

# Food Safety Guidelines for Licensed Child Care Centres

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To ensure that the foods we serve and eat are safe, everyone involved in the food chain is responsible for some level of food safety. It begins with the producers (farms, processing plants, etc.) and ends at the consumer who also has an important role to play. The food industry and several government agencies work together to deliver food that is safe to consumers.

It is important to remember that the food handler plays a vital role in the safety of the food by ensuring the use of safe food handling practices in their kitchen.

This resource was developed by the Thunder Bay District Health Unit for use by Licensed Child Care Centres. Please direct any questions to the public health inspector assigned to your centre or to the program at 625-5900 or toll-free 1-888-294-6630 (use ext. 5930).

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## Regulations Governing Safe Food in Child Care Centres

The purpose of the **Health Protection and Promotion Act** is to provide for the organization and delivery of public health programs and services, the prevention of the spread of disease and the promotion and protection of the health of the people of Ontario. The legislation specifies that boards of health must provide or ensure the provision of a minimum level of public health programs and services in each of the specified areas.

The **Ontario Ministry of Health** has published numerous standards that set out the minimum requirements for fundamental public health programs and services targeted at the prevention of disease, health promotion and health protection.

The goal of the **Food Safety** standard is to improve the health of the population by reducing the incidence of foodborne illness. The objectives of the standard are:

1. To ensure that food is stored, prepared, served and distributed in a manner consistent with accepted public health practices.
2. To stop the sale or distribution of food that is unfit for human consumption by reason of disease adulteration, impurity or other cause.

The food safety standard also includes requirements for the delivery of food safety information, inspections of food premises, food handler training courses, food recalls, response to food safety complaints and data collection and reporting requirements.

All food premises are evaluated each year according to the potential risk they have to cause a foodborne illness. Premises are categorized as high, medium or low risk. The level of risk will determine the food safety strategy the Public Health Inspector will use during inspection.

**Ontario Regulation 493/17: Food Premises** (under the Health Protection and Promotion Act) is the legislation that applies to all food service premises in Ontario. The definition of a food service premise is any food premise where meals or meal portions are prepared for immediate consumption or sold or served in a form that will permit immediate consumption on the premises or elsewhere.

Ontario Regulation 493/17: Food Premises mandates the public disclosure of inspection results. Child care facilities will not receive a letter grade through the DineWise program. TBDHU is transitioning to an online disclosure system which will make the inspection reports available to the public. Child care facilities will be informed when the public site is available.

A recent copy of Ontario Regulation 493/17: Food Premises is available from **Ontario E-Laws Statutes and Regulations**: [www.e-laws.gov.on.ca](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca)

## Personal Hygiene

While personal hygiene may be a sensitive subject, it is vital to food safety. Personal cleanliness is the single most important factor in the prevention of food borne illness. Following a few simple rules will ensure the health of employees and clients.

1. Food handlers are to be clean and wear clean outer garments.
2. Food handlers' hair is to be confined when preparing, handling and serving food.
3. Food handlers are to wash their hands frequently. Wash hands before starting work, before handling or preparing foods, after handling raw meat, after using the restroom, sneezing, coughing, blowing their nose or handling money and after every possible point of contamination (*Appendix B*).
4. Food handlers must be free from infectious agents that may be spread through food or water.
5. Employees with stomach cramps, diarrhea, a sinus infection or other flu-like symptoms should report any illness to their supervisor immediately. If employees are ill, they should stay home or go home. Managers and/or supervisors shall ensure that appropriate action is taken, which may include excluding that individual from activities that involve the handling of food or food contact surface, or authorizing the individual's absence from the workplace.
6. When serving/dispensing food, use utensils such as tongs, ladles, lifters and spoons whenever possible. Never serve with your fingers.
7. Do not dip fingers into food or lick fingers for any reason.
8. No double-dipping of utensils when tasting food. Ladle a small amount of food into a dish and taste the food from the dish with a spoon. Do not reuse the spoon.
9. Do not touch hair, face or other parts of the body with your hands and then handle food.
10. Wear non-latex based gloves if you have a cut or burn on your hands. Do not handle food directly while wearing a bandage.
11. Keep fingernails short, clean and never wear nail polish to work.
12. Leave all jewellery including rings and watches at home. Never wear jewellery when preparing food.
13. Do not smoke, eat or chew gum while working.

## Children and Food Handling

We support and encourage children to learn life skills such as basic food preparation and baking and we certainly do not want the program, in its entirety, to end however food safety requirements must be at the forefront. Please see the handout Guidelines for Food Handling with Children which is available at <https://www.tbdhu.com/health-topics/schools-daycares/child-care-operators>

## Food Source

Please review the following guidelines when purchasing or accepting foods into your facility.

1. All food products must be from an approved source and must have been inspected or graded. For example, all eggs must be graded - either Grade A or B. Eggs from animals other than a domestic hen must be in clean condition, with no visible cracks and transported and stored at 4°C no farm fresh eggs permitted. All meat must be inspected. If uninspected meat, such as wild game is to be served, the appropriate notice and application must first be submitted..
2. Purchase perishable foods with 'Best Before' dates or spoilage time in mind. Remember that once opened, some foods can spoil quickly regardless of the 'Best Before' date.
3. When food is ordered from a commercial outlet a list of ingredients should be requested. This list must be made available to parents on request.
4. Canned food should be free of dents, cracks or bulging lids. Do not accept any home canned or jarred foods.
5. Buy cold and frozen foods last. Take these foods straight to the child care facility and refrigerate/freeze immediately.

## Food Storage

Refrigerators and freezers are your main tools for keeping potentially hazardous foods cold enough to prevent bacteria from growing. Providing the necessary facilities and equipment for storing food safely and training employees to monitor each kind of food while it is in storage should be part of routine staff training.

1. Adequate refrigerator storage space must be provided. Refrigerators must be equipped with accurate indicating thermometers. Place the thermometer closest to the door.
2. Store all raw foods on the bottom shelf of your refrigerator below all cooked and ready-to-eat foods.
3. Keep raw foods separate from cooked or ready-to-eat foods.
4. All cold hazardous foods must be maintained at an internal temperature of 4°C (40°F) or less. All hot hazardous foods must be maintained at an internal temperature of 60°C (140°F) or greater.
5. All pre-packaged, non-hazardous foods such as breads, cereals, cookies and crackers must be stored in a dry clean area on shelves/racks designed to protect the food from contamination and must be readily cleanable
6. Keep all foods covered or in a container with a tight fitting lid to protect from contamination. These containers must be labelled if foods were removed from their original packaging. Food containers must be made of food grade material and be designed for food storage. Single use

disposable containers (i.e. yogurt containers) are not to be washed/sanitized and re-used for the storage of food.

7. Rotate food in order of purchase. Remember FIFO (refer to definitions).
8. Store cleaning/disinfecting agents, insecticides and other chemical products separately from food and out of reach of children.

## Food Preparation

Many foods are most at risk during preparation and service. As foods are thawed, cooked, held, served and cooled, they may pass through the temperature danger zone (the temperature range between 4°C and 60°C or 40°F and 140°F) several times. Each time food is handled, it runs the risk of cross contamination from other food and from food contact surfaces, such as hands, cutting boards and utensils.

1. Prepare all foods as close to serving time as possible.
2. Never thaw foods at room temperature. Refer to *Appendix A* for Methods of Safe Thawing.
3. Hot foods must be cooled to 4°C (40°F) within 6 hours. Refer to *Appendix A* for guidelines on proper cooling.
4. Never reheat leftovers more than once. No second chance for leftovers.
5. Reheat leftovers or foods prepared a day or more in advance to their original cook temperatures within 2 hours.
6. Contaminated food may smell and appear good. Never taste food that you suspect is questionable. It may be contaminated. Never serve mouldy food, even if mould can be scraped off or cut out.
7. Do not handle the inside of cups, glasses, bowls or the eating ends of cutlery. Pick up cutlery and serving utensils by the handles.
8. Work surfaces for food preparation must be cleaned after each use. Wash work surfaces with hot soapy water. Rinse, then sanitize by spraying with a sanitizing solution. Sanitizing solutions may contain chlorine (bleach), iodine, quats (quaternary ammonium) or any other agent that is non-toxic and sanitizes effectively. (Consult a Public Health Inspector prior to the use of any new product)
9. Ensure that all food is processed in a manner that makes the food safe to eat.
10. Ensure an accurate probe thermometer is available to check internal food temperatures. See chart on the next page.

Product	Celsius (°C)	Fahrenheit (°F)
<b>Ground Meat and Meat Mixtures</b> (excluding poultry)	<b>74</b>	<b>165</b>
<b>Beef, Veal, Hamburger</b> Deboned and rolled	<b>71</b>	<b>160</b>
<b>Lamb/Goat</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>160</b>
<b>Pork</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>160</b>
<b>Poultry</b>		
Chicken, whole	<b>82</b>	<b>180</b>
Turkey, whole	<b>82</b>	<b>180</b>
Poultry breasts	<b>74</b>	<b>165</b>
Poultry thighs, wings	<b>74</b>	<b>165</b>
Ground poultry	<b>74</b>	<b>165</b>
Stuffing (cooked alone or in bird)	<b>74</b>	<b>165</b>
Duck, goose, pheasant	<b>74</b>	<b>165</b>
<b>Seafoods</b>		
Fish, shellfish and other seafoods	<b>70</b>	<b>158</b>

## Cleaning and Maintenance

Each child care facility needs an overall cleaning program to organize all cleaning and sanitizing tasks. Your program should help you identify your cleaning needs, set up a master cleaning schedule, select the supplies and tools you need and train your employees to make the best use of their skills.

1. Keep storage areas dry, well maintained, well-lit and clean.
2. Garbage is to be stored in leak proof, non-absorbent container and removed from the premises as often as necessary to maintain a sanitary condition.
3. Screen all doors and windows in your day nursery and maintain in good repair. If a pest or rodent problem is suspected, contact a professional pest control operator immediately.

## Hand Washing Facilities

Train your employees to properly wash their hands and make sure that they have proper hand washing stations and supplies. The hand washing station must be located to allow convenient use by food handlers in the food preparation area and be accessible for use at all times.

1. A sink equipped with hot and cold running water, liquid soap and paper towel in dispensers is required for hand washing in any area where food is prepared. This sink is to be used for hand washing and for no other purpose.

## Dishwashing Facilities

There are 2 acceptable methods for washing dishes that are approved by the health unit. Depending on what is being washed, you must choose either a 3-compartment sink or dishwasher – for any utensil or dish that touches a person’s mouth (forks, spoons, cups/glasses, plates) or a 2-compartment sink – for pots/pans, cutting boards, serving utensils.

1. All dishes used in the preparation of foods must be washed and sanitized in a two-compartment sink according to the two-compartment sink method.
2. All dishes used for eating must be washed and sanitized in a three-compartment sink according to the three-compartment sink method or in a mechanical dishwasher.
3. Mechanical dishwashing is acceptable using a household dishwasher, which has a separate sanitizing cycle (temperature booster) and is capable of effectively cleaning and sanitizing. Environmental swabs taken by the public health inspector will confirm proper cleaning and sanitizing.
4. Mechanical dishwashing using a commercial dishwasher can be achieved through a chemical sanitizer or through heat. A temperature of not lower than 82°C for a minimum of 10 seconds is required for heat. If the dishwasher bears a certification from NSF International the above statement does not apply. Those dishwashers, however, must comply with what is set out by the manufacturer.
5. If a three-compartment sink or dishwasher is not available, single service items/dishes must be used.

## Food Handler Training

The Thunder Bay District Health Unit offers food handling courses that promote safe food handling within the food service industry. This successful program has been designed to familiarize food industry staff with safe food handling practices to ensure that food is prepared, stored and served in a manner that is consistent with the Food Premises Regulation under the Health Protection and Promotion Act.

Under Regulation 493/17: Food Premises, every operator of a food service premise shall ensure that there is at least one food handler or supervisor on the premise who has completed food handler training during every hour which the premise is operating. This means that any time food is being prepared or served, a staff member trained in safe food handling must be on site.

To obtain further information on safe food handling training, visit the TBDHU's online course IN GOOD HANDS (<https://ingoodhands.ca/>) or contact the Environmental Health Department at (807) 625-5930 or toll free at 1-888-294-6630 ext. 5930.