



FOOD HANDLING

Policy Code: 1119	FOOD HANDLING
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Policy Statement

CASS Disability Services accept our Work Health and Safety and Infection Control obligations to our staff and participants to control food safety hazards, in order to minimise their risk of exposure to microbiological hazards in the food handling. This policy and procedures is for staff if their role is to assist participants with meal preparation and/or delivery, food storage and reheating food in the participant's home and day programs. CASS DS team expect staff to have good personal hygiene and in good health when providing care and services to the participants. Meals may be prepared by staff or delivered by an outside meal service in accordance with the participant's Individual Plan. In providing meals, staff will have particular regard to Work Health and Safety and Infection Control Policies.

Procedure

This policy and procedures apply to all staff involved with meal preparation and/or delivery, cooking of food, storing of food, reheating of food, serving of food and disposing of food.

Responsibilities:

CASS Disability Services' management and coordinators will:

- Develop a food hygiene plan in line with national and state guidelines to minimise the occurrence and impact of food poisoning;
- Ensure adequately trained workers are responsible for the food safety practices; and
- Ensure education and training on food handling is provided to all staff as part of induction and ongoing training.

CASS Disability Services' staff members:

- Understand the requirements of food handling;
- Adhere to state and local policies and procedures on food safety at all times;
- Ensure education and training on food handling is provided to all staff as part of induction and ongoing training; and
- Undergo the required training and competency assessment in food safety practices

Practices:

1. Skills and Knowledge:

- All staff assisting the client with meal preparation must have knowledge of food safety and food hygiene principles and the skills to apply that knowledge, commensurate with their work activities; and
- The CASS DS Management and Coordinators to ensure that staff who are assisting participants with meals preparation and/or delivery has read this policy and willing to attend "Food Handling" training when arranged by CASS DS .



CASS Group- Disability Services

2. Health and Hygiene Requirements:

Staff must have good personal hygiene and in good health at all time when arriving to work at participant's home. If not feeling well, staff must contact Coordinator for replacement and/or perform other duties, if applicable. All staff must implement this policy and procedures when assisting participant with meals preparation/delivery. Staff must comply with the followings:

- Not engaging in any handling of food where there is a likelihood of food contamination as a result of a disease or health condition that the food handler may be suffering;
- Taking all practicable measures to ensure his or her body and anything from his or her body, does not contaminate food or surfaces likely to come into contact with food;
- Adhere to the dress code by not wearing any jewellery on the hands or around the wrists, nail polish or long sleeve top while handling food;
- Ensuring outer clothing is of a level of cleanliness that is appropriate for tasks involved;
- Ensuring any skin lesions are appropriately covered, and that bandages and dressings are completely covered with a waterproofed covering; and
- Do not sneeze or cough over unprotected food or surfaces likely to come into contact with food. Wear a face covering (such as mask) when handling with food.

3. Keep the food in the 'right' zone:

- Keep foods in the right temperature zone for as long as possible, use a fridge thermometer to check the temperature in the fridge. The temperature should be below 5°C. Keep the freezer temperature around -15°C to -18°C.
- When storing and transporting food:
 - Keep chilled food at 5°C or colder;
 - Keep frozen food frozen solid;
 - Keep hot foods at 60°C or hotter;
 - Throw out high risk food left in the Temperature Danger (5°C to 60°C) Zone for more than four hours (meat, poultry, dairy products, eggs, seafood, cooked rice, cooked pasta, prepared salads, coleslaws, pasta salads, prepared fruit salads); and
 - Food has been prepared by staff and left in the Temperature Danger Zone for more than two hours that should be discarded.
- If participant request staff purchase ready-to-eat, hot, chilled or frozen foods, staff need to get the food back to the participant's home as soon as practical and keep in correct storage temperature during transportation.
 - Carrying an insulated cooler or bag with an ice pack, to keep chilled or frozen foods cold;
 - Placing hot foods in an insulated container; and
 - Once staff arrives back to the participant's home, immediately transfer chilled and frozen food into the fridge and freezer.

Staff must consult and obtain consent before throwing away any "high risk food". If unsure, staff must contact Coordinator for advise.

4. Store food well:

- Keeping high-risk chilled food in the fridge;
- Keeping frozen foods frozen hard;
- Storing foods in clean, non-toxic, food storage containers;
- Not storing food in opened cans or jars;
- Storing cooked foods separately from raw foods;
- Storing raw meats, seafood and chicken at the bottom of the fridge, in sealed or covered containers;

- Food that has been prepared and immediately refrigerated should not be eaten if it is more than two days old;
 - Any prepared food that has been placed in the refrigerator should be labelled with the date and time it was prepared and the name of the person preparing it;
 - Food should not be defrosted at room temperature: always defrost food in the fridge or microwave;
 - Reheat foods once only: dispose of any leftover reheated foods;
 - Avoiding egg, dairy and meat products past their use-by dates;
 - Cover food in leak-proof containers with tight-fitting lids or wrap in foil or plastic film
 - When in doubt, throw it out; and
 - Ensure the fridge door seals are in good condition, any concern, staff need to report to Coordinator.
5. Wash hands when preparing food:
- All staff must wash and dry their hands prior to handling any food or packaging;
 - Wash hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm running water before preparing food;
 - Wash hands thoroughly before preparing food and after handling raw meats, chicken, seafood, eggs and unwashed vegetables;
 - Dry hands with a clean towel (preferably disposable paper towel);
 - If staff have any cuts or wounds on your hands, cover them with protective waterproof dressing and gloves;
 - Wear clean, protective clothes like an apron when preparing food;
 - Different clothes/apron should be used to clean areas such as kitchens and bathrooms to avoid cross contamination;
 - Disposable gloves should be used when preparing food for participants; and
 - Gloves should be changed after preparing raw foods and before handling cooked food.
6. Keep it clean and separate:
- All food contact areas should be cleaned prior to commencing food preparation;
 - Food preparation areas should be clear of pests, such as flies;
 - Keep raw foods separate from ready-to-eat foods;
 - Use separate and clean utensils and equipment for ready-to-eat food;
 - Different coloured chopping boards should be used to raw and ready-to-eat food, and prepare meat, vegetable, chicken and fish;
 - Don't use the same equipment and utensils for raw foods and for ready-to-eat foods, without thoroughly cleaning them first;
 - Thoroughly clean and dry cutting-boards, knives, pans, plates, containers and other utensils after using them;
 - Use hot soapy water to wash things and ensure they are thoroughly dry before using them again;
 - Use fresh clean tea-towels and/or disposable paper towels to dry utensils and equipment, or allow them to air-dry;
 - Use a dishwasher with appropriate detergents to wash and dry utensils and equipment, if applicable;
 - Rinse raw fruits, salad and vegetables with clean water before using them; and
 - Kept pets, such as dog, cat and bird, away from areas where food is prepared, consumed or stored.

7. Reheating and cooling food:
 - Reheat foods thoroughly so they are steaming (above 70°C) and hold it at that temperature or hotter for at least two minutes or boiling;
 - Keep cooked food out of the Temperature Danger Zone;
 - If staff need to store food for late use, once the steam stops rising cover it and put it in the fridge;
 - When staff cook ahead of time, divide large portions of food into small shallow containers for refrigeration;
 - If staff don't want to cool the food straight away, keep hot food at a temperature of 60°C or hotter; and
 - Good airflow inside the fridge is important for effective cooling. Try to avoid overfilling the fridge.

8. Thaw it right - use the fridge:
 - Unless instructions direct otherwise, thaw frozen food in the fridge or use a microwave;
 - If instructed on packaged frozen food, prepare and cook the food as directed, straight from the freezer;
 - Defrost frozen meats, fish and poultry thoroughly before cooking;
 - Keep defrosted food in the fridge until it is ready to be cooked;
 - If defrosting using a microwave, cook the food immediately after defrosting; and
 - Avoid re-freezing thawed food.

9. Cook it right:
 - Use a food thermometer (if participant have one, if not encourage participant to get one) to help get the temperature right;
 - Thoroughly cook foods made from eggs such as omelettes;
 - Cook poultry until the meat is white – there should be no pink flesh;
 - Cook white fish until it flakes easily with a fork;
 - Most foods should be cooked to eat 75°C; and
 - Take extra care when preparing foods where the eggs remain uncooked such as egg-nog and home-made mayonnaise, as bacteria on the egg shells can contaminate the food.

10. Hands should be washed and dried after handling garbage.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

Staff will be provided with training on “Food Handling” and “Infection Control”.

Documents related to this policy	
Related Policies	Infection control
Forms, record keeping or other organisational documents	• Food handling training record

Reviewing and approving this policy



CASS Group- Disability Services

Frequency	Person responsible	Approval
3 years	Unit Head	HAS & DS Committee

Policy review and version tracking			
Review	Date Approved	Approved by	Next Review due
Version 1	1 June 2014	HAS & DS Committee	31 May 2017
Version 2	29 May 2017	HAS & DS Committee	28 May 2020
Version 3	November 2020	HAS & DS Committee	November 2023
Version 4	November 2023	HAS & DS Committee	November 2026
Version 5	September 2025	HAS & DS Committee	September 2028