

The University of Michigan Small Group Housing Kitchen Guidelines

Revision: August 13, 2026

Introduction

The University of Michigan Department of Environment, Health & Safety (EHS) conducts kitchen inspections in off-campus housing units that are members of the Office of Greek Life, the Inter-Cooperative Council, or a nationally recognized professional fraternal organization when the house employs a cook or provides shared meals.

These off-campus housing units are considered private residences by the Michigan Public Health Code and do not receive a food service license to operate. Instead, they are inspected by EHS and receive a Certificate of Compliance through an agreement with the City of Ann Arbor Housing Inspection Department. Food at these facilities may only be prepared for house residents and invited guests. Food must not be taken out of these houses for distribution at other locations.

Small group housing inspections focus on four basic food safety issues:

- Keep hot food hot.
- Keep cold food cold.
- Protect food from contamination.
- Maintain sanitation.

1. HOT FOODS

Cooking

Be sure that there are facilities and procedures in place to cook foods properly. This may include ovens, ranges, microwave ovens, griddles, steam kettles, etc. This equipment must be in usable condition and clean.

Cook raw meat and eggs to the proper minimum internal temperature:

- Poultry Products, Stuffed Meats/Seafood - 165°F
- Ground Beef and Eggs - 155°F
- Pork, Solid Cuts of Beef - 145°F
- Fish - 145°F

Thermometers

Be sure to have and use ~~analog or~~ digital (probe) thermometers to monitor the temperature of foods. These are similar to meat thermometers, but with a range of 0°F to 220°F. Thermometers that are missing, damaged, out of calibration, or that contain discharged batteries are of no value.

Be sure to clean these thermometers before and after each use, and store them in their plastic sheaths between uses.

Ventilation Hoods

Grease producing cooking equipment needs to be located under a ventilation hood equipped with grease filters. Mesh type air filters are unsatisfactory, since they hold the grease; in the event of a fire, this grease becomes fuel. The hood must be designed to collect the grease for easy removal during normal cleaning procedures. Remove these filters and run through a dishmachine as often as necessary to prevent the build-up of grease. Have the entire hood professionally cleaned at least once a year and never cook without the grease filters in place.

All hoods over grease producing equipment should be equipped with automatic fire suppression systems and be inspected by a qualified technician every twelve months. Hand held fire suppression equipment must be inspected at least once during each twelve month period.

Holding Hot Food

Be sure that there are facilities and procedures in place to maintain hot food at or above 135°F until served or discarded. Food may be held at 135°F in an oven or on a stove. Warming ovens, hot plates, and chafing dishes (with Sterno™) are examples of other equipment that can be used to hold hot food. Be sure to use digital thermometer to monitor the temperature of foods. If food will not be held hot or rapidly cooled for future use, discard the item after 4 hours.

2. COLD FOODS

There should be facilities and procedures in place to cool foods rapidly and to keep cold foods cold until they are served or discarded. This may include ice wands, ice baths, refrigerators, freezers, refrigerated bulk milk dispensers, or other cold holding units.

Ice Wands & Ice Baths

Food items prepared for future use or to be kept as leftovers must be rapidly cooled to prevent the growth of microorganisms. Product should be cooled to 70°F or less within the first two hours. Within the next four hours, the product must be cooled to 41°F or below. Any food that does not reach 70°F within the first two hours of cooling must be thrown away or reheated and cooled again. Try to avoid using refrigerators for rapid cooling but instead immerse pans of food in ice baths or stir liquid items with an ice wand. Refrigerators are designed to keep food cold and not to rapidly cool items.

Refrigerators & Freezers

Refrigerators and freezers must be in working condition, plugged in and turned on. They must be level and the doors must close. There must not be any holes extending into the refrigerated compartment. Refrigerator doors must not be damaged, missing, or left open for extended periods. Door gaskets must be in place, intact and clean. Cold foods must be held at an internal temperature of 41°F or less. Frozen foods must be kept frozen, with the freezer maintaining a temperature of 10°F or less.

Refrigerator Thermometers

Be sure that refrigerator thermometers are accessible and in working order. These thermometers are intended to monitor the temperature of the air within the refrigerated compartment. If built in thermometers are not working properly, contact a service representative. Damaged thermometers must be repaired or replaced.

Portable thermometers, if used, must be placed in a conspicuous location.

3. PROTECTING FOOD FROM CONTAMINATION

Storeroom

Foods in bags need to be stored above the floor on shelves, racks, or pallets, or in plastic bins to facilitate cleaning and protect food from moisture. Canned goods must be stored dry. Rusted, swollen, or damaged canned goods must be discarded or sent back to the distributor for a refund. Floors, walls, and ceilings must be kept clean.

Refrigerators & Freezers

Be sure that raw meats and eggs are stored below any ready-to-eat food. Ready-to-eat foods that show evidence of being contaminated with raw meat drippage must be discarded. Food must be covered to minimize contamination.

The refrigerator must be large enough for the amount of food stored in it; there must be room for chilled air to circulate properly. Throw away unused or expired products promptly.

Clean up any spilled food, broken glassware, raw meat drippage, or other food debris as soon as it is noticed.

Food Preparation Area

Cutting boards, utensils (knives), table tops, counters, and other food contact surfaces must be cleaned and sanitized before and after each use, especially after cutting raw meat. Items that have been washed and rinsed should then be sanitized in a chlorine solution, quaternary ammonium solution, or other EPA registered product approved for use on food contact surfaces without a final rinse step. All chemicals must be stored separately from food and food contact surfaces. Provide indicator test strips, available through food suppliers, to monitor the concentration of the sanitizing solution.

Be sure that floors, walls, and ceilings, and other surfaces such as refrigerator doors and shelving, are kept clean.

During Service

Food should be protected from contamination during service. Plastic laminate sneeze shielding, covers, lids, or similar methods can be effective when used properly. Individual wrapping provides even more protection.

Pests

The presence of pests (mice, cockroaches, fruit flies, etc.) should not be tolerated in any kitchen. Work with a pest control company to prevent or remedy pest issues. Seal any holes in walls or equipment that may provide passage or harborage for pests. Do not allow recycling items such as pop bottles or cardboard boxes to accumulate. Keep items off the floors and store all personal belongings outside of the kitchen proper.

Illness

Do not allow anyone to work with food if they have experienced vomiting or diarrhea within the last 24 hours. Call in a replacement or order food in from a restaurant. At all times, when handling ready to eat food items,

utilize disposable gloves.

4. SANITATION

Handwashing

Be sure that there is at least one designated sink for handwashing where the cook(s) and other workers prepare foods. Soap and a supply of paper towels must be provided. The cook(s) must not use cloth towels to dry their hands since the towels tend to be used over and over thereby spreading contamination. People must not wash their hands in food preparation sinks. Conversely, handwashing sinks are not to be used for food preparation.

Toilet

Restroom facilities used by the cook are to be kept clean. Toilet paper must be provided. There must be a place for the cook(s) to wash their hands with soap and running water. Paper towels must be provided. A covered waste container must also be provided.

No food, utensils, or single service items are to be stored in a restroom. ***Washing, storage of utensils, dishes***

There must be a method to wash and rinse dishware, flatware, pots, pans, etc. If a dishmachine is provided, it must be in proper working condition. Chemical based machines should leave behind a detectable bleach residue of 50-100 ppm on dishware after the final rinse. High-temperature machines should have a final rinse of at least 180°F. This may be verified by running a dish through the machine with a piece of heat sensitive tape attached. The tape should measure at least 160°F on the dishware. Detergent reservoirs, if used, must contain detergent.

If a dishmachine is not provided, a three compartment sink must be utilized. A three compartment sink is set up by first washing and sanitizing the compartments of the sink. In the first compartment goes the detergent solution (dish soap and water). The second compartment is used for rinsing and just contains water. Change out this compartment as it gathers soap suds and food debris. The final compartment contains a sanitizer solution. The sanitizer solution may be made up of bleach water at 50-100ppm, a quaternary ammonia compound usually at 200ppm (check the container for the proper concentration), or another sanitizer approved for use on food contact surfaces such as a lactic acid based product. Have the appropriate test strips on hand to check these concentrations. Allow dishware to air-dry before returning to the shelf.

Clean items need to be stored in a sanitary manner. Cabinets, shelves, drawers, etc. must be kept clean. Spilled food must be cleaned up.

Garbage

Be sure that garbage disposals, if installed, are in working condition. Indoor garbage container(s) must be kept covered when not in use.

Outdoors, garbage must be placed in dumpsters or durable, covered outdoor garbage containers. There must be no litter around or under the dumpster; garbage must not be stored outdoors in unprotected plastic bags.