

## Serving Food at Functions

### Introduction

On occasion, a university workplace may choose to serve light refreshments to visitors and guests at an authorised university function. Stringent requirements for health and hygiene apply to 'ready-to-eat' and 'potentially hazardous' food. This Guideline outlines the considerations for the service of food at this type of function.

This guideline does not apply to a catered event. In this circumstance, the externally contracted catering business comes under the Food Standards Code and is required to comply with that standard.

### Definitions

UniSA is not defined as a business that handles food intended for sale and is therefore not required to comply with the declared food safety standards. However, in the interest of applying the best possible practice, the Food Safety Standards have been used to inform this guidance.

<b>Handling of food</b>	includes storing, preparing, thawing, serving of food
<b>Hazard</b>	an agent in food that has the potential to cause an adverse health effect
<b>Equipment</b>	a utensil or appliance used in food handling, including cleaning equipment
<b>Food handler</b>	a person who engages in the handling of food
<b>Potentially hazardous food</b>	food containing raw and cooked meats (inc sandwiches), dairy products, seafood, fruits, salads, rice, pasta and processed foods containing eggs, beans and nuts
<b>Single-use item</b>	is a utensil for use in food handling, includes disposable gloves.

### Guidelines

To assist staff hosting an event and to ensure the health and wellbeing of attendees who consume supplied food at a university function, the following control measures are recommended:

#### Preparation

- Gain prior approval from the appropriate Manager to conduct the food service function
- Remove any restrictions that impede movement in the preparation and service areas
- Ensure the available food storage and preparation facilities and any equipment that will be used is clean and appropriate for the purpose
- If electrical equipment is to be used, the operator should do a visual inspection, the item should have a current Electrical Test tag and be connected to a RCD where required.
- Purchase food from a reputable retailer and ensure that food is within manufacturer's recommended best before date. Purchasing the food as close as possible to the service time will reduce the likelihood of food contamination.
- A sufficient quantity of single use items (plates, utensils, cups, napkins etc) is to be supplied.
- Regularly clean surfaces & utensils to eliminate potential sources of contamination
- Unpackaged ready-to-eat food (ie: finger food, hors d'oeuvres, antipasto etc) is vulnerable to contamination. By providing separate serving utensils (tongs, serving spoons or forks) for each food will help minimise the likelihood of contamination.

#### Allergies

- Certain food allergies can result in anaphylactic shock. Consider the suitability of menu items, including potential allergens (*the presence of allergens that do not affect the general population does not make that food unsafe*). As nuts and wheat are common allergens consider use of a small notice to alert attendees of any food item containing nuts and wheat.

## Storage

- Food is not to be stored in the vicinity of other items that are likely to be the source of contamination of food (eg: chemicals, clothing, personal belongings).
- Hot food should be kept hot, above 60°C, and cold food should be kept cold, 5°C or lower to minimise the growth of micro-organisms. As it takes more than four hours for food-poisoning bacteria to grow to dangerous levels, ready-to-eat foods can safely remain between 5°C and 60°C for **less than four hours**.

The 2 hour / 4 hour guide applies to ready-to-eat potentially hazardous foods and the time refers to **the life of the food**, including preparation and cooling. Apply the following time limits to ensure these foods remain safe to eat:

Total time between 5°C and 60°C		
Under 2 hours	2 to 4 hours	Over 4 hours
<b>What you should do</b>		
Ok to use, or refrigerate @ 5°C or less	Ok to use	Throw away

Example: Sandwiches are freshly prepared at 12 noon and placed in a non-refrigerated display case:-

(1) The sandwich can be kept out of refrigeration for up to 2 hours (until 2p.m.) and then refrigerated and brought out again later in the day, say 4p.m. (not to go back into the refrigerator for later use after this point). If not used by 6p.m. (4 hours out of temperature control in total) then throw it away.

OR

(2) The sandwich can be kept out of temperature control (refrigeration) for up to 4 hours straight – until 4p.m. Then **MUST** be thrown away.

## Food Handling Hygiene & Safety

- Staff with illness are to be excluded from food preparation duties.
- Anyone with a food handling duty is to wash their hands whenever they are likely to be a source of contamination. They are to vigorously clean the entire surface of the hands including the nails using soap and warm running water; and thoroughly dry hands on a single use towel.
- Contact with ready-to-eat food should be kept to a minimum by use of clean tongs etc. Food Handlers are to wear food preparation gloves to avoid direct contact with ready-to-eat food. If direct hand contact is necessary, wash & dry hands thoroughly before hand.
- If a food handler has a wound or bandage, a waterproof covering or glove is required over it to prevent any seepage from the wound contaminating food.
- Food handlers should not eat, sneeze, blow or cough, nor spit, smoke or use tobacco over unprotected food, or preparation surfaces and equipment
- Cross contamination can occur when raw meat especially poultry comes into contact with ready-to-eat food. This can be avoided by using different chopping boards, utensils and plates when preparing raw foods and ready-to-eat food, and by never placing cooked meat back on trays that held any raw meat. Washing & drying hands thoroughly after handling raw meat / poultry is also important.
- Vegetarian menu items should be served separately from non-vegetarian food.
- Pay attention to task when using sharp knives and appliances
- Be aware of potential for burns / scalds when dealing with any hot food, drinks or equipment.
- A first aid kit is to be readily available. If an oven is being used a fire blanket is to be available

## Clean up

- All food service items and equipment used in the event are to be thoroughly cleaned at the conclusion.
- Any wastage is to be disposed of appropriately at the end of the function.
- Any non-consumed items (left-overs) must be stored as per the 2/4 hour guide (above). They should be consumed within 4 hours without temperature control, beyond this time they are to be disposed of.

A checklist is included below that can be utilised by staff with a food handling task. A Risk Assessment, *Service of Food at Functions* has been compiled by the Safety and Wellbeing Team and can be utilised as a support to these notes.

## References

[University HS&IM Policy](#)  
[Australia New Zealand Food Standards](#)  
[Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 \(SA\)](#)  
[Department of Health SA – Food Safety](#)

# Serving Food at Functions Checklist

Event: ..... Date: .....

<b>Preparation</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Manager Approval for function</li> <li>▪ Food preparation and serving area are clean and free from obstruction / hazard</li> <li>▪ Food storage and preparation areas clean and appropriate for the purpose</li> <li>▪ Electrical appliances in sound condition, with a current Electrical Test tag</li> <li>▪ Food purchased from a reputable retailer</li> <li>▪ Food within manufacturer's best before date</li> <li>▪ Menu items purchased as close as possible to the service time</li> <li>▪ Ample plates, utensils, cups, napkins etc. provided.</li> <li>▪ Working surfaces &amp; utensils are regularly cleaned</li> <li>▪ Separate serving utensils (tongs, serving spoons or forks) are provided for each food</li> </ul>		
<b>Allergies</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Potential food allergies been considered in menu design</li> <li>▪ Small notice has been placed on any food item containing nuts and wheat e.g.  "          This product contains nuts".  "          This food was prepared in the same kitchen as wheat items,  so it can be classified as minimal gluten but not gluten free"</li> <li>▪ Vegetarian menu items are separated from non-vegetarian items</li> </ul>		
<b>Storage</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Food is not stored alongside chemicals, clothing and personal belongings</li> <li>▪ The following guide is adhered to for any ready-to-eat potentially hazardous food</li> </ul>		
<b>Total time between 5°C and 60°C</b>		
Under 2 hours	2 to 4 hours	Over 4 hours
Ok to use or refrigerate	Ok to use	Throw away
Time refers to the life of the food [its preparation, cooling and entire time offered for consumption]		
<b>Food Handling Hygiene &amp; Safety</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staff with illness are excluded from food preparation duties</li> <li>▪ Food handlers thoroughly wash and dry their hands before handling food</li> <li>▪ Food Handlers wear food preparation gloves</li> <li>▪ Tongs etc. are used to avoid contact with food</li> <li>▪ Eating, sneezing, blowing, coughing, or spitting over food / items whilst preparing food is prevented</li> <li>▪ Care is taken when using sharp knives and appliances</li> <li>▪ Food handlers are cautious when dealing with any hot food, drinks or equipment.</li> <li>▪ Staff are observant of and immediately clean up any spills or slip hazards</li> <li>▪ A First Aid kit and fire blanket (if oven being used) are readily available.</li> </ul>		
<b>Clean up</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All items and equipment have been thoroughly cleaned after use</li> <li>▪ Waste has been appropriately disposed of after the function</li> <li>▪ Leftovers have been stored as per the 2-4-hour guide (shown above)</li> <li>▪ After 4 hours without temperature control, any remaining food has been disposed of.</li> </ul>		