For a copy of *Cooking for Groups: A Volunteer's Guide to Food Safety*, write: FCIC, Item #604H, Pueblo, CO 81009.

- 1. Plan Ahead – Make sure the location meets your needs.**
 - Be sure you have enough oven, stovetop, refrigerator, freezer and work space.
 - Find out if there's a source of clean water. If not, bring water for preparation and cleaning.
 - 2. Store and Prepare Food Safely**
 - Refrigerate or freeze perishable food within 2 hours of shopping or preparing.
 - Separate preparation areas for raw and cooked food.
 - Never place cooked food back on the same plate or cutting board that held raw food.
 - Wash hands, cutting boards, dishes, utensils and work surfaces frequently with hot, soapy water.
 - 3. Cook Food to Safe Internal Temperatures – It's the only way to tell if harmful bacteria are destroyed!**
 - Use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of meat, poultry, casseroles and other food. Check temperature in several places to be sure food is safely cooked.
 - Never partially cook food for finishing later because you increase the risk of bacterial growth.
 - 4. Transport Food Safely – Keep hot food HOT. Keep cold food COLD.**
 - Keep cold food at or below 40°F. Place in a cooler with a cold source such as ice or commercial freezing gels.
 - Keep hot food at or above 140°F. Wrap well and place in an insulated container.
 - 5. Need to Reheat? – Food must be hot and steamy for serving. Just “warmed up” is not good enough.**
 - Use the stove, oven or microwave to reheat food to 165°F. Bring sauces, soups and gravies to a boil.
 - 6. Keep Food Out of the “Danger Zone” (40°–140°F).**
 - Keep hot food hot – at or above 140°F. Place cooked food in chafing dishes, preheated steam tables, warming trays and/or slow cookers.
 - Keep cold food cold – at or below 40°F. Place food in containers on ice.
 - 7. When In Doubt, Throw it Out!**
 - Discard food left out at room temperature for more than 2 hours.
 - Place leftovers in shallow containers. Refrigerate or freeze immediately.
- Fight BAC!**
- When preparing for your special event, remember you have the power to Fight BAC and keep your food safe.
- Clean**
- Wash hands and surfaces often.
- Separate**
- Don't cross-contaminate.
- Cook**
- Cook to proper temperatures.
- Chill**
- Refrigerate promptly

Internal Cooking Temperatures

Product	°F
Egg and Egg Dishes	
Eggs Cook until yolk and white are firm.	
Egg casseroles	160
Egg sauces, custard	160
Ground Meat and Meat Mixtures	
Turkey, chicken	165
Beef, veal, lamb, pork	160
Fresh Beef, Veal, Lamb	
Medium rare.	145
Medium	160
Well done	170
Fresh Pork	
Medium	160
Well done	170
Ham	
Fresh (raw).	160
Fully cooked (to reheat).	140
Roast Beef	
Cooked commercially, vacuum sealed and ready-to-eat.	140
Poultry	
Chicken, turkey – whole	180
Chicken, turkey – dark meat	180
Poultry – breast	170
Duck and goose	180

Product	°F
Stuffing	
Cooked alone or in bird	165
Sauces, Soups, Gravies, Marinades	
Used with raw meat, poultry or fish	Bring to a boil.
Seafood	
Fin Fish	Cook until opaque and flakes easily with a fork.
Shrimp, lobster, crab	Should turn red and flesh should become pearly opaque.
Scallops.	Should turn milky white or opaque and firm.
Clams, mussels, oysters	Cook until shells open.
Leftovers	165

NOTE:

These temperatures are recommended for consumer cooking. They are not intended for processing institutional or food service preparation. Food Service Professionals should consult their state or local food code or health department.

Adapted for use from United States Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Services by Dr. Russ Kennedy, Associate Professor - Health and Aging Specialist, University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service.