

The University of Alabama

Social Events Food Service Requirements

Introduction & Purpose

This program was developed to ensure student organizations (“organization”) offering food products for sale and/or on-site consumption are operating in accordance with the rules, regulations and guidelines established by the Alabama Department of Public Health (ALDPH). In addition to ALDPH rules, regulations and guidelines, this program is intended to encourage the safe handling and preparation of food items to prevent a foodborne illness. This program is in addition to all other policies, guidelines, registration, procedures and requirements applicable to special and/or social events hosted on-campus by student organization or off-campus when the food is purchased with University funds.

General Guidelines

The two general categories of food include perishable and non-perishable. While there needs to be reasonable sanitation and hygiene controls with non-perishable foods, the controls for perishable foods are far more stringent and require proper preparation, holding/service at appropriate temperatures, rotating food at regular intervals and proper hygiene for those persons preparing, storing or serving food. To clarify the perishable versus non-perishable foods, some examples of each include:

Non-Perishable

Chips, Crackers & Snack Mix
Canned Vegetables, Fruits & Meats (unopened)
Peanut Butter
Dry Cereal, Rice, Beans, Oatmeal & Pasta
Bread (some may be semi-perishable)
Protein/Energy Bars

Perishable

Dairy Products – Milk Cheese, Butter, etc.
Meat & Poultry – Fresh & Frozen
Eggs
Fish/Shellfish – Fresh & Frozen
Fresh Fruits & Vegetables
Sauces & Salad Dressings

When dealing with the preparation and service of perishable foods, there must be controls in place and the person(s) preparing and serving food must be knowledgeable in general food safety including:

- Proper cooking time & temperature controls
- Effective sanitation practices and control of cross contamination
- Sound personal hygiene practices
- Understanding of food holding/serving time and temperature guidelines
- Routine disposal of aged foods

This program does not seek to discourage home prepared foods or foods cooked at events such as a cook-out, fish fry, crawfish boil or tailgate gathering. However, it is important for those persons preparing the food to have a general understanding of food safety. If any food safety instructions or advice is needed, please contact Environmental Health and Safety at 348-5905.

The University has guidelines for hosting bake sales, which is under the direction of the Ferguson Center Student Union. Please refer the Ferguson website for details or contact the Ferguson Center office (Room #356 or call 348-6063).

When food is sold, the food must be prepared in a commercial kitchen that holds the appropriate permit and licensure to allow the sale of food. While a commercial kitchen is typically in a fixed

location, it can also include a mobile unit such a trailer or truck. In any case, the permit and licensure must be specific to the fixed or portable operation.

The sale of food includes events where a ticket is exchanged for a meal, or there is an admission charge that includes food as an element of the event. The sale of food also includes charity events where a donation includes food.

When a permitted-kitchen such as those operated in fraternity and sorority houses is used to prepare food for an event that is outside of the normal operation of providing meals to members, the kitchen shall be under the supervision of the regular staff employed to operate the kitchen. The organization or kitchen staff may engage additional personnel, equipment or a vendor to handle the demand or special menu of an event, but only when the kitchen staff is present and authorized to provide supervision.

If a caterer is contracted for an event, the caterer must have the appropriate permit and licensure as dictated by ALDPH and City and/or County of Tuscaloosa. In most cases, the caterer will prepare food at an off-site location and deliver and set-up at the event location, which is an acceptable practice as long as the caterer directs the entire operation up until the consumption of the food. When possible, the organization should consider a caterer that participates in the University's Catering License Program.

As required in the Party Smart Guide, any event with alcohol present shall include some type of alternative non-alcoholic beverage and food items. It is suggested the food items be of a non-perishable nature such as chips, individual wrapped snacks, popcorn, etc. If perishable, the items shall be disposed of after 4 hours unless there is equipment present to hold the food at a suitable hot or cold temperature. The organization should exercise care with perishable items such as deli sandwiches, pizza, meat & cheese trays, dips with dairy and/or meat ingredients, condiments with warnings, salads, fresh fruit, dairy products, etc. All food items shall be kept in a safe and sanitary location.