SAFE FOOD HANDLING

[Organization Name] strives to maintain a high standard of quality in the handling of food and a high level of food safety that protects all individuals. Food handling, preparation, and storage will be conducted per the strict hygiene standards of The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and the Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA).

## POLICY

Each employee of [Organization Name] is expected to have knowledge or skills related to food handling and food safety. The organization's orientation process will incorporate proper food handling, storage, and labelling.

Education about safe food practices will be provided by [Organization Name] to employees through ongoing training, examples, targeted activities, notices, posters, and information sheets.

**Personal Hygiene When Handling Food**

It is critical for all staff who handle food to practise sound personal health and hygiene practices to avoid jeopardising the food's safety and suitability.

Coordinators should ensure that the following practices are observed, understood, and followed by staff when food is prepared:

* Before preparing or handling food, and after smoking, coughing, sneezing, using a tissue, or eating and drinking, all persons handling food must wash their hands.
* Staff should wash their hands with soap and running water and thoroughly dry them with a paper towel.
* When preparing food, a staff member should cover exposed cut, sore, or graze with a bandage that is entirely covered by a waterproof covering (e.g., glove).
* Blue or coloured Band-Aids are available at all services for staff who require a wound covering.
* Gloves are required if a staff member has open wounds, cuts, or grazes, bandages, nail polish, skin conditions, jewellery, or artificial nails.
* After using the toilet, smoking, coughing, sneezing, using a handkerchief, eating, drinking, or touching the hair, scalp, or body, gloves must be removed, discarded, and replaced.
* Gloves should not be used in place of handwashing between activities. When gloves are worn, they must be kept clean and intact and changed as soon as they become contaminated.
* When preparing food, hair should be tied back or covered to prevent it from falling in.
* Employees should avoid eating, sneezing, blowing, or coughing on unprotected food or surfaces that may come into contact with food.
* If someone is ill or has an airborne illness, they should abstain from food preparation or handling.
* Employees, especially those in the kitchen, should wear headgear.
* Employees should wear clean and proper clothing/uniform

**Food Purchase and Transport**

Food purchases and transportation should be made with the following considerations in mind:

* Verify expiration dates
* Purchase foods only from a reputable and trusted supplier or retail outlet in which we have confidence that the food will be safe and appropriate.
* Choose and purchase foods in good condition to avoid ingesting chemicals, bacteria, or pests (i.e., packaged foods must be clean, undamaged, and intact, while fresh produce must be clean, fresh, and undamaged)
* Transport chilled and frozen foods in an esky or cooler bag filled with ice bricks and hot foods in an insulated container (foam box) to prevent bacteria from growing.
* Proceed directly from the supplier, retail outlet, or service kitchen to the service kitchen to minimize the number of times foods are out of temperature control.

**Receiving and storage**

Whenever food is received at the [Organization Name] premises, it should be inspected.

* Ensure that all food to receive comes from a reputable source and is in good condition.
* Examine delivery vehicles, which should be clean and free of contamination.
* Before acceptance, all food products should be inspected to ensure they are not spoiled or damaged.
* Check for the following:
	+ Temperatures suitable for shipping
	+ Dents or rust on cans
	+ Bulging, leaking, or stains on packaging
	+ Signs that products may be spoiled or infested with pests (e.g., gnawed holes or insect wings)
	+ Proper labelling. and labelling should be intact - not altered, broken, or detached from the food to which it is supposed to be attached
	+ Verify expiration date. If the expiration date has passed, refuse the food.

Food must be stored in a clean, hygienic environment free of chemicals. Food must be kept at the proper temperature during transportation to and storage at your food establishment.

Dry Storage

* Dry Storage (pantry) should be kept off the floor in a neat and orderly manner. This deters pests and insects.
* If storage areas are unclean, staff must perform an additional clean. Notify the coordinator if pests are spotted. The coordinator is responsible for ensuring that service personnel adheres to the Pest Control Policy. Depending on the severity of the problem, a pest controller may be required.
* Remove canned foods from their tins and place them in a suitable clean container.
* Food should be covered or sealed in clean containers to prevent foreign objects, pests, and harmful bacteria.

Cold Storage

* The coordinator is responsible for monitoring the refrigerator's temperature regularly and notifying management if the refrigerator does not maintain an optimal temperature to ensure replacement/repair.
* Place raw foods (e.g. meat) on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator, below cooked and ready-to-eat foods. This prevents harmful bacteria in raw food juices from dripping onto cooked or ready-to-eat food and contaminating it.
* Refrigerated or frozen foods will be stored in the refrigerator or freezer.
* Milk must be refrigerated and kept in the refrigerator's main section, not on the door.
* The fridge must have a working fridge/freezer thermometer checked regularly to ensure proper temperature maintenance.

**Freezing**

Frozen foods must be stored at a temperature that maintains their frozen solid state. Temperatures should be checked several times daily to ensure that food remains frozen. A probe thermometer should be used once a week to ensure that the temperature displayed on the freezer's thermometer is accurate.

Do not refreeze already thawed food without first cooking it.

Freezer and refrigerator care

* Keep the door closed as much as possible.
* Avoid overcrowding the space.
* Utilize unlined open wire shelves (no cardboard, tin foil, or other solid material).
* Ascertain that door seals are secure and in good condition.

**Thawing**

NEVER allow frozen foods to thaw at room temperature. While the inside of the food remains frozen, the outside of the food will stay at room temperature (the danger zone) for an extended period, allowing any bacteria to grow and multiply rapidly.

Thaw foods safely using one of the four methods listed below.

* In a refrigerator set to 4°C (40°F): This is the safest method despite being slow. Thus, allow at least a day for large items such as poultry and roasts to thaw. It takes approximately 10 hours/kg or 5 hrs/lb. Use this method whenever possible.
* In a sink with cold running water: Use a large, clean sink, and avoid splashing water on other foods or surfaces that will be in contact with food. Maintain a constant flow of water to keep the product's exterior cold. As soon as the food has thawed, remove it from the sink. Sanitize the sink and all utensils used in the thawing process.
* As part of the continuous cooking process: Use this method for small portions of food such as seafood, ground beef, and similar items, but not for larger items.
* In the microwave: Use this method ONLY if the food will be transferred immediately to another cooking source, as the product will be warm after thawing in the microwave. This method is not ideal for large items.

**Refrigeration**

Refrigerated foods must be kept at or below 4°C (40°F).

Refrigerators, like freezers, must have their temperatures monitored.

All refrigerators will have an easily visible and accurate thermometer located in the refrigerator's warmest area near the door and the top.

Temperatures must be monitored several times daily to ensure they remain between 4°C (40°F) and 4°C (40°F).

A probe thermometer will be provided to monitor food temperature at every stage of food preparation. The temperature displayed on the refrigerator's thermometer should be checked for accuracy once a week using this probe thermometer.

Condiment Fridge

As much as possible, keep the lid closed and monitor temperatures closely.

Food compartments should be relocated to the refrigerator's main section for overnight storage.

**Food Preparation**

At room temperature, potentially hazardous foods can be prepared, processed, and manufactured for no more than two hours.

Do not let foods remain in the danger zone (20°C-50°C or 68°F-122°F) for longer than necessary. If there is a need to leave the workstation for any reason, return food to the refrigerator until work resumes.

When preparing a large quantity of food:

* Use small batch sizes
* Use ingredients that have been chilled
* Foodstuffs should be kept on ice

**Cooking**

Food mixtures containing hazardous foods (i.e., meat, poultry, fish, egg, dairy products) should be cooked to at least 74°C (165°F) on the inside. Verify the temperature for at least 15 seconds with a probe thermometer.

Cooking Meat

To ensure that all bacteria are killed, the meat must be fully cooked.

Be guided by the following temperatures to ensure that meats are thoroughly cooked and to minimize the possibility of bacterial survival.

| **Cooking Raw Food** | **Temperature Requirement** (per Food Retail and Food Services Code) |
| --- | --- |
| Pork | 71ºC (160ºF) |
| Poultry (whole) | 82ºC (180ºF) for at least 15 seconds |
| Poultry (pieces or ground) | 74ºC (165ºF) for at least 15 seconds |
| Ground meat (other than those containing poultry) | 71ºC (160ºF) for at least 15 seconds |
| Fish | 70ºC (158ºF) for at least 15 seconds |
| Food mixtures containing poultry, eggs, meat, fish, or other potentially hazardous foods | 74ºC (165ºF) for at least 15 seconds |

Throughout the cooking process, cooked food should be kept separate from raw food.

**Hot and Cold Holding**

There are distinct requirements for each type of holding; we'll discuss these in greater detail next.

Hot Holding

Food that must be kept hot for service or display must maintain a temperature of 60°C (140°F) or higher at all times.

Monitor and record temperatures using a probe thermometer regularly during the holding time.

Do this once the food has reached the proper internal temperature.

Cold Holding

All foods that must be kept cold for service or display must always be kept at a temperature of 4°C (40°F) or less.

Monitor and record temperatures using a probe thermometer regularly during the holding time.

Ensure that containers are not overfilled.

Metal containers should be used for all hazardous foods, as metal conducts cold more effectively than plastic.

Food can be refrigerated or kept on ice in the cold zone. Food containers should always be refrigerated if they will be stored overnight.

**Cooling**

If cooked food must be cooled for storage or service, it must be done carefully to avoid crossing the temperature danger zone. Before temperature drops to below 60°C/140°F, the food should be placed on ice or refrigerated. The faster food is cooled, the less time it spends in the danger zone, minimizing the risk of bacterial growth.

The time required to cool food is as follows:

* Within two hours, the food's temperature should drop from 60°C (140°F) to 20°C (68°F).
* Within the next four hours, the food should cool to between 20°C (68°F) and 4°C (40°F) or less.

Monitor the temperature of the food during cooling with a probe thermometer to ensure that it is cooled quickly enough.

Food that has been chilled must be stored at 4°C (40°F) or less.

Cooling After Preparation

Food prepared at room temperature should be cooled to a temperature of no more than 20°C (68°F) or 4°C (40°F) within four hours. This is true of food immediately after it has been cooked and foods that will not be cooked, such as salads. Use a probe thermometer to make sure food is cooled quickly enough.

**Reheating**

Soups, stews, and gravies should all be brought to a boil.

Reheat in small increments whenever possible.

Check the reheating temperature with a probe thermometer.

Do not reheat food in a hot holding unit, such as a holding oven, steam table, or soup urn, because these units are not designed to quickly or sufficiently heat food.

After reheating, discard any leftovers (i.e., do not use the leftovers of a leftover).

**Labelling**

Foods prepared or opened must be clearly labelled. See the following examples:

* Food opened, removed from original packaging, and placed in another container must be labelled as follows:
	+ Colby Cheese

Opened 04/08/2022 AM

Use by date 07/05/2022.

Ingredients: Milk, culture, salt.

Allergens: Contains Dairy

* Food opened and still in its original packaging must be labelled as follows:
	+ Opened 04/08/2022 AM
* Opened any jarred food still in its original packaging/Jar (i.e. Tomato paste, cheese spread) that contains instructions saying it has to be used within x days of the opening must be labelled as follows:
	+ Opened 03/08/2021 am
	+ Use or throw away by 06/08/2022.
	+ **When in doubt, throw it out.**

**Serving Food**

To avoid contaminating food while it is being served, do the following:

* To distribute food, use single-use disposable plastic bags, wax paper, or disposable gloves.
* If cutlery (forks, knives, and spoons) and glasses are out but not in use, cover them and store them upside down.
* Serve on trays.
* Avoid touching surfaces of dishes or utensils that come into contact with mouths or food, such as the insides of glasses, straws, or cutlery eating ends.
* Avoid placing thumbs on top of a plate to secure it. Placing your thumb on the rim of the plates, grasp them beneath.
* Utensils will be used to serve food whenever possible.

**Discarding**

All food that has been served but not consumed must be discarded, except for low-risk foods that have been previously served in packaging or a container that protects the food from contamination. This may be re-used if the packaging or container is undamaged and the food is not contaminated.

Even if food appears to be untouched, there is no way to be certain. It is possible that it is contaminated and MUST be discarded.

Disposable service items such as disposable plates, plastic cutlery, and chopsticks must be thrown away.

Single-use service items must be discarded. Never reuse them.

**Equipment**

All equipment must be thoroughly cleaned, rinsed, and sanitised regularly, especially between uses with different foods.

Separate raw and cooked food equipment, utensils, cutting boards, and preparation areas

Utensils and cutting boards should be colour-coded. Use one colour for raw foods and another for prepared foods.

Each time food (especially raw food) comes into contact with a surface, immediately wash, rinse, and sanitize the surface.

Keep a bucket or labelled spray bottle of sanitizing solution on hand, mixed to the proper concentrations.

Wipe cloths in a sanitizing solution regularly to prevent bacteria from growing on the cloth.

Replace cracked, creviced, or open seams on cutting surfaces.

After use, disassemble meat slicers and thoroughly clean and sanitize.

If slicers are used frequently throughout the day, clean the equipment periodically to remove bacteria from the cutting surfaces.

Throughout the day, switch out utensils (i.e., knives, ladles, tongs, etc.). If you drop a utensil, do not wipe it and reuse it. It must be discarded and replaced with a clean one in the dishwashing area.

**Tasting Food**

Use a disposable spoon and discard it immediately after tasting the food, or a clean, regular spoon and discard it along with the dirty dishes.

Food should be ladled into a cup, tasting bowl, or additional spoon. Taste the food with a second spoon.

Do not dip your fingers into the food and then into your mouth.

Never reintroduce a spoon that has been in your mouth into the food.

**Monitoring and Verification**

The [INDICATE PERSON IN CHARGE] must monitor the system or whether the policy is being followed.

Verification is a check to ensure that the system or policy is functioning properly. Along with monitoring, verification is carried out. Verification would occur less frequently than monitoring unless there is a problem.

Procedures for monitoring and verification must be documented. They should be quantifiable and trackable, and it should be clear who is accountable for them and how frequently.

Monitoring may include the following:

* checking temperatures during cooking;
* checking refrigerator and freezer temperatures;
* checking cooling times to ensure foods cool quickly enough;
* checking for government inspection stamps or labels on received food;
* checking for signs of infestation or contamination;
* and checking for the proper shipping temperatures for received food.

Details of the procedure for verification must include the following:

* Who will do the verification
* How it is to be done
* Schedule of verification
* Details of what needs to be verified

**Records Keeping**

Records of two types are required: documentation and records.

**Documentation** refers to the policies, procedures, and other documents created during the system's development.

When procedures are followed, **records** are created. Records should be straightforward to use for employees:

* Maintain blank forms and a clipboard near work areas to allow for simultaneous verification of multiple items.
* Maintain notebooks or additional pages to record actions taken.
* Post or store documentation near work areas so that employees can quickly access it.
* Logs should be attached to the equipment for which they are intended, such as temperature logs on the front of a refrigerator.