

CHARITABLE FOOD DISTRIBUTIONS

PROVIDING SAFE FOOD TO THOSE THAT ARE FOOD INSECURE

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that each year 1 in 5 Americans get sick from contaminated food or beverages and 3,000 die from foodborne illness. The most commonly reported symptoms of foodborne illnesses are nausea, vomiting, stomach cramps, and diarrhea. Although anyone can get a foodborne illness, some people are more likely to develop one and more likely to suffer more extreme symptoms. Older adults, young children, women who are pregnant and those with weakened immune systems are most vulnerable. Vulnerable people are not only at increased risk of contracting a foodborne illness but are also more likely to have a lengthier illness, undergo hospitalization, or even die, according to the Food and Drug Administration. Due to limited access to health care and possible nutrition concerns, those who are experiencing homelessness are considered a vulnerable population and at a higher risk for foodborne illness and more serious results. Effects of foodborne illness symptoms can quickly lead to dehydration. This is especially a problem for those exposed to extreme temperatures and without ready access to fresh drinking water. — **The mission of Marion County Public Health Department Food & Consumer Safety Department is to prevent food-related illnesses and improve food safety practices in Marion County. Safe food sources and proper handling are important factors in ensuring people do not become ill.**

MARION COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT REQUIREMENTS

Requirements and considerations will vary based on the type and risk level of the food distribution. Many options are exempt from licensing but would require registration. For distributions that would require licensing, the Marion County Public Health Department offers a reduced fee of \$20 for food pantries or feeding sites. **See chart below:**

FOOD DISTRIBUTION TYPE	EXAMPLE	REGISTRATION OR PERMIT
Pre-packaged, shelf-stable foods in their original packaging	Boxes of crackers, tuna pouches, bagged cookies, jar of peanut butter, etc.	Exempt
Providing hot coffee, hot cocoa or bottled beverages	Using coffee or powdered ingredients to prepare hot beverages for distribution.	Exempt
Unprocessed, whole and uncut produce	Bananas, apples, oranges, etc.	Exempt
Pre-packaged perishable foods	Pre-portioned and packaged soup from a licensed and inspected restaurant.	Exempt from additional licensure if the source is licensed and is distributed for immediate service and consumption.
Preparation of foods: portioning, repackaging, reheating, cutting, chopping, cooking, etc.	Chopping vegetables and preparing a vegetable soup.	License at the point of preparation is required.
Receiving or holding potentially hazardous foods for later distribution	Storing foods in a freezer or refrigerator for distribution.	License required for the storage location.
Serving food beyond distribution of prepackaged foods	Ladling soup into bowls, portioning salads.	Varies based on operation. Food service beyond distribution of prepackaged foods requires additional requirements for set up.

SERVING FOOD SAFELY

The safest food distribution would be in a licensed establishment, located indoors with minimum requirements for equipment, including handwashing, warewashing, cold holding and hot holding units. The following are minimum requirements for ensuring safe food distribution outdoors. These serving requirements are based on the local food code that ensures safe food and limits risk of foodborne illness.

OPTION A: Serving prepackaged food from an approved source for immediate service.

This option requires minimal set up and requirements since there is not direct handling of food.

Requirements:

- Trash disposal method

Recommended:

- Overhead covering
- Handwashing for volunteers and recipients

OPTION B: Handling open food, portioning, and operating a food service line

Requirements:

- Overhead covering
- Sneeze shields or other cover to protect the food
- Handwashing for volunteers and recipients
- Temperature control if not for immediate service (served and consumed within 4 hours)
- Thermometer
- Trash disposal method
- Hair restraints
- Extra utensils
- Certified Food Manager (if not exempted by not-for-profit status)
- Sanitizer for food contact surfaces

LOCAL REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with Proposition 76, passed in February 2021, the City of Indianapolis has designated Safe Charitable Distribution Sites. For additional information and to register, please visit:

<https://www.indy.gov/form/safe-site-charitable-distributions> — **Any distribution would need to have permission of the property owner.**

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

Safe Source: Food, water and ice must be obtained from safe and approved sources. Food must come from a facility that is regulated and inspected, including grocery stores, restaurants or licensed kitchens. Home prepared foods should not be served. Ensure donations are from approved sources or are in their original commercial packaging. Packaging and product must be in good condition.

Potentially Hazardous Foods: Foods that require time and temperature control in order to prevent bacteria growth. These foods can make you or others sick if they aren't maintained at proper temperatures. Deli meats, soup, casseroles, cooked pasta, cooked vegetables, cut melon, dairy, cheese

Shelf Stable Foods: Foods that can be safely stored at room temperature. Examples include bread, peanut butter, whole uncut produce, canned goods, dry goods, cookies and baked goods.

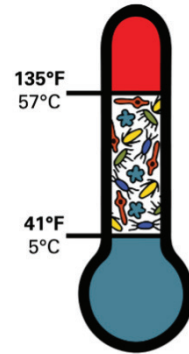


Ready to Eat Foods: Ready-to-eat food is food that will not be cooked or reheated before serving. This includes salads, cooked meats, desserts, sandwiches, cheese and food that you have cooked in advance to serve cold.

KEEP IT COLD, KEEP IT HOT

Bacteria grow most rapidly in the range of temperatures between 41 °F and 135 °F, doubling in number in as little as 20 minutes. This range of temperatures is often called the "Danger Zone."

If mechanical refrigeration is not available, use ice and coolers to keep food cold. Use sterno or cambros to keep food warm. Monitor temperatures using a calibrated food thermometer.



TIME AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CONTROL

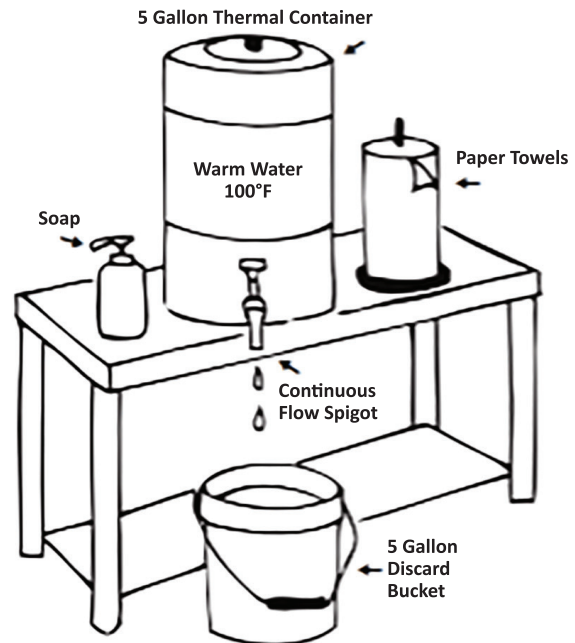
Potentially hazardous food that is not maintained at 41 °F or less and 135 °F and above must be served and consumed within 4 hours of being removed from temperature control. After four hours, it must be disposed of.

TRANSPORTING FOOD FOR DISTRIBUTION

- Keep hot food hot, and cold food cold. Minimize time spent in the bacteria growing Danger Zone 41-135°F.
- Use safe, nonabsorbent, leak proof pans
- Never put food directly on the ground
- Use a clean transport vehicle
- Separate items for distribution from personal items

HANDWASHING

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Food workers need to wash their hands thoroughly and frequently. Hand sanitizer is not a substitute for handwashing. **If a hand sink is not available, a temporary handwashing station is recommended for handwashing before serving or eating. Properly dispose of all waste water.**



FOOD HANDLING

Do not handle ready to eat food with bare hands. Ready-to-eat food is food that will not be cooked or reheated before serving. Gloves are not required to be worn, but regulations do require ready to eat foods be prepared and served without bare-hand contact. **In place of bare hands, use gloves, utensils (spatulas, tongs, ladles), deli tissue, or wax paper.**



IF USING GLOVES, WASH AND DRY HANDS THOROUGHLY:

- Before wearing gloves
- When changing to a new pair of gloves
- After removing soiled gloves

Remove and discard gloves when they become soiled, contaminated, or torn.

SERVICE LINE

Use sneeze shields or other covers to protect the food from contamination.

SANITIZING

Clean and sanitize food serving surfaces before and after use. Using sanitizer in a spray bottle with disposable paper towels is recommended for charitable feeding operations. Many different sanitizers can be used: an easy homemade version is to make a solution of 1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of water, or you can use a commercial sanitizer or sanitizing wipe. Pour or spray your sanitizing solution on surfaces and wipe them clean with a paper towel.

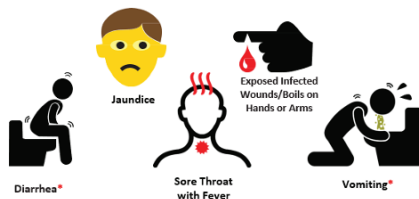
TRASH DISPOSAL

Food wastes and litter create an unhealthy environment and attract pests. Provide trash containers and remove trash after food distribution. Encourage guests to stay on site to eat so they can utilize the provided trash containers.

STAY HOME IF ILL

Volunteers should not work with food or clean utensils if they are ill.

5 Symptoms of Foodborne Illness



FINDING A LICENSED KITCHEN

You can search active licensed kitchens in Marion County by searching our inspection site <https://hwcwebfood.hhcorp.org/default.aspx> or by contacting our office.

FOOD SAFETY EDUCATION

The Marion County Public Health Department offers free food safety education. Classes are offered throughout the year or can be presented to individual groups. Contact our office at 317-221-2222 or visit our website for information. For information on the Certified Food Manager Certification, visit <https://marionhealth.org/programs/environmental-health/food-and-consumer-safety-2/>.



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