

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP):

Safe Food Handling

Effective Date: 8/7/2025 (revised as needed)

Prepared By: Environmental Health and Safety Office (EHS)

Approved By: Carl Taz Wininger, EHS Director

1. Purpose

To establish safe food handling procedures that prevent foodborne illness, ensure food safety compliance, and protect the health of students, staff, visitors, and vendors across all university-operated or affiliated food service facilities.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all university personnel, contractors, and student workers involved in the preparation, service, storage, and transportation of food on campus. It also applies to temporary food vendors and catering operations.

3. Regulatory References

- **FDA Food Code (latest edition)**
- **Local and state public health codes**
- **ServSafe® or equivalent food safety standards**
- University-specific food safety policy and permit requirements

4. Key Principles of Safe Food Handling

1. **Clean:** Wash hands, surfaces, and equipment often.
2. **Separate:** Avoid cross-contamination between raw and ready-to-eat foods.
3. **Cook:** Ensure food is cooked to safe internal temperatures.
4. **Chill:** Keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot.
5. **Check:** Monitor food temperatures and expiration dates regularly.

5. Personal Hygiene Requirements

- Wash hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds:
 - Before handling food
 - After using the restroom
 - After touching raw meat, garbage, money, or face
- Wear clean uniforms or aprons.
- Hair must be restrained (hairnets, caps).
- No eating, drinking, or smoking in food prep areas.
- Report any illness (especially vomiting, diarrhea, fever) to a supervisor immediately.

6. Food Storage

Dry Storage:

- Store food 6 inches off the floor and away from walls.
- Maintain temperature below 70°F (21°C) with adequate ventilation.

Cold Storage:

- Refrigerators must be kept at $\leq 41^{\circ}\text{F}$ (5°C).
- Freezers at 0°F (-18°C) or below.
- Label and date all food upon arrival and after opening.
- Follow FIFO (First In, First Out) inventory rotation.

Separation:

- Store raw meat, poultry, and seafood **below** ready-to-eat foods.
- Use separate, clearly labeled containers.

7. Food Preparation

- Use color-coded cutting boards and utensils to prevent cross-contamination:
 - Red: Raw meat
 - Yellow: Raw poultry
 - Blue: Raw fish
 - Green: Fruits and vegetables
- Thaw food in refrigeration, under cold running water, or in a microwave (never on the counter).
- Sanitize surfaces and equipment after each use.

8. Cooking Temperatures

Food Item	Minimum Internal Temp
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Poultry (whole or ground)	165°F (74°C)
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Ground meat (beef, pork)	155°F (68°C)
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Seafood	145°F (63°C)
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Eggs (for hot holding)	155°F (68°C)
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Leftovers / reheated foods	165°F (74°C)
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Use a calibrated food thermometer to verify.

9. Holding and Serving

- **Hot holding:** Keep food at $\geq 135^{\circ}\text{F}$ (57°C)
- **Cold holding:** Keep food at $\leq 41^{\circ}\text{F}$ (5°C)
- Never mix new food with old batches.
- Cover food and keep serving areas clean.
- Self-service (buffet) areas must have:
 - Sneeze guards
 - Clean utensils (changed regularly)

10. Cleaning and Sanitizing

- Wash, rinse, and sanitize food contact surfaces:
 - After each use

- After changing from raw to ready-to-eat foods
- Every 4 hours during continuous use
- Use approved sanitizers (e.g., bleach at correct dilution or commercial sanitizer)
- Dish machines must reach appropriate sanitizing temperatures (check daily)

11. Waste Disposal and Pest Control

- Dispose of food waste promptly in closed, lined bins.
- Remove garbage regularly.
- Maintain clean floors and eliminate food debris.
- Report any signs of pests to Facilities immediately.

12. Training and Certification

- All food handlers must complete:
 - **Initial food safety training**
 - **Annual refresher training**
 - Supervisors must have **ServSafe® Manager Certification** or equivalent
- Temporary food vendors must follow the same guidelines and hold required permits.

13. Recordkeeping

Maintain the following logs and records:

- Temperature logs (cooking, holding, refrigeration)
- Cleaning schedules
- Employee illness and training records
- Pest control inspections
- Delivery inspection forms

14. Enforcement and Violations

- Non-compliance with this SOP may result in:
 - Immediate removal from food handling duties
 - Disciplinary action
 - Closure of operation in coordination with EHS and local health authorities

15. CONTACT INFORMATION

- **Environmental Health & Safety Office:**
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