



Divine Retreat Centre

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Food Safety and Hygiene Policy

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1. Policy Statement

All Volunteers and staff that are involved in food handling at any stage of the process need to be aware of good food hygiene practices and the need to handle food in a safe, clean environment. The Divine Retreat Centre has a duty to ensure that all staff/volunteers and retreatants should be kept as safe as possible from poisoning and related food-associated illness by the adoption of high standards of food hygiene and food preparation.

2. Employment of Food Handlers

2.1 Pre-employment Checks

- All catering staff must have a health check. All new starters should be trained to the Basic Food Hygiene standard and immediately informed of the Food Hygiene Policy.
- New staff must also be informed that should they suffer from diarrhoea, vomiting, throat infection, skin rash, boils or other skin lesions, they should inform the authorities immediately.
- They should also report if:
 - i. Anyone at home is suffering from diarrhoea or vomiting
 - ii. Any of their family has suffered gastro-intestinal illness whilst on holiday
 - iii. They are returning to duty after suffering any of the above

2.2 Training

All catering staff should be trained to the Basic Food Hygiene standard and immediately informed of the Trust's Food Hygiene Policy

Training will include:

- Practical on the job training by a competent Supervisor/Manager
- Theoretical training as part of structured food hygiene training
- Product specific task training e.g., use of a particular cleaning product of specialised cleaning equipment

- Specific task training e.g., cleaning dangerous machinery such as meat slicers
- Chemical safety training
- Use and care of protective equipment

Catering staff involved in cleaning tasks must be properly trained and this must be recorded on their training record.

Staff will take part in e-learning programmes or in person trainings on an as required basis. All staff will complete their mandatory training in the time dictated by the organisation.

3. Personal Hygiene

- Food Handlers must observe high standards of personal cleanliness and have a moral and legal obligation to do so.
- Main kitchen staff - Personal clothing must be stored in lockers or cloakrooms. Protective clothing, e.g., chef whites and overalls must be worn at work and must be kept clean and smart, and changed at regular intervals.
- Other staff must wear aprons within kitchen area, when cleaning and clearing.
- Footwear must be sensible. Sturdy, low heeled and enclosed type and must be clean. Sandals or soft shoes such as trainers are not permitted
- Staff working in areas where open food is being prepared must wear a head covering that reduces the risk of hair falling into food.
- Long hair must be tied back, without any trailing ends and fully inside an approved hair covering.
- Nail varnish and false nails must not be worn. Nails are to be kept short and scrupulously clean.
- Cuts and abrasions must be covered by blue waterproof dressings.
- Regular hand washing is essential and is to be carried out in designated wash hand basins only, which are provided with hot water, soap and disposable towel.
- Food handlers must not wear jewellery other than un-jewelled wedding rings and plain sleeper earrings (1cm diameter). Any other body piercing jewellery is prohibited.
- All food handlers must wash their hands and be bare below the elbows.
- Bad habits that have to be avoided in food storage and preparation areas :
 - Nose picking
 - Coughing and sneezing
 - Scratching and touching other parts of your body e.g. head or hair
 - Nail biting
 - Finger licking

- Tasting food with fingers
- Eating and drinking in food preparation and service areas.

3.1 Washing Hands

All food handlers must wash their hands and be bare below the elbows.

Before:

- Starting work and frequently thereafter
- Handling cooked or ready to eat food e.g., salads
- Entering food related environment.

After:

- Visiting the toilet
- Coughing and sneezing or using a handkerchief
- Touching their face or hair
- Cleaning tasks
- Handling chemicals
- Handling rubbish and waste
- Wearing rubber or plastic gloves
- Breaks
- Eating and drinking
- Smoking

Between:

- Handling different foods

Before and After

- Handling raw meat, poultry and fish
- Handling raw eggs

4. Temperature Control

It is a legal requirement that temperature checks are completed throughout the entire food chain (from delivery to consumption). These temperatures will vary from the point of delivery through to storage, during preparation, cooking and service and where applicable cooling and reheating of food.

Listed below are the acceptable temperature limits:

STAGE	TEMPERATURE
Cooked chill products	Below 3 degrees C
Chilled delivery	At or below 8 degrees C
Frozen delivery	-15 degrees C or colder
Chilled storage	Between 0-5 degrees C
Frozen Storage	-18 degrees C or colder
Cooking	75 degrees or higher

Cooling	Food must reach 5 degrees C within 2 hours
Reheating	75 degrees C
Hot service	63 degrees C or higher
Cold Service	At or below 5 degrees C

4.1 Kitchen / Refrigerator and Freezer Temperature Monitoring

- In order to ensure food safety, it is essential to check the temperature of all refrigerators and freezers on a daily basis.
- The temperature of all refrigerators and freezers should be checked twice daily
- The first check should be made at the beginning of the day, the second check mid afternoon
- In order to get accurate and reliable readings of freezer temperatures, a sanitised, calibrated probe thermometer should be sandwiched tightly between packs of pliable foods e.g., frozen vegetables. Avoid puncturing packaging. (If this is likely to be the case use the infra red probe). Leave the probe to adjust to the temperature for up to 5 minutes before taking a reading.

4.2 Temperature Record Keeping

Written records of these temperatures must be made and retained for three months by the Catering Manager/Chef. Faults should be reported to the Catering Manager/Chef.

4.3 Probe Calibration

The accuracy of all food thermometers should be checked monthly. This can be done by:

- i. Part filling a container with broken ice
- ii. Wet the ice with a small amount of water and allow a short time for the temperature to equalise
- iii. Insert the tip of the probe into the ice/water and leave for three minutes before taking the probe reading.
- iv. A reading between -1 and +1 degree is acceptable
- v. Hot calibration is measure by kettle hot water insert the probe into the steam to reach between +99 degrees C maximum +101 degrees C

The results of the monthly self-calibration checks should be recorded for each probe in use.

4.4 Exemption from Temperature Control

For practical reasons, high risk food may occasionally need to be kept outside of the temperature limits shown above, e.g., during food preparation, but these periods must be kept as short as possible.

4.5 Chilled and Frozen Food

- Chilled and frozen food must be stored in a refrigerator or freezer immediately after it has been delivered.
- Raw and cooked foods must be separated. Wherever possible, different refrigerators should be provided for cooked meats, cooked fish, raw meat, raw fish and dairy produce to reduce the risk of cross contamination.
- Where this is not practical, raw and cooked food should be stored in separate fridges and where only one fridge is available, raw food including fresh eggs must be stored below cooked and ready to eat food.
- Outer cardboard or wooden boxes must not be used to store food in refrigerators. Foods that have been decanted from their original packaging (including frozen food and vacuum food, packed food) must be labelled with 'use by' or 'best before' date on the original packaging.
- If the content of a can of food is only partly used, the remainder must be transferred to a clean container, covered, date coded, and stored in the refrigerator.
- The temperatures at which food must be stored at are as follows: -
 - Chilled food 5 degrees C or lower
 - In the case of cooked chilled food 3 degrees C
 - Frozen food -18 degrees C or colder

4.6 Cold Food – the 4 hour rule

- High risk food that should normally be stored below 5 degrees C can be displayed above this temperature, provided that it is for a single period of up to 4 hours.
- Examples of situations where this exemption may be used include salad bars, cheese boards, buffet and sandwich trolley rounds.
- Any leftover food must be discarded immediately at the end of this period.

4.7 Hot Food – the 2 hour rule

High risk food that should normally be stored above 63 degrees C can be displayed below this temperature, provided that it is for a single period of up to 2 hours. However, the quality of the food is likely to suffer and therefore this exemption should be avoided and only used when absolutely necessary.

4.8 Staff Food and Storage

- In order to comply with food hygiene legislation, staff placing food in refrigerators must be labelled and dated.
- The labelling must indicate who it belongs to and the date it was placed into the refrigerator.

- Catering staff will dispose of any food that is undated or has been in the fridge for more than 2 days for example dated today (day 1) the next day (day 2 disposed off on day 3).
- Any food that has a manufacturer's sell/use by date must be labelled with the owner's name and will be disposed off by Catering staff when this date is exceeded.

5. Storage of Food

Correct storage of food is fundamental to the hygienic operation of food safety. Failure to ensure satisfactory conditions of cleanliness, temperatures and stock rotation can result in problems of unfit or spoiled food. This included mould, discolouration, staleness and insect and rodent infestation.

5.1 Product Date Codes

- To ensure good stock rotation and compliance with the Food Labelling Regulation, all food must be date coded.
- Unprepared and uncut fruit and raw vegetables must all be date coded either on the individual box e.g., strawberries or melon.
- The box which the food, such as apples and bananas are stored should be marked with the date that it was received and placed in storage. However, the box in which the food is stored should be marked with the date that it was placed in storage.

5.2 Date Codes are classified under two headings

- **'Use By'** – applied to highly perishable 'high risk' products such as cooked meats, dairy products
- **'Best Before'** – applied to perishable and non-perishable foods, e.g., cereals and packed products, cans, usually with a shelf life of over 3 months.
- All products must be used before the expiry of these dates and care must be taken when using products to check labelling instructions, which may indicate for example –
 - Refrigerate after opening
 - Use within three days of opening
- The rule **'First in – First Out'** should always be applied.
- Opened packs of food should be decanted into clean containers with close fitting lids labelled and date coded in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendation.

5.3 Dry Foods

- Rooms and cupboards used for the storage of dried and canned food should be –
 - Dry

- Cool
 - Well lit
 - Ventilated
 - Vermin proof
 - Clean
- Opened packets and bags of dry food should be placed into airtight-lidded containers.
 - If the packaging is discarded, the container should be labelled with the 'best before date'
 - Dry goods should not be stored on the floor and ensure that there is enough space underneath the lowest shelves to allow thorough cleaning.
 - Regular checks for evidence of pests such as droppings, chewed up materials and dead insects should take place.

5.4 Preparation of Food

Wherever possible, the preparation of raw food, such as raw meat, fish and vegetables must be carried out in a specific area, away from surfaces where cooked and ready to eat foods are prepared.

Where physical separation is not possible, it is essential that preparation surfaces, sinks and utensils be thoroughly cleaned and sanitised between each food preparation task.

Food that is past its 'Best Before' or 'Use By' date, must neither be used, nor must food in badly dented or rusted cans.

5.5 Cooked Chill Food

This method of preparation is where the food is thoroughly cooked, then chilled rapidly in a blast chiller to a temperature of 3 degrees C or below within 90 minutes. The food is then stored between 0 degrees C and 3 degrees C for a predetermined period, until required for reheating. Cooked chill food should be reheated to a temperature of at least 75 degrees C.

5.6 Cooked Frozen Food

This method of preparation is where the food is thoroughly cooked then frozen rapidly in a blast freezer to a temperature of -1C or below within 90 minutes. The food is then stored between -18 degrees and below for a predetermined period, until required for reheating. Cooked frozen food should be reheated to a temperature of at least 75 degrees.

5.7 Retreatant's Personal Food Handling

It is recognised that some visitor's will bring food into the DRC premises for their own consumption and DRC would not want to prevent them from doing this. However, it should be recognised that the DRC cannot take responsibility for this food because it is not possible to control its storage and preparation

prior to being brought in. Cooked food brought into the centre for your own consumption or any food that is not consumed should be disposed off or taken by the retreatant.

If retreatants bring in food, good practice dictates that hot food brought in should be in a flask or similar vessel to maintain temperature. Likewise cold food should be in a flask or similar vessel to maintain temperature.

6. Cleaning and Sanitising

It is a legal requirement that all parts of food premises are kept clean. An area specific cleaning schedule must be completed to help maintain a high standard of cleanliness. It must be split into daily, weekly, monthly tasks and include: -

- Every surface (walls, floors and if appropriate, ceiling) all equipment (oven, fryer, grill etc.); all fixtures and fittings (preparation tables, extract canopy etc.)
- The method of cleaning
- The chemicals and equipment to be used
- Any personal protective equipment (PPE) that must be worn
- Safety points e.g., isolation of electrical equipment
- Who is to undertake the cleaning
- Time of day when cleaning is to take place
- The frequency of cleaning
- The standard of cleanliness required
- Who will supervise / monitor the effectiveness of the cleaning

6.1 Weekly Clean

- Wash hands and put on gloves
- Remove food to another suitable storage area
- Discard any out of date or unlabelled food
- Remove all loose debris and excess soiling
- Prepare the cleaning solution in a well-ventilated area (refer to manufacturer's instruction)
- Dampen or rinse a cloth in the cleaning solution and wring out
- Remove and clean all shelves, hanging rails and drip trays and take to a cleaning area to dry
- Cleaning accessible fan parts, door seals and handles when if becomes soiled.
- Return the shelves, hanging rails and drip trays to the correct position.
- Replace food in the correct order (but only when the correct refrigerator temperature has been reached.
- Check the refrigerator temperature is correct
- After use, all equipment should be checked, cleaned, dried and returned to the storage area.

- Dispose off the cloth when the task is completed.
- Remove gloves and wash hands.
- Note – frequently rinse the cloth in the cleaning solution. Change the cleaning solution

6.2 Check Clean

- Wash hands and put on gloves
- Discard any out of date or unlabelled food
- Clean any spillages within the refrigerator
- Remove gloves and wash hands

7. Waste Disposal

- Food waste and other refuse must not accumulate in kitchen and should not be left overnight.
- Waste bins and sacks must be regularly emptied throughout the day.
- Internal refuse containers should be maintained in good condition and be regularly cleaned and disinfected
- If refuse containers in food preparation areas are fitted with lids, they should be foot operated
- Cardboard boxes must not be used as refuse containers.
- The central refuse containers and refuse storage areas must be maintained in good condition and be regularly cleaned.
- Bins must be fitted with close fitting lids that are kept shut.
- Refuse must not be allowed to accumulate externally as this can provide potential harbourage for pests.
- Waste oil should be removed by an approved contractor and appropriate paper work kept on file.

7.1 Food Pests

- Kitchen areas can provide ideal conditions for the survival and multiplication of pests.
- Cockroaches, houseflies, ants, insects, mites, rodents (especially mice) cats and birds can spoil and contaminate food – and thereby transmitting infectious diseases.
- Pests can come into the kitchen with foodstuffs or equipment or be attracted to conditions favourable to them.
- Later they may move or be carried to previously un-infested area in food trolleys presenting a health risk to the consumer.

7.2 Pest Control

The strategies that must be in place to prevent kitchen pests are: -

- Ensuring cleaning schedules are properly carried out
- Inspecting dry goods regularly for signs of infestation
- Report all pest sightings
- Remove refuse and food waste from the kitchen as soon as possible

- Reporting any defects in the building, fabric that could be conducive to infestation

8. Monitoring

- Regular checks should be made by an acting internal Quality Assurance Team
- In the event of food poisoning being suspected a DATIX form should be completed, and where applicable a Notification of Infectious Disease or Food Poisoning Form should be completed.
- The Environmental Health Officer (EHO) is a local authority official responsible for the enforcement of legislation relating to food hygiene and food safety. The functions of an EHO in the field of food hygiene can be summarised as follows: -
 - To ensure product safety and fitness for consumption
 - To reduce possible sources of contamination entering the food environment.
 - To monitor conditions and hygienic operation within the food environment.
 - To ensure compliance with relevant legislation
 - To establish the integrity of management and effectiveness of control procedures
 - To offer professional advice
- Hygiene offences can be the subject of a prosecution or the issue of an improvement notice allowing not less than 14 days to comply. Where there is an imminent risk of injury to health, an emergency prohibition notice can be served, immediate cessation of a process or use of equipment or closure of the premises; food which is regarded as unfit for consumption or is contaminated can be seized.
- However, most EHO's prefer in the first instance, to act by means of a letter specifying items to be remedied within a stated time, provided they are confident the work will be carried out
- On the day of the EHO visit, the Catering Manager is to provide the Estates and Facilities Site Manager with an overview of findings and when received a copy of the letter provided.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have fully read and understood the catering staff and Food Handlers Policy of Divine Retreat Centre. I understand that if I have any questions or concerns about this policy, it is my responsibility to discuss this with Chef Donby.

Name (print):

Signature:

Date:

