

Chapter:	Service Delivery		
Title:	Food Handling, Preparation and Storage		
Policy: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Procedure: <input type="checkbox"/>	Review Cycle: Triennial Author: Res. Srvs. Dir	Adopted Date: 10.2023 Review Date: 10.2023	Related Policies: Infection Control and Universal Precautions Service Animals

Purpose:

Hopeful Horizons (HH) recognizes that proper food handling is important and a required practice in the prevention of infection and spread of other food borne illnesses. This policy is adopted to assure that shelter operations, where food storage and preparation occur, comply with best practice standards and public health requirements.

Scope:

This policy applies to

- All HH Staff
- Selected HH Staff, as specified: Shelter staff
- HH Board Members
- HH Volunteers: Shelter volunteers
- Other: Shelter residents

Policy:

HHs' shelter staff, volunteers and residents shall comply with food handling, preparation and storage requirements defined by HHs' policy and as established by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) under the Group Home standards. Shelter residents have primary responsibility for food/meal preparation.

- A. **Site Premises:** The Director of Residential Services (DRS)/designee shall monitor shelter facilities to ensure the following requirements are met.
1. HHs' shelter is operated in a facility on a public wastewater system. Staff shall ensure proper operation of the internal mechanics and promptly address any malfunction.
 2. HHs' shelter is operated in a facility with a public water supply. If staff detect a disruption to or problem with the water supply, the DRS/designee shall notify the Beaufort-Jasper Water Sewer Authority to address any required corrective action. Shelter staff shall comply with orders pertaining to use of the public water supply if contamination is detected.
 3. HH has a handwashing sink convenient for the food preparation area. Staff shall monitor the sink to ensure it is clean and supplied with hot and cold water under pressure through a mixing faucet and that adequate soap and individual towels are available.
 4. Shelter bathrooms shall be cleaned daily or as needed and checked to ensure they remain in good repair.
 - Staff shall ensure restrooms have appropriate supplies including soap and individual towels.
 - Bathrooms must have a covered trash can.
 5. Service animals shall be permitted in food preparation areas in accordance with HHs' Service Animal policy. To remain in a food preparation area, the service animal must be under the control of its handler, not disruptive or posing a safety hazard. Pets are not permitted in food preparation areas.

B. Food Purchasing/Donations:

1. Staff responsible for purchasing food or receiving food donations shall check all food to ensure it is wholesome, unspoiled, free from contamination, properly labeled and safe for human consumption.
2. Food purchased is for use by residents. Staff and volunteers are responsible for providing their own food for meals or snacks expected to occur during work/volunteer hours.

C. Food Storage: Staff and residents shall comply with the following food storage requirements:

1. Staff shall check the food storage areas to ensure food or food equipment, utensils or single service articles are not stored in restrooms or under exposed sewer lines.
2. Staff shall ensure all potentially hazardous foods that need to be kept cold are maintained at forty-five (45) degrees Fahrenheit. Shelter refrigeration units must have a thermometer located in the warmest part of the unit.
3. Staff shall ensure raw and ready to eat foods are stored separately and that containers of food, food preparation equipment and single service articles are stored in a manner that protects them from splashes and other contamination.
4. All leftover prepared food shall be stored in a suitable container and appropriately labeled, saying what the item is, the date it was prepared, and if possible/applicable, include information about common allergens (i.e. nuts, milk, fish/shell fish)
5. Cleaning materials/supplies and poisonous or toxic materials shall be stored so that they do not contaminate food, food equipment, utensils, linens and single service and single use food articles. Containers of poisonous or toxic materials shall be prominently and distinctly marked or labeled for easy identification of contents.
6. Routine cleaning and inspection of food storage areas shall be conducted to ensure control and prevention of harborage, breeding and infestation by insects, rodents and other vermin.

D. Food Handling

1. Staff shall monitor appropriate utensil use to minimize direct handling of food.
2. Generally, food should be thawed in a refrigerator, in a microwave oven, or in cold water. Food must never be thawed on the counter or at room temperature. Meat shall be thawed on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator or in a container to prevent dripping and contamination of other foods.
3. Before preparing food staff or residents shall:
 - Clean all food preparation and cooking surfaces and utensils with a clean cloth, hot soapy water and a food safe disinfecting agent (A solution of 1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach in one gallon of water may be used to sanitize washed surfaces and utensils). Equipment, utensils, and single service items must be handled in a manner that protects them from contamination.
 - Use a separate cutting board when preparing raw meat, poultry or seafood
 - Check the “used by date”, and properly dispose of food that is past the date
 - Inspect food to ensure it is properly cleaned, unspoiled, free from contamination, properly labeled and safe for human consumption
4. Cooking, staff or residents shall:
 - Always follow cooking instructions

- Ensure the availability and use of a metal, stem type, numerically scaled thermometer, accurate to +/-3 degrees Fahrenheit, and monitor staff and resident use to ensure appropriate use for internal cooking, holding or refrigeration temperatures of all potentially hazardous foods are maintained
 - Ensure reheated food is warmed to an internal temperature of one hundred and sixty-five (165) degrees Fahrenheit
5. **Holding, staff or residents shall:**
- Ensure that food held for services is maintained at an appropriate hot (140 degrees) or cold (40 degrees) temperature
 - Ensure previously served (plated) food is not stored or re-served
- E. **Hygiene:** Staff and residents shall demonstrate good hygiene when engaged in food handling or preparation.
1. Hands and exposed areas of arms must be washed with soap and warm water before engaging in food handling or preparation and as often as is necessary to keep them clean, e.g., after smoking, eating, drinking; or using the toilet.
 2. Fingernails must be clean and trimmed.
 3. Outer clothing shall be clean and free of debris that can contaminate food.
 4. Residents and staff are prohibited from using any form of tobacco while engaged in food handling and preparation activities.
- F. **Kitchen and Cooking Safety:** Staff and residents shall comply with proper kitchen and cooking equipment safety requirements and shall receive training in advance of equipment use. Kitchen utensils and equipment shall be properly cleaned, maintained and stored to minimize damage or hazard.
- G. **Routine Monitoring:** The DRS/designee shall inspect food handling, preparation and storage practices, facilities, and equipment at least monthly to assure compliance with this policy and DHEC standards. Staff and residents shall comply with DHEC's review of the site and food handling, preparation and storage practices. The DRS shall report all DHEC findings to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and shall provide the required corrective action plan for any findings in accordance with DHEC guidelines.
- H. **Policy Violations:** Repeated violations of HHs' food handling preparation and safety standards may result in loss of food preparation privileges and can result in discipline in accordance with HHs' Progress Discipline policy.

Communication and Training:

The Board shall receive a copy of the policy at the time of periodic review and will have an opportunity to ask clarifying questions during the approval process. Employees and volunteers shall receive notice of the Board's policy review and approval including notice of any substantive changes. The notice will provide a link to the policy located on the HH website.

Staff and volunteers who have oversight responsibility for the shelter's food service functions shall receive additional training in DHEC compliance requirements and possess a good understanding of food safety practices as defined herein.

Definitions:

1. **Food Borne Illness:** Food borne illness is a preventable public health challenge that causes an estimated 48 million illnesses and 3,000 deaths each year in the United States. It is an illness that comes from eating contaminated food. The onset of symptoms may occur within minutes to weeks and often presents itself as flu-like symptoms, as the ill person may experience symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or fever.
2. **Warewashing:** The collective term that is used to refer to the process of collecting dirty kitchen ware and cutlery, including but not limited to glasses, pots, pans and dishes. Scraping them, washing them, and rinsing them, the process does not end there, as the collected equipment has to undergo sanitization before drying can be carried out.

Other Related Materials:

Shelter Inspection Checklist

References/Legal Authority:

[Cooking for Groups, United States Department of Agriculture, 2011.](#)

[Cooking Equipment Safety, Dining Safety Training, University of California Riverside, 2013](#)

Marking Guide For Group Home Inspection, DHEC.

[Food Code, United States Food & Drug Administration, 2022.](#)

[Requirements for Home-based Food Productions, SC Code Section 44-1-143, 2013](#)

Change Log:

Date of Change	Description of Change	Responsible Party
10.2023	This is a new policy.	N. Miller Prog. Eval Consultant with T. Doctor RSD and J. Antley CSM Lead