

Food Safety at Lunch and Learn Events

Lunch and Learn sessions are educational seminars provided at a workplace or event. When lunch is provided to attendees by the employer, the organizer or caterer must follow provincial food safety rules, outlined in the Alberta Food Regulation.

When food is provided, the organizer (or caterer) must:

1. Obtain food from approved sources, like restaurants, local grocery stores, and licensed caterers. These facilities must have a valid Food Handling Permit from AHS.
2. Protect food from contamination by:
 - keeping raw and ready-to-eat foods separate during storage, preparation, transport and display,
 - using tongs or other utensils to serve food,
 - keeping food in covered containers as much as possible, and
 - wrapping sandwiches and baked goods separately in food-grade plastic, if possible.
3. Serve hot food at 60°C or hotter, and cold foods at 4°C or colder. Monitor food temperatures using a probe thermometer.
4. Ensure handwashing facilities, with warm running water, soap and paper towel, are available and easily accessible for food handlers and attendees.

Other recommended food safety practices include:

- Keeping an extra set of clean serving utensils available, in case one set falls on the floor or otherwise becomes contaminated.
- Using disposable dishware and utensils. A caterer may supply reusable dishware and utensils that have been cleaned and sanitized prior to use.
- Keeping the original packaging and/or a list of ingredients for food being served, in case someone asks about a food allergy or sensitivity.

Please note that these requirements do not apply to events where staff bring their own lunch.

If you have questions about your Lunch and Learn session, please contact your local EPH office.

For more information, please contact your nearest Environmental Public Health office.

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