

Redistribution of Returned Food/Share Tables

Sample HACCP-Based Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Purpose: To provide guidance on food items approved for redistribution in the cafeteria setting while maintaining food safety protocols to prevent the risk of a foodborne illness.

Scope: This procedure applies to child nutrition programs that allow approved foods to be returned to a “share table” and utilized for redistribution.

Instructions:

Re-Service (redistribution) refers to the transfer of food that is unused and returned by a consumer after being served or sold in the possession of the consumer, to another person.

USDA Regulation 7 CFR 210.9(14) and 220.7(8): Each school food authority (SFA) participating in the NSLP and SBP agrees to “maintain, in the storage, preparation, and service of food, proper sanitation and health standards in conformance with all applicable State and local laws and regulations and must comply with FNS food safety requirements of 7 CFR 210.13, 226.20(1) and 225.16(a).”

FNS Instruction 786-6: “SFA operators must be aware of all applicable local and State health and food safety codes to ensure their use of share tables does not violate any of those codes. It is important to keep in mind that local and State health and food safety codes may be more restrictive than the FNS requirements, or may place specific limitations on which food or beverage items may be reused. To ensure compliance with food safety requirements, SFA operators should discuss plans for a share table with their local health department and State agency prior to implementation”

Allowable Food and Beverage Redistribution Practices:

- Children may take an additional helping of a food or beverage item from the share table at no cost;
- Food or beverage items left on the share table may be served and claimed for reimbursement during another meal service (i.e. during an afterschool snack program when leftover from a school lunch); and/or
- Food or beverage items may be donated to a non-profit organization, such as a community food bank, homeless shelter or other non-profit charitable organization (see SP 11-2012, CACFP 05-2012, SFSP 07-2012: *Guidance on the Food Donation Program in Child Nutrition Programs*).

Food and Beverages Allowed for Redistribution:

- Un-opened, pre-packaged shelf stable food items, such as granola bars, cereal packs, crackers, ketchup packets, and drinks.
- Wrapped fruit and vegetables or fruit with a thick skin like washed apples, bananas, and oranges, with the peel intact.
- Un-opened, pre-packaged potentially hazardous or perishable food items, such as string cheese or milk (*see below for specific instructions on potentially hazardous or perishable foods*)

Foods and Beverages Not Allowed for Redistribution:

- Unpackaged food items, such as a salad bowl without a lid
- Packaged items that have been opened, punctured, or otherwise compromised, such as an open bag of baby carrots
- Packaged items that can be opened and resealed
- Foods that have reached their expiration date
- Food items brought from home

Potentially Hazardous or Perishable Foods:

Option 1:

If the following conditions are met and the local health sanitarian has provided approval, potentially hazardous foods, such as milk, may be returned to storage and re-served at the next meal service:

1. Items must be placed in a separate temperature-controlled storage unit, such as a refrigerator or mechanical display cooler, after the point of sale.
2. Items must be stored at or below 41°F, with temperatures being monitored and documented on the Share Table Temperature Log every two hours or at the end of the meal service, if service is less than two hours in length.
3. Returned unopened packaging shall be inspected by the share table monitor to ensure it has not been compromised and that the expiration date has not passed.
4. Returned unopened items shall not be intermixed with food and beverages in storage; instead, they must be stored in a separate container, to be used first at the next meal service.

Option 2:

If the following conditions are met and your local health sanitarian has provided approval, foodservice employees may use time as a public health control to allow students to share unopened, unwanted potentially hazardous or perishable foods on the share table:

1. School notifies their local health sanitarian that they plan to use time as a public health control and outlines their procedure for ensuring the student's safety using the Minnesota Department of Health or local health agency's Time as a Public Health Control Form.
2. Returned, unopened items shall be inspected by the share table monitor to ensure the packaging has not been compromised.
3. Items are placed on a designated share table, which could include (but not required) a separate storage container or tray with ice.
4. Items are discarded after four hours outside of temperature control, or after the meal service, whichever is sooner.

Monitoring:

1. Foodservice employees will continually monitor that all potentially hazardous or perishable foods, such as milk cartons, are maintained at proper temperatures. Temperatures of these items must be monitored and documented every two hours or at the end of the meal service, if the service is less than two hours in length. Alternatively, if time is used as a public health control for potentially hazardous items, the items are discarded after four hours or after the meal service, whichever is sooner.
2. Foodservice employees will inspect *all* items placed on the share table to ensure they are all allowable items, their packaging has not been compromised, and expiration dates have not yet passed.

Corrective Action:

1. Retrain any foodservice employee found not following the procedures in this SOP.
2. Discard items found on the share table if:
 - a. They are considered unallowable food items
 - b. They are potentially hazardous/perishable and found to be above 41°F when temperatures are monitored
 - c. Their packages have been compromised
 - d. The expiration date has passed

Verification and Record Keeping:

Foodservice employees will document temperatures of potentially hazardous/perishable foods left on the share table on the Share Table Temperature Log as specified in the Instructions Section of this SOP. Foodservice employees will document all items for redistribution on the Food Recovery Log. The foodservice manager will verify that foodservice employees are following this procedure by visually monitoring foodservice employees and food handling during the shift. These logs are to be kept on file for a minimum of one year.

Date Implemented: _____ By: _____

Date Reviewed: _____ By: _____

Date Revised: _____ By: _____

This form was modified from the template SOP developed by USDA and Institute for Child Nutrition. For additional guidance on Share Tables from USDA, please see USDA memorandum SP-41 2016.