

Guidelines for the Safe Handling of Food for Sale via Canteens or Barbeques



Introduction

Although we depend on food in our daily lives, it is easy to forget that food can also be very dangerous if neither handled nor prepared correctly. Poorly temperature-controlled food, food which is undercooked or subject to cross-contamination can harbour quickly multiplying bacteria which is capable of making us extremely ill.

The NSW Food Handling Authority (www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au) is the responsible Authority in NSW for safe food handling. This Authority though does not require any training for food handlers who are supplying food as a fundraising initiative for volunteer organisations such as ours. Nevertheless, the Authority requires that food handlers should have good general knowledge and skills appropriate to the food they are preparing for sale.

Little Athletics centres should also be aware that their local council may require them to register their canteen for food handling on a seasonal or annual basis and they should therefore take steps to ascertain their council's requirements.

Aim

This guideline aims to:

1. Help identify existing potential health and safety issues.
2. Raise the overall awareness of hazard identification.
3. Suggest ways of minimising these risks.

Keeping Food Safe

This guide offers general sound food handling ideas and some risk mitigation strategies. More detailed ideas and education in good food handling practice can be found on the NSW Food Authority website referred to above.

1. Ensure raw meats for barbeques are kept appropriately refrigerated until required for cooking for immediate use.
2. Avoid cross-contamination of raw and cooked food by utilising separate containers/utensils for each.
3. Ensure barbeque helpers/food preparers use gloves when directly handling foods.
4. Do not refreeze frozen foods (e.g. pies, sausage rolls, etc) once thawed and heated for sale. Dispose of unsold product at the end of the centre meet/gala day, etc.
5. Persons with current illnesses should not be involved in food preparation.
6. Remember that some foods require careful handling. E.g. Raw meat-based foods, seafood, rice, dairy and egg-based products.

What Do Volunteers Need to Know When Handling Food?

Volunteers who handle food should have general knowledge (such as the foregoing advice on keeping food safe) and skills appropriate to the foods that they are preparing. For example, those preparing a large number of hot meals with varying ingredients need to understand temperature control and how to avoid cross-contamination in the interests of protecting public health.

Money Handling & Food Safety

Handling money and food increases the likelihood of cross contamination and bacteria build up on the food. The best way to minimise the risk of cross contamination is to isolate the task of handling money from handling food by dedicating someone to only handle money. If this is not possible, adequate hand sanitation practices should be used including:

- Not directly handling ready to eat foods.
- Washing hands after handling money and immediately before preparing food.

- Using food handling tools like tongs, spoons, utensils or bakery serving papers.
- Using disposable gloves when preparing food and not handling money with these gloves. Taking money while wearing gloves will contaminate the gloves. Any gloves used to handle money should not be used to handle food again.

Additional Hazards

Clearly the operation of barbeques and canteens involves additional hazards and therefore potential risks. These include but are not limited to:

- Working with hot appliances with associated burn risks;
- Electrical equipment such as coffee urns;
- Refrigerators and other food preparation or storing devices.

Centres should therefore ensure such equipment is subjected to annual safety inspections and tagging of portable electrical equipment to reduce the electrification risks.

It goes without saying that the risk involved in barbeque and canteen environments dictates that young children should not be allowed in those areas and ideally only persons above 16 years of age should be canteen or barbeque helpers.

Another aspect to be aware of is the issue of food allergies and the appropriate labelling of any foods containing or possibly exposed to any of the common food allergens (e.g. nuts, egg, cows milk, etc) to mitigate the risk of accidental consumption by anyone suffering from such allergies. For more information, see the Little Athletics NSW Anaphylaxis/Severe Allergic Reaction Guidelines or the website of Anaphylaxis Australia at www.allergyfacts.com.au.