

CATERING GUIDELINES FOR FLIGHT ATTENDANTS



Prepared by:

Marsell N. Amineddine
M Foods Ltd.
Catering
Egypt

Paula Kraft
Tastefully Yours, Inc.
Catering
USA

Jean Dible
GA Food Safety Professionals
Food Safety Instructor
USA



With the collaboration of:



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INTRODUCTION

Catering is vital in cabin service and major entertainment for your passengers at 40,000 feet. Catering may or may not make your day, but it should make your passenger's trip a pleasant experience.

Flight attendants play a major role in the entire catering process since they provide the service directly to end users and face their reaction. Having the proper know-how keeps you and your passengers always happy.

This guide encompasses 20 years of experience in the business aviation catering industry and provides you with practical steps on how to place your catering order professionally, audit your caterer, audit the FBO facility and how to handle food safely on board.

CATERING PROCESS

The catering service process is composed of the following steps:

- 1- Submission of catering request
- 2- Preparation of catering order at caterer's facility
- 3- Transporting the catering order
- 4- Receiving and handling catering order by FBO
- 5- Receiving catering order by flight attendant
- 6- Food handling and presentation by flight attendant

THE 4 HOUR LIFE TIME OF YOUR CATERING

Did you know that in 1997, 60% of all Medaire calls were directly linked to gastrointestinal problems? Foodborne illness can occur in less than one hour to several days after eating contaminated food. Symptoms can include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea (bloody), muscle cramping, headache, chills, fatigue, and fever. In more severe cases, there might be changes in blood pressure, pulse rate, and severe dehydration. In passengers with compromised immune systems, the elderly, children under the age of 4-years, and pregnant women, foodborne illness can be life threatening.

Think of food as having a four hour life - that is under optimal conditions. The clock begins to tick when any potentially dangerous food is delivered to the caterer **not** to the FBO or the plane. When potentially dangerous food is held in the temperature danger zone between 41°F (5°C) and 140°F (60°C) degrees for preparation, delivery, or any other reason, its four-hour **safe** life cycle is being diminished as the clock ticks. It is extremely important that the General Aviation crew member handling the catering for a flight understand what is happening to the food as it is prepared by a catering, restaurant, or hotel chef. A food safety class will make you understand what is happening to the food as it is “Flowing from the preparation table at the catering company to your passenger’s table in the aircraft”. Knowledge is power, extremely important when dealing with food preparers. Food Safety knowledge is especially important for knowing **what questions to ask** of the food preparers when ordering food.

Your food preparer source can **cause** foodborne illness for your passengers and you if they prepare foods too far in advance, improperly store potentially dangerous foods, practice poor personal hygiene, or carry on other unsafe safety practices in a commercial kitchen.

The decision as to where to purchase your aircraft catering is critical. It is important to purchase your catering from aviation caterers and / or large airline caterers who are familiar with cook-chill systems rather than hotels, restaurants, street vendors and other operations which specialize in cook-serve. Ask for documentation!

The “**Site Visit To Qualify Your Caterer**” outline contains many of these questions and an acceptable answer from your caterer. For example, how is the food delivered to the airport? Is it delivered in a refrigerated van or a car? Are ice packs, ice sheets, ice gels, or insulated carriers used to protect the food during transport in a car? Dry ice is **not an acceptable answer** for transporting food to the aircraft. Dry ice can cause unconsciousness to the person delivering the food due to a depletion of oxygen in the air. Cold food should be transported at 40°F (4°C) degrees or below, and hot food should be transported at 140°F (60°C) degrees or above.

ORDERING YOUR CATERING PROFESSIONALLY

Important items to include on every catering order:

- 1- **Your name, both first and last, and a local contact phone number or your cell number:** This will enable the caterer to contact you if there are any questions concerning your order or its packaging.
- 2- **Your aircraft tail number, flight number:** or some means to identify your catering from everyone else's at the FBO. Even if your food is to go to a conference room at the hanger or FBO, those receiving it must have this information.
- 3- **The day and date:** Frequently the day and date do not match and when the kitchen notices this, caterer will call and make sure that your catering is delivered on the correct day.
- 4- **Delivery time to the airport:** Do **not** give the caterer departure time as this could end up mistakenly as the delivery time. **Don't** forget to tell the caterer AM or PM.
- 5- **State the airport and the facility at that airport which you want your catering delivered to:** Many cities have more than one of the same FBO so simply by requesting it be delivered to say "Mercury" might not be enough information. If in doubt, have the FBO phone number handy so your caterer will be able to determine which airport to deliver your catering to.
- 6- **Allergies and special diets are something often overlooked when placing a catering order:** The caterer must have this information in order to prevent your passenger from consuming the wrong foods. A note should be written about nut allergies because no average catering kitchen is truly nut free. Caterers can prepare things without nuts, **but**, understand that someone with a **severe** allergy may have a reaction because the caterer has nut residue and dust in their kitchen from normal production. A catering order form with medic alert symbol that is universally understood is enclosed in this guide (see page 8). You should fill out such an order form when you have a passenger with an allergy.



Medic alert symbol

WHEN A LEMON IS NOT ALWAYS A LEMON

So now you have given all of the mundane stuff such as day, time and airport to the caterer and it is time to talk food. For each and every item you order, it is important to provide two details.

1- How do you want that packaged?

2- How do you want that prepared?

Here are few examples:

Example #1: You order 1 turkey sandwich.

How do you want that packaged?

- In a box,
- On a plate
- On a tray,
- Bulk pre-made
- Bulk in piece, to assemble on the aircraft

How do you want that prepared?

What kind of bread? Is it smoked turkey or Turkey off the bone? Do you want cheese with that? Do you want lettuce? Do you want tomato or other fillings such as sliced apples and brie? Or do you want cranberry sauce and stuffing? Do you want the condiments on the side? Which condiments do you want?

A caterer has a multitude of choices and each answer to any of these questions could result in the delivery of sandwich that does not meet your expectations. It is up to you, the person placing the order, and the caterer, to find out all of the details regarding your expectations.

Example #2: You order 1 diet coke.

How do you want that packaged? Can or bottle? If you say bottle, then caterer needs to know what size. You can get diet coke in 8 oz, 12 oz, 16 oz, 20 oz., liter, and 3 liter bottles. If you want a bottle of coke, imagine how the order will be perceived incorrect if the caterer sends 3 liter and you wanted 12 oz.

How do you want that prepared?

In today's market, you may have plain diet coke, diet coke with lime, diet coke with lemon, or caffeine free diet coke.

You may think this is silly, but, always remember that the person filling your order or shopping for your order is not always the person who took the order.

Be specific! Give all of the details!

Let's take another example to convey how important the tiny details are when placing a catering order.

You have ordered light Hors d'oeuvres for eight passengers. Imagine all the possibilities of items to prepare and ways to present them.

How do you want that prepared?

Half of the assortment hot and half of the assortment cold, or all cold, or all hot. What items would you like? Do you want them all vegetable, all meat, all low fat, all seafood? Unless you are a totally trusting person and know that your caterer knows exactly what you want, you, the person placing the order, need to ask for suggestions and select from those suggestions. Do you want fried items, cheese based items? There are a plethora of choices and choices from which to select!

How do you want that packaged?

Do you want this on tray or bulk? Do you want the cold items presented on a tray and the hot in re-heatable containers that you will add to the tray? Now to the tray, do you want glass, metal, or plastic? Do you want all 8 servings on one tray, or 2 trays for 4 or 4 trays for 2, or 8 trays for 1? If you do not specify exactly what you want and how you want it to be done, then the caterer gets to make that decision for you.

Caterers do not know how your aircraft seating is configured, whether you are going to pass this tray or whether you plan to set up a buffet on the credenza. Why risk the catering being delivered in a manner that makes its serving and consumption difficult for you? Think through the order and request it the way you intend to use it.

All of this detail brings us back to why a Lemon is not always a Lemon.

The order is for 1 lemon...

How do you want that prepared?

Do you want it whole, sliced, as a crown, as wagon wheels, as curls, as wedges, as a basket or as a rope to tie vegetables?

How do you want that packaged?

Do you want the order packaged in a Ziploc bag, a foil tin, or included as part of a garnishing kit?

Remember details, size, and packaging all matter. Preparation also matters so your caterer can deliver the food as you have envisioned it in your mind.

We want to make you shine; to look like a million dollars and to receive a standing ovation every time you serve catering!

Your Company Name:
Address:
Phone:
Fax:



Catering Request

Bill to:		Phone:	
		Fax:	
		Flight Attendant:	
		Contact Phone:	
		e-mail:	
Catering Company		Phone	
Confirmed with		Fax	

Flight #		Delivery Day	
Airport:		Delivery Date	
FBO:		Delivery Time	am/pm
Order #			

Set-Up Needed Yes No Plastic or Glass Paper or Linen

Any Food Allergies: _____

Dietary Restrictions: _____

Dry Ice _____ **Wet**

Ice _____ **Newspapers:** _____

Caterer-Please do not make substitutions or changes with out calling

QTY	Item Ordered	Packaging requests Bulk, Tray, Plated, etc	Special Requests

RETURN CONFIRMATION FAX REQUESTED

AUDITING & QUALIFYING YOUR CATERER

This “Audit” has been prepared as an aid to help you evaluate qualified food handlers who cater your aircraft. You may deal with many different types of food service operators, from small deli’s to full service, professional in-flight kitchens. This guide will assist you in determining the best provider in each location where you order catering.

Inspections & Training

Holding a certificate of inspection does not guarantee that proper food safety practices are being followed; nevertheless, it shows that a local, state or federal official made a physical inspection of the premises and determined that basic safety procedures were met at the time of the inspection. All food service handlers are required **at minimum** to hold a current local license and are subject to regular inspections by the local Board of Health. Some operators go a step further and obtain an FDA inspection and a HACCP inspection. All food service operators should, at minimum, hold worker’s compensation insurance and product liability insurance.

Staff Training & Certification

At minimum, the kitchen supervisor should be trained and knowledgeable in proper food safety procedures. A current certificate would be proof that an **owner or manager** has successfully passed an approved food handler’s safety course and has been exposed to the proper procedures for **safe** food handling and storage.

Perishable Food Transport

Perishable food must be transported at proper temperatures to ensure that it is safe to eat. Packaging on ice or in a refrigerated vehicle will help sustain those temperatures. When perishable food is held at an FBO, the ideal condition would be a commercial grade refrigerator with a thermometer reading 40 degrees F (4°C) or below. The refrigerator should be cleaned and repaired on a regular basis and should be used exclusively to store aviation catering.

Purchasing

Not only should the food prepared by the handler be safe, but also any outside sources of food purchased for your order have to adhere to the same health and safety requirements. Special concern should be paid to items such as raw sushi and caviar. These items should be purchased from a reputable purveyor and always transported on ice in an insulated box. It is important to get the name, address, and phone number of any sub-contracted food vendor who might be a supplier of potentially dangerous foods for your order.

Security Policies

Reviewing the security measures in place at the food handler’s facility is a first step in evaluating the security of your catering. You will want assurances that the general public cannot easily access the area where your catering is prepared and packaged and that there is an awareness of security.

Facility Tour

Touring the facility of a food operator's kitchen is a final important step in evaluating a catering vendor. The general appearance, organization and cleanliness of the facility and its employees will speak for itself. You should ask to be shown the following areas: food preparation, storage, refrigeration, and delivery vehicles.

You will find that caterers in premium market areas are generally the ones that have food safety training, but **do not** assume that they follow good food safety practices. Many catering companies will slide by with as little as the consumer allows. You are the consumer, so demand more of your caterers.

SITE VISIT TO QUALIFY A CATERER

The following list of items to check during a site visit provides a guide to caterer selection. These are only guidelines, and many items may be subjective if the aviation employee has not been formally trained in food safety education procedures.

	Outside areas:	YES	NO
1	Is the exterior of the catering facility maintained in a decent and well kept condition? (should be yes)		
2	Do you see insects, flies, ants, or roaches crawling anywhere in your presence? (should be no)		
3	Do you see evidence of full trash cans setting on or near a loading area? Is there evidence of wet garbage surrounding a trash area with a foul smell? (should be no)		
4	Are outside trash bins or dumpsters doors closed? (should be yes)		
5	Are all doors to the building completely closed to the outside? (should be yes)		

Personal Hygiene:

1	Do all employees have clean clothing and clean aprons on? (should be yes)		
2	Are employees wearing hairnets or hats to contain all of their hair or beards? (should be yes)		
3	Do you notice kitchen employees wearing jewelry, such as rings, bracelets, earrings, or watches? This is not advisable.		
4	Are you noticing much hand-washing activity among the employees in the kitchen? Take a look in the trash can near the hand washing sink and see how many used paper towels are in the trash can. (should be yes)		
5	Do the employees seem to be washing their hands & changing their gloves as they move from task to task in the kitchen? (should be yes)		
6	Do you see signs of employees eating, drinking or smoking inside the kitchen? (should be no)		
7	Are soap and towel dispensers full? (should be yes)		

	Interior Building:	YES	NO
1	Floors, walls and ceiling should be in good repair and clean.		
2	All equipment should be free of grease, dirt and old food residue. The meat slicing machine should not contain stale food particles that have not been cleaned off after the last use.		
3	Are they using a sanitizing solution to wipe tables and equipment and is the cloth kept in the solution until use? (should be yes)		
4	Are the clean pots, pans, utensils, etc. stored in a clean and safe manner? (Should be yes)		
5	If they hand wash dishes, is there a 3-compartment sink? Sink 1 should be used for washing dishes, Sink 2 should be used for rinsing dishes, and Sink 3 should be used for sanitizing the dishes. Ask what type of chemical is used for sanitizing dishes.		
6	Are boxes or containers of any type being stored in the food preparation areas? This is not allowable.		
7	Are all of the equipment and supplies stored at least 6" (15cm) above the floor and a distance away from the walls? Do they appear to be orderly, sealed, labeled and dated, and away from chemicals with no sign of rodents? (should be yes)Should be easy to clean around it.		
8	Do you see any type of hazardous materials or insect repellents stored in the dry storage area with the food? (should be no)		
9	Ask to see the walk-in cooler. Request to see the temperature of the cooler with a working thermometer. The temperature of the cooler should be 40 degrees F (4°C) or less.		
10	Are all foods wrapped, labeled and dated in the cooler? (should be yes)		
11	Ask to see the freezer area. Check the thermometer. It should read 0 degrees F (-18°C) or lower. All foods should be wrapped, labeled, and dated.		
12	Is a lot of food sitting on the counter while food preparation is taking place? There should be very little food left in the preparation area.		
13	Is food thawing under running water or in the refrigerator? The safest way to thaw food is in the refrigerator. Food should never be laid out on a counter at room temperature to thaw or put into a container of water.		
14	Is the preparation of raw foods segregated from the preparation and handling of cooked foods? (should be yes)		
15	Are all of the lights working & protected with shields above the food prep area? (should be yes)		
16	Are there separate preparation sinks for meats and vegetables? (should be yes)		
17	Ask how the cutting board is treated between cutting different types of fruits and vegetables. It should be cleaned & sanitized between each item that is prepared.		
18	Do all of the trash cans in the kitchen have plastic liners inside and lids that fit all tops of the cans.		

	Miscellaneous:	YES	NO
1	Does your caterer have a HACCP plan? Proactive ones will.		
2	Does your caterer have at the very least a 5 year, preferably a 10-year background check preformed on each employee? Ask to see paper work on the employee background checks and ask the caterer how they check backgrounds.		
3	Does your caterer require each employee to wear a photo ID and logo clothing for your security and protection? It is obvious that this should be yes for your protection.		
4	Does your caterer keep medical records on each employee? Proactive caterers will maintain good records.		
5	Does your caterer require all employees to attend food handling classes? How often? (should be yes, 1 time per year, ask for copies of certificates)		
6	Does your caterer audit their suppliers? Do they keep copies of their inspections on file?(should be yes)		
7	Does your caterer maintain a temperature log for cooling hot foods down before being put into a cooler for storage? (should be yes)		
8	Ask the caterer how their hot foods are cooled down before storage in a cooler. Bulk or liquid hot foods should be put in an ice bath first, stirred frequently, and the temperature charted until the temperature reaches 95 degrees F (35°C) or below before putting the warm food into a cooler. Warm or hot food never goes directly into a cooler or freezer.		
9	If the caterer has a blast chiller, does someone maintain a temperature log on food being cooled down? (should be yes)		
10	Does your caterer maintain temperature logs on interior temperatures of the coolers and freezer? (should be yes)		
11	Does your caterer have a departure temperature log book, and is the food temperature documented at time of dispatch from the catering company to the aviation area? (should be yes)		
12	Ask the caterer to show you how they sanitize the thermometer probes between probing each type of food.		
13	Ask the caterer if they use the same thermometer for testing the temperature in raw meats, as well as cold salad foods? The same thermometer should never be used because of the threat of cross-contamination. There should be a minimum of two different thermometers in any kitchen.		
14	Does your caterer perform bacteriological tests regularly on water, food and equipment? (should be yes)		
15	Ask the caterer how the food is delivered to the airport.		

By reviewing the local health inspection reports for your caterer, you will be able to determine what the requirements are for that caterer. Many of the log and record keeping tasks are part of a HACCP plan and are necessary for FDA compliance.

Remember you are ultimately responsible for the food safety of your passengers. You control the caterer you order from, as well as the FBO your firm uses, when away from home. Do not risk the safety of your passengers because you **assumed** the caterer was credible and knew **how** to watch out for your passengers' health and well being. The handling of food, the cleanliness of the facility and employees play a key role in how safe the food is to eat.

Take pictures of your caterer's facility, check licenses, insurances to CYA. In the event that someone becomes ill from catering, you will not be blamed if you have done your homework.

AUDITING YOUR FBO

You have to be sure of the following at your FBO's facility:

- The FBO should have a commercial refrigerator. Home units are not built well enough to carry large loads and recover a warm temperature as quickly as a commercial unit.
- The cooler should be used for catering only and **not** for employee food. By allowing FBO employees to use the catering commercial refrigerator, you are taking a chance in food safety security, as well as theft and cross-contamination of the catered food. It is important to know exactly who is allowed inside the commercial refrigerator; crew, line personnel, caterers, or anyone.
- The cooler should not be overflowing with food. Cold air must circulate in all directions in order to maintain the temperature of the food at 40 degrees F (4°C) or lower. Bacterium in food does not quit growing while food is in a cooler, it only slows it down. The bacteria growth continues, but only on a slower basis.
- The FBO should maintain a cooler temperature log, which is a charted record of the temperature of the inside of the cooler. There should also be a corrective action plan if the temperature warms up higher than 40°F (4°C).
- Does the FBO leave your name and tail number on the counter in open view?
- Does the caterer deliver your food to the person at the counter, or is the catering delivery employee allowed to take the food directly to the refrigeration unit?
- Has the FBO ever done a site visit to the caterer?

- If the FBO has done a site visit to the caterer? If so, does the FBO have copies of the following information from the catering company?
 - o Product liability insurance
 - o Is the FBO named as loss payee of the insurance policy?
 - o Copies of Local Health Board inspections for the last 1 ½ years.
- Ask the FBO who cleans your dishes, and where they are cleaned.
- Ask the FBO to show you how the dishes are sanitized after they have been washed.

RECEIVING YOUR CATERING

Check catering upon arrival, but store in a cooler at 40°F (4°C) or below immediately. If you check the catering for accuracy when you arrive at the airport, it will enable you and the caterer the time to correct any potential problems. Please be kind to your caterer. Screaming and cursing at the caterer will only delay the resolution of the problem.

IMPORTANT NOTES

- Catering should be cold, well wrapped, and appear tamper free. Do not accept unwrapped catering.
- All protein foods should be covered with ice sheets or gels.
- Catering should be loaded at the last possible minute from the FBO cooler.
- Storage of catering, during take off or likewise, should not include the bathroom floor, a seat or counter top. In the event that this is the only solution, cover the floor or area to be used with clean paper or trays and place the catering on this. Be sure to cover all food with ice packs that needs refrigeration. When taking the food from the floor, make sure not to put the “dirty” paper or tray on the galley counter top, as this will contaminate that surface.
- Insist that the caterer always package raw and cooked foods separately.

CHILLED & FROZEN STORAGE ON BOARD

A lot of judgment goes into planning this aspect of food storage. Some of the many things you need to consider for your destination are temperature forecast, ground time and availability of wet and dry ice.

To keep your icebox cold in hot climates, you may opt to place chips of dry ice in your wet ice. Be careful not to use too much dry ice as it may freeze your food products and will release CO₂ vapors in the cabin or cooler box. You may also place your food products in waterproof bags and place them in an ice bath. Close aircraft window shades to keep the temperature down. Keep potential hazardous foods in the coolest spot (low

and next to ice) and check them often. Ready-to-eat foods should always be placed above any other type of food.

There are many techniques for storing frozen foods on aircraft. However, the method that seems to work best on a jet is to place a thick plastic bag (at least 6mm) in a thick walled cooler. Next, place the food products in the bottom of the bag and place dry ice on top of the food because dry ice freezes downward. Tie up the bag to keep it airtight as possible and then close the cooler lid. Larger blocks of dry ice last longer than the small pellets.

WARNING: *Dry ice emits carbon dioxide as it dissipates, thus depleting oxygen. This is an important consideration when boarding after the aircraft has been sealed up for any length of time. The FAA states if dry ice is used for packing perishables, quantity not to exceed 4.4 pounds (2kg) per person and the package must allow the release of CO₂.*

FLIGHT ATTENDANT AS A FOOD HANDLER

Your passengers have the right to expect the food they eat to be safe for human consumption. Foodborne illness in a passenger can create major problems for the passenger, yourself, and your employer. Foodborne illness can cause severe discomfort in a passenger, or can cause a potential fatality.

Effective hygiene practice, therefore, is vital to avoid the adverse human health, food borne injury, and food spoilage. Everyone in the industry has a responsibility to assure that food is safe and suitable for consumption.

Personal Hygiene

Practicing excellent personal hygiene is vital in handling and dealing with food aboard an aircraft. Employee uniforms will always be contaminated, and small aprons should be worn to prevent cross-contamination from the clothing of the person handling the food.

Keep fingernails clean and short. Acrylics finger nails may look attractive, but they harbor excessive amounts of bacteria under the fingers and around the cuticle area. Acrylic finger nails can cause a foodborne outbreak. If you have long finger nails or wear the acrylic finger nails, it is extremely important to wear **rubber gloves** when you handle ready-to-eat foods. Before you put on a pair of rubber gloves, it is very important to wash your hands first. After you take the rubber gloves off and discard them, it is important to wash your hands again. Gloves are good, if used properly. However, gloves can give you a false sense of security and become contaminated easily when the food handling process is interrupted by touching something else. Using tongs to handle food is a great practice to go along with using gloves.

- Keep hands away from face, hair and other body parts. Do not touch your clothing.
- Keep your hands away from the hair, and always keep the hair contained.

Hand Washing

Employee's contaminated hands are the leading cause of foodborne illness on the ground or in the sky. Aviation employees not washing their hands properly or often enough will be the biggest threat in any food galley in the air. Washing hands frequently after touching most things, and before handling food, will help to keep bacterium from causing a problem in the food galley.

When to wash your hands

You shall wash your hands:

- Before starting different food handling tasks.
- After using the restroom.
- After coughing, sneezing, smoking, eating or drinking.
- After blowing or touching nose.
- After touching face, hair, mouth or sores.
- After touching raw poultry, meat, fish.
- Before and after using gloves.
- After touching dirty dishes, equipment, or utensils.
- After touching trash, floors, soiled linens.
- After using cleaners or chemicals.
- Before handling single use items (i.e. cups, utensils, etc.)
- Before handling clean tableware.

Hand Washing Procedure

1. Wet your hands with running water as hot as you can comfortably stand.
2. Apply soap.
3. Vigorously scrub hands and arms for at least twenty-seconds. Pay particular attention to scrubbing between the fingers and under the fingernails. Keep your hands away from the water while you are scrubbing your skin.
4. Thoroughly rinse under hot running water.
5. Dry hands and arms with a single-use paper towel or warm air dryer.
6. To avoid recontamination after washing hands, use disposable paper towels to turn off the faucet and open or close the restroom door. Remember, everything in a restroom is 100% contaminated.

CLEANING UP THE GALLEY

Since most galleys have only a single sink, use the following procedures:

1. Scrape food.
2. Wipe the plate using a disposable towel for scraping the food off.
3. Rinse the plate in cold water.
4. Wash the plate with hot water & soap.
5. Rinse the plate with clean warm water.
6. Use a clean large plastic container to sanitize the washed dishes in. Make sure the water and plastic container are clean. Fill the container $\frac{3}{4}$ full of clean warm water. Add an approved sanitizing tablet to the clean water, and soak the clean dishes in the sanitizer for several minutes. Soap does not kill bacteria, so a sanitizer will have to be used. If you can't do the liquid sanitizing method, place your dishes in the oven and bake them for approximately 15 minutes at 200 degrees F (94°C). There is no guarantee that the dishes will not break or develop cracks from heating in the oven, so this method is risky for the glass serving pieces.
7. Air dry the dishes in a clean rack. Never dry dishes or silverware with a cloth towel because cloth holds bacteria.
8. Sanitize the galley counter top when the dishes have been taken care of. Quats (sanitizer) can be sprayed or **wiped** on all food contact surfaces to kill the bacteria, with the **exception** of the actual dishes or silverware. Allow the Quats to air dry for a few minutes. There is no rinsing required with Quats.

CROSS-CONTAMINATION

Cross-contamination is the process by which microorganisms (bacteria, pathogens, viruses, etc) are transferred from one surface to another. There is a great potential for cross-contamination in any aircraft.

Cross-contamination in any aircraft may occur as a result of one of the following:

- Improper food handling
- Improper dishwashing techniques
- Unclean food contact surfaces
- Illness
- Improper beverage service
- Improper personal hygiene
- Contaminated ice
- Inappropriate chemical storage

Avoid Cross-Contamination

- Practicing good personal hygiene is extremely important.
- Do not handle ready-to-eat foods (foods that will receive no further cooking) with bare hands. Always use rubber gloves when handling ready-to-eat food.
- Make sure that utensils are washed and sanitized when switching between potentially hazardous foods and ready-to-eat foods.
- Fresh fruits and vegetables should be washed before serving or cutting. When the knife blade cuts through the skin of a fruit or vegetable it carries the outside bacteria on the skin to the inside flesh, which you eat and can cause a foodborne illness.
- Make sure that ice to be served with beverages is of a potable water source and has not been contaminated by food or sodas stored in the ice, or any other type of contaminant.
- Do not store any type of chemicals near or above foods or food contact surfaces or near any type of food related item such as paper plates, ice buckets, utensils, etc..
- Do not handle food if you have diarrhea, an upset stomach, are coughing, sneezing or have other signs of illness.

POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS FOODS

Are natural or synthetic **foods**, which require **time and temperature** control because they are capable of supporting the rapid and progressive growth of bacterium and toxins.

Any food that contains one of the following ingredients is considered a potentially hazardous food:

- Meat
- Poultry
- Fish & shell fish
- Shell eggs
- Dairy products
- Raw sprouts
- Cooked beans
- Cooked pasta & rice
- Un-pasteurized fruit juices
- Baked & boiled potatoes
- Garlic / oil mixtures
- Sliced sweet melons
- Raw coconut
- Sushi

TIME & DANGER ZONE

Harmful bacteria grow fast between 41°F & 140°F (5°C & 60°C). The range between these two degrees is called the “temperature danger zone”. If proper temperature, food, and humidity are provided, harmful bacteria will double every 20 minutes.

Minimize the time that potentially hazardous will be in the danger zone. Any food kept in the “temperature danger zone” for more than 4 hours should be discarded.

Keep this fact in mind when transporting, storing, uploading aircraft, preparing and serving food. This also means your caterer. The clock started ticking when the food, raw or prepared is delivered to the caterer.

Because of not being trained in food safety procedures and not having a license or a commercial kitchen that is monitored by a health department, it is totally unwise and against the law throughout the world to cook food at home and transport it to be served to others in a commercial situation. Acting as an unlicensed chef in the General Aviation Industry can get you in a lot of trouble. The liability isn't worth the risk!

It is **not recommended** that raw meat be cooked aboard an aircraft because of lack of space and the possibility of cross-contamination with ready to eat foods. But, if you have the need to cook raw food in an aircraft food galley, look at the minimum temperatures required killing off particular bacteria in each type of food on the table next page.

Minimum Recommended Cooking Temperatures

Food Product	Minimum Internal Cooking Temperatures	Other Cooking Requirements & Recommendations
Poultry (including whole or ground chicken duck or turkey)	165 degrees F (74°C) (15 seconds)	Poultry has more types & higher counts of microorganisms than other meat. Therefore, it should be cooked more thoroughly. Poultry is one of the most dangerous meats in a kitchen.
Stuffing & Stuffed Meat (stuffed pork Chop, stuffed fish,)	165 degrees F (74°C) (15 seconds)	Stuffing poses a hazard because it can be made with potentially hazardous food. It also acts as insulation, preventing heat from reaching the center of the meat or poultry.
Warmed over foods	165 degrees F (74°C) (15 seconds)	Potentially dangerous foods can only be warmed one time, and then they have to be discarded if the food is not eaten. There is no second time allowed for re-heating food.
Food dishes which include previously cooked dangerous foods in the dish	165 degrees F (74°C) (15 seconds)	Example: when adding cooked ground beef to a red sauce, the beef within the dish must be reheated to 165 degrees for 15 seconds.
Potentially hazardous food cooked in the microwave. (eggs, poultry, fish, & meat)	165 degrees F (74°C) (15 seconds)	Check the temperature in several places to ensure that it is cooked through and reaches an internal temperature of 165 degrees F (74 C).
Ground, Minced, or chopped (including beef, pork, & other meat or fish)	155 degrees F (68°C) (15 seconds)	When meats are ground up, the microorganisms on surface of the meat are then mixed throughout the product, which increases the microorganism count.
Injected meats (brined ham & flavor injected roasts)	155 degrees F (68°C) (15 seconds)	When meats are injected, foodborne microorganisms on the surface can be carried into the interior of the meat.
Pork, Beef, Veal, Lamb, Fish	145 degrees F (63°C) (15 seconds)	Any type of microorganism in these meats or larvae that may be in the meat will be destroyed by cooking the meat to a minimum of 145 F
Shell Eggs for immediate Service	145 degrees F (63°C) (15 seconds)	When cooking eggs, remove from storage only as many eggs as you need for immediate use. Never stack eggs near the grill or stove.
Shell eggs that will be hot-held for service	155 degrees F (68°C) (15 seconds)	
Fruits or vegetables that will be hot-held for service	135 degrees F (57°C) (15 seconds)	Cooked vegetables must never be held at cabin temperature.
Commercially processed, read-to-eat-food that will be hot-held for service	135 degrees F (57°C) (15 seconds)	Items such as cheese sticks, deep-fried vegetables, chicken wings, etc.

References for cooking temperatures:

- ServSafe Essentials (Third Edition) 2004
- The National Restaurant Association (Educational Foundation)
- Chicago, Illinois
- NSF HealthGuard (Professional Food Manager Certification Training)
- Version 3.0, 2004
- National Sanitation Foundation for Public Health Education
- Ann Arbor, Michigan

REHEATING YOUR CATERING

Always remember the fact that your catering is a **leftover** when it arrives to you. It was cooked, cooled, packaged, transported, and then reheated by you for your passengers. Food is only allowed to be reheated one time in order to reduce the amount of pathogens that multiply in reheated food. **Never** save reheated foods. If you save the leftovers that you have heated and then allowed to cool, you have greatly increased the risk of making someone sick. If you are using food for several legs, ask the caterer to pack the food in smaller quantities. You will then be able to reheat food in smaller batches, and not jeopardize the safety of all of the food and all your passengers.

Always make sure of the following when you reheat your catering

1. Preheat the oven before putting food inside. Consider the ticking clock when foods go in the oven. The time it takes to reheat food in an oven that is not preheated keeps your food in the unsafe temperature zone too long.
2. Use a liquid to keep foods soft and moist when reheating and keep the item covered. Uncovering the item while in the oven will make that item dry and crispy.
3. Reheat all foods to reach a core temperature of 165°F (74°C) and test with a temperature probe for accuracy. If you don't have a temperature probe, disposable ones are available at most grocery stores.

SERVING & PLATING

Remember the following while you are plating and serving:

1. Wash hands before starting each new task.
2. Clean and sanitize food contact surfaces (i.e. counter tops and cutting boards) between working with raw and ready-to-eat foods. After cleaning with soap and water and rinsing a hard contact surface, Purel & Clorox Wipes, or Quats Sani-Wipes are all acceptable sanitizers to use on a hard surface to kill bacteria. To be on the safe side, allow these chemicals to completely dry on a surface to receive the maximum benefit of the chemical. If you use **Purel** or **Clorox Wipes**, it is most important that you then rinse the chemical off the hard contact surface with clean potable water afterwards. The chemical base in these products can make someone sick if left on a food contact surface. If you use **Quats Sani Wipes**, there is no rinsing required afterwards.

3. When refilling or handing out drinks, hold the glass near the base, not the rim. Handle plates by the bottom and the very edge rather than allowing your fingers to touch the flat rim of the plate. You do not want your hand to touch any part of the plate that the passenger's food may touch in that same plate.
4. If pouring from a pitcher, the rim of the glass should not touch the rim of the pitcher. Always handle silverware by the base and not by the tines or the blade.
5. Ice from the ice drawer should be used for beverages and not storage of foods. Ice is considered a food in the food service industry and can be very dangerous. Treat ice as you would a potentially dangerous food. If the ice is emptied into an ice bin, ensure that the bin has been cleaned and sanitized. Preferably, keep the ice in the original ice bag and dip it out of there. It's not a good idea to use your chill box storage ice for drinking. If you chill milk in the carton, wine bottles, or sodas in your ice drawer you are cross- contaminating the ice. Always have a separate and clean container to store the ice scoop in. Never allow the ice scoop to lie down in the ice because of contamination from the handle.
6. Serve hot foods **hot** and cold foods **cold**.

LEFTOVERS POLICY

If you give your leftover catering to the ground crew at an FBO, you are civil and criminally **liable** if the ground crew recipients become ill or worse. Because of the potential danger in the flow of food from the catering company to the FBO, and then the holding of the food at the FBO and the long hours of storage in an aircraft under adverse conditions, any potentially dangerous food is now considered **very dangerous and should always be automatically discarded at the end of any flight.**

The liability for knowingly giving potentially dangerous food to others is pretty serious and could cause dire consequences to you, as well as your company. Remember, you can't see, taste, or smell bad food, but you have to assume the enemy is lurching in the food that you are bringing back from a trip. Don't take the risk!

DISCLAIMER

The information presented in these **Catering Guidelines** has been compiled from several sources, and the sources are believed to be reliable. The “guidelines” represents the best professional judgment of the **preparers** of this document. The accuracy of the information presented, however, is not guaranteed, nor is any responsibility assumed or implied, by preparers or recognizers of this document for any damage or loss resulting from inaccuracies or omissions.

Food safety regulations may vary by city, county, state, or country. These guidelines are not intended to make the aviation employee an expert in “food safety,” but rather to make the reader aware of the need for further food safety knowledge. The information contained in the **Catering Guidelines** is only a start to learning about food safety, but by no means is the information complete. Only by deliberately enrolling in a food safety class and studying food safety procedure from an accredited food safety instructor will the reader have total competence in food safety knowledge.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS & DEFINITIONS

FDA Inspection: The Food & Drug Administration requires all in-flight catering facilities be regulated and certified by their office. This comes under US Public Health Service Act and the Code of Federal Regulations: 21CFR 1240 and 1250, to assure that the public traveling on interstate conveyances has safe food.

HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point): A program that uses a combination of proper food-handling procedures, monitoring techniques and record keeping to help ensure food safety. It is a science-based food safety system that allows operators to continuously monitor their establishments and reduce the risk of exposing passengers and crew to food-borne illness.

Food borne Illness: A food borne illness is a disease that is transmitted to people by food. Most food borne illnesses are caused by microorganisms. Microorganisms are tiny forms of life that are so small you can't see, taste or smell them. They include bacteria, viruses, parasites and fungi. Bacteria are the biggest threat to food safety. Once bacteria begin to grow on food, it is like a rapid chain reaction. And if someone eats the food, an illness can develop. Foods that allow microorganisms to grow are called potentially hazardous foods. The list is long and includes all center of the plate foods, as well as many other popular foods.

Cleaning: is the process of removing food and visible dirt or crumbs from a surface or countertop. Cleaning with soap and water does not kill bacteria.

Sanitizing: Is the process of reducing the number of microorganisms on a surface to a safe level. Sanitizing is done with a chemical or hot water 180 degrees F or above.

References

- Recommended International Code of Practice - General Principles of Food Hygiene Cac / Rcp 1-1969, Rev. 4 - 2003
- FDA Food Code 2005
- IFCA & IFSA World Food Safety Guidelines, first edition 2003
- Code of Practice for the development of a Food Safety Program for a Foodservice Operation
- You are the Flight Attendant and the Food Handler, originally prepared by Ron Perry, ASAF, modified by Paula Kraft, Tastefully Yours & Jean Dible, Certified Food Safety Instructor, GA Food Safety Professionals.