



Congregation B'nai Shalom

***Kashrut* and Kitchen Usage Policy**
March 11, 2010

INTRODUCTION

Congregation B'nai Shalom is committed to the principle of *kashrut* as a way of expressing a relationship with God, history, and community. Recognizing that individual congregants interpret and apply standards of *kashrut* differently in their own lives, the congregation establishes a standard that applies to the synagogue and all synagogue-related events in order to maintain consistency and unity within the community. It is expected that all congregants and outside vendors who participate in the preparation of food for the congregation will adhere to the guidelines set forth in this policy.

Congregants are encouraged to participate in the communal life of the congregation by planning and hosting events on the synagogue campus. The rabbi and the Kashrut Committee are always available to consult and assist in planning successful events that reflect the guidelines of this policy.

USE OF THE KITCHEN

The use of the congregational kitchen and all food prepared therein must conform to the standards of *halakhah* (Jewish Law) as interpreted by the rabbi of the congregation, as *mara d'atra* (local authority of Jewish Law).

The rabbi may train and assign agents, including *mashgihim* (*kashrut* supervisors) and members of the Kashrut Committee, to supervise and maintain the appropriate standards on his/her behalf.

The kitchen may only be used under the following circumstances, when the appropriate standards for use can be guaranteed.

1. The kitchen may be used by congregants, staff members, and outside caterers who have been screened, trained and/or evaluated, and approved by the rabbi of the congregation. A list of those who are certified to use the kitchen will be maintained by the Kashrut Committee and available in the synagogue office.
2. The kitchen may be used by congregants who have not been otherwise approved, provided that on-site supervision is conducted by the rabbi of the congregation or his/her designee (i.e., an approved *mashgiah*).
3. The kitchen may be used by outside organizations only on a case-by-case basis when approved by the rabbi of the congregation and subject to any conditions that he/she may establish in order to assure the *kashrut* of the kitchen.

4. The kitchen may be used for the preparation of dairy and *pareve* foods only, unless expressly *kashered* for other purposes under the direct supervision of the rabbi of the congregation.
5. Equipment should never be removed or brought into the kitchen without explicit permission of the rabbi or his/her designee.
6. The administration of the kitchen, supervising and maintaining its cleanliness, and managing its utensils, appliances and furnishings, will be the responsibility of the Kitchen Committee of the congregation.
7. Use of the kitchen by congregants and/or caterers will be coordinated by the synagogue office and must be scheduled in advance. A key to the kitchen can be checked out from the office for the purpose of preparing for a specific event by approval of the rabbi. Maintenance staff may not open the kitchen without express authorization or prior approval.
8. The Kitchen Committee will oversee the storage of foods (including general staples and leftovers), and arrange for their disposal, when necessary.

FOOD IN THE SYNAGOGUE KITCHEN

All foods brought into the kitchen must be prepared under rabbinic supervision recognized and approved by the rabbi of the congregation. Such foods must arrive in their original and unopened packages.

1. Food items may be prepared in other food establishments (e.g., bakeries, catering kitchens, and restaurants) if those facilities are properly supervised to the satisfaction of the rabbi of the congregation. Such foods must arrive in sealed containers or wrapping from the kosher kitchen in which they are produced.
2. Those who are certified by the rabbi to use the kitchen [e.g., kosher caterers and specific congregants (see above)] may bring foods into the kitchen, subject to the conditions outlined in this section.
3. Those who are not otherwise certified to use the kitchen without proper supervision (see above) may bring food items into the kitchen under the following conditions:
 - a. They must submit a list of proposed food items/ingredients to the rabbi for pre-approval, including for each item, the brand, and the specific *hekhsher* (kosher symbol) that appears on the packaging. A form will be available for this purpose, and must be submitted no less than two weeks in advance.
 - b. When the foods/ingredients arrive at the kitchen, they must be “checked in” by the rabbi or his/her designee to assure that each item complies with the conditions outlined in this section, and that it is listed on the list submitted to and approved by the rabbi. No other food items/ingredients may enter the kitchen without the knowledge of the rabbi.
4. All packaged food items/ingredients must bear an acceptable *hekhsher* (kosher symbol) or be approved by the rabbi of the congregation for use. A list of acceptable symbols is

attached. Please note that the letter “K” on a package is generally not an acceptable *hekhsher*.

5. Exceptions:
 - a. Whole, uncooked fruits and vegetables and raw nuts do not need a *hekhsher*. Frozen fruits and vegetables, processed nuts (i.e., roasted, salted, etc.), and dried fruit all need a *hekhsher*.
 - b. Raw or frozen kosher fish (i.e., with fins and scales – check with the rabbi of the congregation for clarification, if necessary) does not need a *hekhsher*.
 - c. Although it is always preferable to use cheese that bears an acceptable *hekhsher*, domestically produced (U.S. or Canada) hard cheeses may be used without a *hekhsher*. Such cheeses must not contain additional ingredients such as fruits, spices, hot peppers, port wine, etc. In addition, rennet or animal products must not appear in the list of ingredients. (Trader Joe’s, however, does carry cheeses made with “vegetable rennet” and “microbial rennet”, which are acceptable for use.) Soft cheeses (e.g., cream cheese, cottage cheese, feta, brie, etc.) must bear an acceptable *hekhsher*.
 - d. Domestic wine may be used without a *hekhsher*, although only wines with a *hekhsher* may be used for ritual purposes (e.g., *Kiddush* and *Havdalah*). When a domestic wine is served, wine with a *hekhsher* should also be available.
6. **Foods that do not conform to the criteria above may never enter the kitchen, even though under certain circumstances, they may be permitted in the social hall (see below for further details). In addition, trays and other utensils from the kitchen cannot be used to platter or serve any foods that do not conform to the criteria above. When such foods are brought into the social hall, the kitchen must remain locked and out of service for the duration of the event and the subsequent clean-up process.**

OTHER FOOD BROUGHT ONTO THE SYNAGOGUE CAMPUS

1. **When foods from congregants’ homes, non-kosher restaurants or other non-rabbinically certified sources are served in the social hall, the kitchen must remain locked and out of service for the duration of the event and the subsequent clean-up process. In addition, such foods may never be served on trays and/or with other utensils from the kitchen, and such foods may not be stored in the kitchen or social hall refrigerators at any time.**
2. Congregants are encouraged to use the synagogue kitchen to prepare food for synagogue events. However, foods prepared in congregants’ homes may be served in the synagogue under the following conditions:
 - a. Only brand-new, unused cooking utensils, pots, pans and trays may be used when preparing, cooking, baking and transporting food to the synagogue. Disposable one-use aluminum pans are acceptable for use.
 - b. All food ingredients must conform to the standards of *kashrut* outlined above.

- c. Food should be prepared in an area that has been scrubbed and cleaned, separate from other food preparation in the home kitchen.
3. Synagogue members and employees may bring dairy and/or *pareve* foods onto the synagogue campus for congregational events or personal consumption. Such foods should be kept separate from the synagogue kitchen, according to the specifications above. Under no circumstances should non-kosher meat, fish or poultry be brought onto the synagogue campus.
4. Outside groups using the synagogue campus for non-congregational programs and events may bring only kosher foods onto campus. Such foods must bear an acceptable *hekhsher* or be produced in a kosher facility that is properly supervised to the satisfaction of the rabbi of the congregation. Foods that are not prepared under acceptable rabbinic supervision may not be served at non-congregational events on campus.

SHABBAT AND FESTIVALS

1. Shabbat and Festivals¹ begin, by definition, at the published candle lighting time and conclude the next day approximately one hour after the same candle lighting time, subject to the direction of the rabbi of the congregation. Candle lighting times are available in the synagogue office.
2. Under no circumstances can any cooking of food take place on Shabbat. Pre-cooked foods can be warmed or kept warm on Shabbat in an oven pre-set on a low temperature before Shabbat. Please consult the rabbi for guidance in this area.
3. Cooking is permitted on Festivals, but stoves, ovens, and other heat sources cannot be manipulated by any person of the Jewish faith.
4. With explicit rabbinic approval, certain food preparations that do not involve actual cooking may take place before the end of Shabbat, in preparation for a Saturday evening event (e.g., cold salad assembly, plating of cold or uncooked foods, etc.).
5. Food and related supplies may not be delivered on Shabbat.
 - a. All deliveries of food, catering items, and other event-related materials must conclude no later than two hours prior to candle lighting at the beginning of Shabbat and Festivals. Such items cannot be removed from the premises until after the conclusion of the Shabbat or Festival, and will be stored until such time that they can be picked up.
 - b. Deliveries of non-food-related items (i.e., anything other than food and catering supplies) for a Saturday evening event can be made by non-Jewish vendors beginning on Saturday two hours before the end of Shabbat, by prior arrangement with the synagogue office and/or the rabbi of the congregation.²
 - c. Deliveries that do not conform to these guidelines will be refused.

¹ Festivals include Passover (first two and last two days), Shavuot, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot (first two days), Shemini Atzeret, and Simhat Torah.

² Non-food items are treated differently than food items because foods cannot be prepared on Shabbat, whether by Jews or non-Jews. By contrast, non-Jews are not prohibited from handling non-food-related items on Shabbat.

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

1. Final judgment and interpretation of the *halakhah* regarding food preparation and kitchen usage at the synagogue resides with the rabbi of the congregation, as *mara d'atra*.
2. Questions regarding any of these policies can be directed to the rabbi of the congregation.
3. Any matters not explicitly covered by this policy must be referred to the rabbi of the congregation for consideration and clarification.
4. In case of violation or disregard of these policies, the rabbi and Religious Vice President of the congregation are each empowered to revoke the kitchen certification (or authorization for kitchen use) of an individual or organization.



Congregation b'nai shalom

Some Acceptable *Hekhshers* (kosher symbols)

(Not a comprehensive list; please check with the rabbi with any questions)

