

# Potluck Events

## LICENSE EXEMPTION REQUIREMENTS

A potluck is a meal at which each guest brings food that is shared with others. Potluck events are exempt from licensing requirements if:

- Food is brought by the people attending.
- Food is not prepared in or brought into a licensed food establishment kitchen at the site of the potluck.

## Examples

The following examples may help you determine if your event is exempt from licensing. If you need help to determine if your event is exempt from licensing requirements, contact the licensing agency in your area. To find the agency in your area, see the [Licensing](#) website.

IF	THEN
<p>A school PTA plans a potluck for parents. Families bring food to share. The school provides paper supplies and beverages. Food is served in the school cafeteria, but the kitchen is not used at all for the potluck.</p>	<p>This <b>IS</b> a potluck event and is <b>EXEMPT FROM LICENSING</b> because the food is shared and is not brought into the licensed kitchen. Schools may sponsor a potluck if the school kitchen is not used in any manner for the potluck.</p>
<p>A local motorcycle club publicly advertises a potluck. The ad asks people to bring a chicken (cooked at home or purchased from a store) and a side dish to share. Event organizers will provide beverages, desserts and paper supplies.</p>	<p>This <b>IS</b> a potluck event and is <b>EXEMPT FROM LICENSING</b> because the food, beverages and supplies are shared by the attendees.</p>
<p>A 4-H club publicly advertises a lutefisk dinner. All of the food will be prepared at a local social club.</p>	<p>This <b>IS NOT</b> a potluck event and <b>REQUIRES A LICENSE</b> because the food provided was not brought by the attendees.</p>
<p>A youth hockey club publicly advertises an event at a local restaurant. All of the hot food will be held hot in the licensed restaurant's ovens.</p>	<p>This <b>IS NOT</b> a potluck event and <b>REQUIRES A LICENSE</b> because it uses the kitchen of a licensed food establishment.</p>

## Food safety starts with you...

- Do not handle or prepare food if you have vomiting or diarrhea.
- Buy ingredients – especially meats – from a safe source such as a grocery store or farmers' market.
- Keep food safe by following 4 simple steps – clean, cook, separate and chill.

### Clean

- Wash hands and surfaces often.
- Follow safe handwashing steps.
- Wash, rinse, sanitize and air dry all utensils.

### Cook

- Always cook food to safe temperatures.
- Reheat food quickly.
- Keep hot food hot.

### Separate

- Keep raw meat, poultry and their juices away from ready-to-eat food.
- Use clean utensils with each new food.
- Wash hands after touching raw meat and poultry.

### Chill

- Refrigerate food right away.
- Cool food quickly in small containers.
- Keep cold food cold.

## Resources

[Minnesota Department of Health Food Business Safety \(www.health.state.mn.us/foodbizsafety\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/foodbizsafety)

[Clean & Separate Keeping Food Safe at Home \(www.health.state.mn.us/people/foodsafety/clean/index.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/people/foodsafety/clean/index.html)

[Cook & Chill Keeping Food Safe and Home \(www.health.state.mn.us/people/foodsafety/cook/index.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/people/foodsafety/cook/index.html)

[Cooking Safely for a Crowd \(extension.umn.edu/preserving-and-preparing/cooking-safely-crowd\)](http://extension.umn.edu/preserving-and-preparing/cooking-safely-crowd)

[Licensing \(www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/food/license/index.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/food/license/index.html)

Minnesota Department of Health  
Food, Pools, and Lodging Services  
PO Box 64975  
St. Paul, MN 55164-0975  
651-201-4500  
[health.foodlodging@state.mn.us](mailto:health.foodlodging@state.mn.us)  
[www.health.state.mn.us](http://www.health.state.mn.us)

JANUARY 2019

*To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-4500.*