

Food Safety

CHALLENGE

Food is a regular part of nonprofit life, whether it is providing food to the people served by your organization or setting out food for staff, board, or volunteers. Organizations need to make sure the nourishment provided is safe and healthy.

Food Safety Concerns Include:

- Sanitation
- Water supply
- Food handling
- Safe operations of kitchens and feeding facilities

ACTIONS

When serving food to the public, review the following actions related to cleanliness and food handling. Getting food safety training and a food worker card is an excellent way to learn about key rules and proper procedures. A food worker card, also known as a food handler permit, is required if you work with unpackaged food, food equipment or utensils, or with any surface where people put unwrapped food.

Cleanliness

- Always keep the serving area clean. Bleach is a common solution to use on surfaces. Never allow a bleach solution to contact the food or food service items.
- Keep the floors clean. A solution of bleach is a good choice depending on the floor surface. Wear nitrile gloves and a pair of goggles when using bleach to prevent your eyes and skin from splashes.
- All pots, pans, dishes, etc. are to be washed and then sanitized in hot water before being dried. If the kitchen is equipped with a dishwashing machine, use that for sanitizing. If not, you may have to use the three-compartment dishwashing process of wash, rinse, and sanitize.
- Sanitize all utensils and cutting boards before using them for another food type.

Food Handling

- Make sure there is clean, uncontaminated drinking water available (also known as potable water). Clearly label any water sources not fit for drinking.
- Wear nitrile or other similar gloves when handling food. Ensure everyone handling food or otherwise working in the kitchen washes their hands thoroughly prior to working. If anyone leaves the kitchen for any reason, they should wash their hands again upon return.
- Perishable items should not be left out at room temperature for long periods of time, and should be stored below 40 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Meats should be cooked to the [appropriate internal temperature](#). Use a thermometer to gauge the temperature of the meat.
- Serving areas should be kept organized and clean. If possible, have a server do the serving as opposed to open self-serve lines. This is for the safety and sanitation of the service line. If that is not possible, have someone watch the line to make sure utensils are kept clean and are not cross contaminating.

RESOURCES

- [OSHA Foodborne Disease webpage](#)
- [Washington State Department of Health Food Safety webpage](#)
- [Do it Right, Serve it Safe! Washington State Food Worker Course](#) — Take the course, pass the test, and receive your food worker card.