

Community Organization Functions

A community organization function (COF) is a public event where home prepared food may be served. To qualify as a community organization function, the event must meet **all** of the following requirements.

- It is open to the general public, for example advertised as “Everyone welcome!”.
- It occurs rarely or infrequently.
- It must not be part of a special event, like a fair, festival or exhibition.
- It must be organized by a not-for-profit community organization, like a community or multi-cultural association, church, service or recreational club, school, or sports team.
- It is operated to raise money for the community organization or another charitable purpose.
- It is catered by volunteers who receive no or minimal payment.
- It runs no longer than two (2) days unless approved by Environmental Public Health (EPH).

Examples of community organization functions include community sports events, fall harvest suppers and wild game dinners.

Notification

The organizer of a community organization function must

- Notify EPH of the event by submitting a completed Community Organization Function Notification **at least fourteen (14)** days prior to the function.
- Notify attendees of the community organization function that home-prepared foods are being served.

Ensuring a Successful Community Organization Function

Practice good food safety when planning and preparing food for your community organization function. Most foodborne illnesses from large community events are caused by:

1. cooling food too slowly
2. keeping hot foods below 60°C (140°F) while transporting or serving
3. allowing sick people to prepare and serve food
4. preparing food too far in advance, such as a day or more ahead of time
5. allowing cross-contamination i.e. storing raw food near cooked food
6. leaving high-risk food in the **Danger Zone**, between 4°C (40°F) and 60°C (140°F)

The following food safety tips will help ensure a safe and successful community event.

FOOD HANDLING REQUIREMENTS

The COF organizer and voluntary caterers preparing the food must ensure that food is handled in a clean and safe manner, at home or in approved food facilities.

- Home-prepared foods must be prepared and donated **only** by members of the community organization hosting the function.
- **Unpasteurized milk, uninspected meats, and unfit foods** cannot be served or used as ingredients in food items.
- Pets must be kept out of the kitchen or vehicles when food is being prepared, served or transported.

Food Handler Hygiene

- Wash hands often with hot soapy water, especially after using the washroom and before handling any food.
- Keep hair under control.
- Avoid habits that contaminate food or food preparation areas, like licking fingers, biting fingernails, smoking or wearing aprons outside the food preparation areas.
- Cover cuts and/or sores with a bandage and glove before handling food.
- Prepare food only if you are feeling well. Do not prepare food if you are vomiting, have diarrhea or jaundice.
- Wear clean clothing and footwear.

FOOD SAFETY BASICS

Plan Ahead

- Select a location or facility that meets your needs. Ask yourself:
 - Does it have adequate storage space in the refrigerator and freezer?
 - Does it have the cooking and hot-holding equipment you need?
 - Is it clean?
- Select a person who knows good food safety practices to manage your function.
- Ensure the water source you are using is safe.

Keep Food Safe During Preparation

- Serve food as soon as possible. Prepare food just before your event.
- Use tongs and other utensils to prepare or serve food. Wash your hands and change gloves between tasks, if you are using gloves.
- Keep raw meat away from ready-to-eat foods like lettuce, fruit and bread. Never place cooked food back on the same plate or cutting board that held raw food.
- Wash and sanitize cutting boards and other food preparation surfaces to prevent cross contamination. You can make a simple sanitizing solution by mixing 1/2 teaspoon of household bleach into one litre of water.
- Cook food to 74°C (165°F). Check the internal temperature of meat, poultry and casseroles using a thermometer.

- Cook food thoroughly. Never partially cook food for finishing later.
- Wash fresh fruit and vegetables before preparing or serving.

Keep Food Out of the “Danger Zone”

The Danger Zone is the range of temperatures between 4°C (40°F) and 60°C (140°F). Bacteria in food can grow and multiply quickly at these temperatures.

- Keep hot food hot, at least 60°C (140°F) or above.
- Keep cold food cold, at least 4°C (40°F) or below.
- Keep high-risk foods, like meat, poultry and casseroles at Danger Zone temperatures for no more than two (2) hours.
- Defrost or thaw foods in the refrigerator, under cold running water, or in the microwave. Never leave high-risk foods to thaw at room temperature.
- Divide foods into smaller portions to allow for quicker cooling. For example, cut cooked poultry and roasts into smaller portions before placing in the refrigerator.

Keep Food Safe When Transporting

- Keep hot food hot by using insulated containers, or by tightly wrapping the food container in several layers of tin foil or a clean heavy blanket.
- Keep cold food cold in an insulated cooler with ice or freezer packs.
- Pack high-risk foods just before you leave, and do not open them until serving time.
- Unload hot and cold foods first, and immediately place them in hot holding equipment or coolers.

Keep Food Safe When Serving

- Keep serving portions small if not kept in hot or cold holding equipment.
- Serve hot food from chafing dishes, pre-heated steam tables, warming trays and/or slow cookers, if possible. Never place food in a steam table, if the food has not been cooked or reheated to 74°C (165°F) first.
- Use clean and sanitized dishes and utensils to serve food.
- Replace empty platters and dishes with freshly filled ones. Never add new food to a serving dish or platter that is partially empty.
- Check food temperatures often.

Keep Leftover Food Safe

- Discard leftover food that has been left out at room temperature for more than two (2) hours.
- Refrigerate or freeze food that was not served.
- Follow the rule, “When in doubt, throw it out”.
- Allow leftover to be taken home only by members of the host organization.

For more information, please contact your nearest Environmental Public Health office.

Edmonton Main Office
 Calgary Main Office
 Lethbridge Main Office

780-735-1800
 403-943-2295
 403-388-6689

Grande Prairie Main Office
 Red Deer Main Office
www.albertahealthservices.ca/eph.asp

780-513-7517
 403-356-6366

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Community Organization Function Notification

Notification must be submitted to Environmental Public Health at least 14 days prior to the function.

To submit this notification to Environmental Public Health:

1. Print the notification to your local printer.
2. Complete the notification.
3. Fax, mail or scan and email the completed notification to:
 - a) your local public health inspector OR
 - b) to the office below near the community event.

Southern Alberta

AHS- Environmental Public Health
 Lethbridge Community Health Centre
 801 1 Avenue S
 Lethbridge, Alberta T1J 4L5

south.specialevents@albertahealthservices.ca
 Tel: 403-388-6689
 Fax: 403-328-5934

Calgary and Area

AHS - Environmental Public Health
 10101 Southport Road SW
 Calgary, Alberta T2W 3N2

specialevents@albertahealthservices.ca
 Tel: 403-943-2295
 Fax: 403-943-8056

Red Deer and Area

AHS - Environmental Public Health
 Johnstone Crossing Community Health Centre
 300 Jordon Parkway
 Red Deer, Alberta T4P 0G8

central.specialevents@albertahealthservices.ca
 Tel: 403-356-6366
 Fax: 403-356-6433

Edmonton and Area

AHS - Environmental Public Health
 HSBC Building 10055 106th Street
 Edmonton, Alberta T5J 2Y2

edm.specialevents@albertahealthservices.ca
 Tel: 780-735-1800
 Fax: 780-735-1802

Northern Alberta, including Jasper

AHS - Environmental Public Health
 Grande Prairie Provincial Building
 10320 99 Street
 Grande Prairie, Alberta T8V 6J4

north.specialevents@albertahealthservices.ca
 Tel: 780-513-7517
 Fax: 780-532-1550

Please view the Environmental Health Map Explorer, available at: www.albertahealthservices.ca/5004.asp if you are unsure where to send this notification.

Name of event: _____

Location of event: _____ City/Municipality: _____

Estimated number of people attending: _____

Start date of event: _____ Start time: _____ End time: _____

End date of event: _____ Start time: _____ End time: _____

Name of group or organization: _____
Mailing address: _____
City/Municipality: _____ Province: _____ Postal code: _____
Name of function organizer: _____
Telephone: _____ Fax: _____
Email: _____

Public Facilities

permanent toilets: _____ # portable toilets: _____
hand wash sinks: _____ # garbage receptacles: _____
Sewage disposal: Water supply:
 Municipal Municipal Other _____
 Holding Tank Well If private water supply, date of last satisfactory result: _____
 Septic Holding tank
Other activities (eg. petting zoo, face painting): _____

Food Source

Please list foods to be served: _____

If foods are prepared off-site, please state where: _____

 Food donated by community organization members (Attendees must be notified that foods have not been prepared in an approved food establishment)
 Food from approved food establishment Name of establishment(s): _____

Equipment for transport and preparation of food on-site

Cooking equipment: Cold holding equipment:
#: _____ Type: _____ #: _____ Type: _____
of food handlers: _____ # of food handlers with food safety training: _____
of thermometers: _____
Dishwashing sinks # plumbed in: _____ # temporarily set up: _____ Disposable Dishes: Yes No
Handwashing sinks # plumbed in: _____ # temporarily set up: _____
Additional Comments: _____

For office use only

Notification received: _____ Reviewed by: _____
Food safety information sheets provided: Yes No
Additional Comments: _____

Please be advised

Food has been prepared and donated by community members. Food may not have been prepared in an approved food establishment.