

Food Safety Series (No.2)

April 2019

## Catering Options

### A Guide for Departments and Faculties

#### WEB VERSION

Departments may wish to provide refreshments for a variety of meetings or functions, ranging from tea and biscuits through to a full meal. This guide is designed to assist in selecting the most appropriate option when organising catering and aims to encourage best practice and ensure legal conformity.

**It is an offence under Food Safety Regulations to supply any food or drink that is not safe for human consumption.**

Departments must ensure that where refreshments are provided they take all reasonable precautions to guarantee the food and drink supplied are safe. It is not only the food handler that can be prosecuted for a breach of food safety but also the University and/or individuals responsible for employing the caterer.

#### General

All food and drink must be prepared, stored and consumed in suitable and appropriate areas (not laboratories / workshops). These areas must conform to food safety regulations (see 'An Introduction to Legislation for University Premises' Leaflet).

Food preparation areas must be free from sources of contamination e.g. biological (pathogens, GM), chemical (oils, acids, degreasers etc.), physical (glass, dust, swarf etc.). Information on allergens must be available (see the Allergen leaflet)

Individuals who prepare or handle food, even if it is not part of their main duties, are deemed 'food handlers' and so must

be trained in food hygiene to a level appropriate to their role (see the 'Food Hygiene Training' leaflet). Also they must sign the Fitness to Work form.

Any department with catering facilities other than those used solely by staff/students for the storage and preparation of their own food/drink must register with the local authority Environmental Health Department as a food premises.

Departments ordering "fast food" such as pizza etc. must dispose of all packaging and leftover food appropriately and hygienically.

*University Catering* may be able to provide catering to suit all requirements, for details contact the University Centre.

#### **Decide the type of catering required**

*(excludes the normal preparation of beverages and biscuits by staff, for themselves or visitors.)*

#### **A** Light refreshments (low risk)

Examples of which include:

Hot and cold beverages  
Biscuits, nuts, crisps etc.

#### **B** Other refreshments / main meals

Examples of which include:

Sandwiches and canapés  
Hot or cold buffets  
Served lunches or dinners

#### **C** Catering provided by an external third party embedded on University premises e.g. Tate at the Fitzwilliam Museum

#### **If "A"**

Departments may provide their own catering but food and drink must be purchased from a reputable supplier and receipts kept. Where

practicable ingredients should be purchased from a Preferred Supplier listed with the Central Purchasing Office ([www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/purchasing](http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/purchasing)).

Low risk food stuffs e.g. biscuits, tea/coffee, crisps, nuts, cakes (not cream) must be stored in sealed containers or packets in a suitable place, where they cannot become contaminated in any way, until required. All packaging must be labelled or where ingredient information is separate this packaging must be retained until after sale for reference with regard to Allergens.

Fresh milk, cream cakes etc must be refrigerated at least below 8°C but ideally below 5°C until required and used within date. Long life milk can be stored at room temperature but once opened must be treated as fresh and labelled on date of opening and stored following manufacturer's instructions.

Serving staff must have received appropriate training in food safety; be in good health and maintain strict personal hygiene at all times. Hands must be washed before preparing food and there must be a potable (clean) water supply for making beverages.

### **If "B"**

All the requirements for "A" must be adhered to plus the following:

**Departments obtaining sandwiches** or other food to supply hospitality for a meeting or function must use a reputable supplier and keep receipts. *University Catering* or Catering Providers listed with the University is strongly recommended as these premises have undergone the necessary checks to ensure the foods they provide fall in line with the University's own food safety policy. Departments deciding to use non listed caterers must appoint someone who will be wholly responsible in the event of a food contamination incident.

**Sandwiches and buffets** should where possible be ordered to arrive just before they are to be served. On receipt food must remain covered and protected from hazards of any kind. Cold foods must be refrigerated (below 8°C, ideally below 5°C) until used.

**Any special diets** must remain covered and segregated to prevent contamination (see 'Allergens' leaflet)

**Once removed from refrigeration** all cold food must be eaten within 4 hours or thrown away. Hot food must be kept hot (above 63°C) or eaten within 2 hours. After this time food must be thrown away including surplus food from a meeting /function is left out for students or staff.

In general, departments are discouraged from self-catering due to the risks involved. However should they choose to do so food must be purchased only from a major leading supermarket or fast food outlet and receipts kept. Strict food safe controls must be implemented during storage, preparation and service to ensure the safety of the food and compliance with all relevant legislation. This includes occasions when departments purchase pre-packaged sandwiches etc, cut them into smaller units and transfer them to a plate for service. It is essential staff have a good understanding of basic food hygiene and their legal requirements.

### **If "C"**

Where outside organisations rent or are provided with space for regular catering they must be provided with a written contract.

In the case of embedded third party outlets only catering providers that have been vetted by the University may be used.

### **Further Information**

- on the Food Standards Agency website ([www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk))
- from MAS Environmental

([www.masenv.co.uk/fsq](http://www.masenv.co.uk/fsq))

### **Other leaflets in the Food Safety Guidance Notes Series**

- 1 Food Safety – An introduction to legislation for University premises
- 3 Staff Kitchens and Tearooms – General hygiene requirements
- 4 Food Hygiene Training Requirements
- 5 Guidance on Departmental Barbecue Safety
- 6 Purchase, Delivery and Storage of Food
- 7 Preparation and Service of Food
- 8 Personal Hygiene Requirements for Individuals Preparing or Serving Food
- 9 Cleaning and Pest Control in Food Preparation Areas
- 10 Food Safety Guidance for Departmental Christmas Parties
- 11 Food Safety for Charity Events – A guide for departments and faculties
- 12 Food Complaints - A guide for departments and University operated food outlets
- 13 Allergens

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