

Food Safety Requirements for Field Trip Meals in the Summer Food Service Program

Section [7 CFR 225.16\(g\)](#) of the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) regulations allows reimbursement for meals served away from an approved site (e.g., field trip meals) when sponsors provide advance notice to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) and meet specific requirements. For guidance on the field trip requirements, refer to the CSDE's [Requirements for Field Trip Meals in the Summer Food Service Program](#).

As specified in [7 CFR 225.16\(g\)\(1\)\(ii\)](#), field trip meals must meet all applicable state and local health, safety, and sanitation standards. The greatest food safety concern for field trip meals is ensuring that foods defined by the [Food and Drug Administration's \(FDA\) Food Code](#) as "Time/Temperature Control for Safety Food" (TCS) – formerly known as potential hazardous foods (PHFs) – stay at proper temperatures during transport and service.

TCS require time/temperature control for safety to limit pathogenic microorganism growth or toxin formation that can lead to foodborne illness. Examples of TCS include dairy products, meat (beef, pork, lamb, and poultry), fish, shellfish, and eggs), heat-treated plants foods (e.g., baked potatoes; cooked rice, beans, and vegetables; and tofu or other soy proteins), raw seed sprouts, cut melon, cut leafy greens, cut tomatoes, and garlic-in-oil.

Staff must ensure that field trip meals are safe to eat. The SFSP sponsor's standard operating procedure (SOP) for field trip meals should include appropriate TCS food safety procedures during meal preparation, transport, and service. The practices below help to ensure the safety of field trip meals. For SOP examples, refer to the Iowa State University's [Standard Operating Procedure: Field Trip Meals](#) and the Institute of Child Nutrition's (ICN) [Standard Operating Procedures](#) webpage.



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Meal Preparation

- Ensure that staff follow all applicable HACCP procedures during the preparation and storage of field trip meals. For HACCP guidance, visit the "[HACCP](#)" section of the CSDE's Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.
- Chill TCS that will be served cold before placing in transport containers. Examples include sandwiches (e.g., turkey, ham, roast beef, tuna salad), cut fresh fruit and vegetables, especially melons, tomatoes, and leafy greens (excluding whole fruit and pre-packaged, shelf-stable fruit such as fruit cups and applesauce), and dairy products (e.g., milk, yogurt, and cheese).
- If the transport containers cannot maintain milk at 41°F or below, use shelf-stable (aseptic) milk that does not require refrigeration.

Meal Transport

- Maintain TCS at appropriate temperatures during transport and storage. Cold foods must be kept at 41°F or below. Hot foods must be kept at 135°F or above. For more information, refer to the ICN's sample SOP, [Hot and Cold Holding for Time Temperature Control for Safe Foods](#).
- Transport TCS in insulated portable food transport containers like coolers. Clean and sanitize transport containers before use. Use ice or cold packs to maintain the temperature of TCS. Keep the containers tightly closed until meals are distributed. For more information, refer to the ICN's sample SOP, [Transporting Food to Remote Sites \(Satellite Kitchens\)](#).
- Store transport containers and foods out of direct sunlight and away from engines.

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Meal Service

- Ensure that children eat meals at the appropriate time for correct implementation of time and temperature controls for food safety. Cold foods must be kept at 41°F or below; or eaten within four hours if stored below 70°F; or eaten within one hour if kept at temperatures above 90°F.
- Wash hands prior to distributing meals. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer is not a suitable substitute for handwashing because it is not effective against foodborne viruses and allergens. For more information, refer to the ICN's sample SOP, [Washing Hands](#), and visit the "[Handwashing](#)" section of the CSDE's Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.
- Use clean disposable gloves or utensils when distributing any unwrapped or unpackaged ready-to-serve food, such as whole pieces of fresh fruit or sandwiches packaged in bulk containers. For more information, refer to the ICN's sample SOP, [Using Suitable Utensils When Handling Ready-to-Eat Foods](#).
- Have children thoroughly wash their hands before receiving meals and eating. To avoid potential allergic reactions, ask children not to share foods.
- Discard all leftover food items returned in coolers from the field trip.



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Best Practices

- Develop a SOP that provides clear written procedures for field trip meals regarding appropriate food safety procedures for preparing, transporting, storing, and serving field trip meals, including temperature control, handwashing, and proper food handling procedures during transport and meal service; and how to handle leftover meals or foods (including milk).
- Disseminate the SOP to food service staff and all applicable field trip staff (including volunteers) and post it on the SFSP sponsor's website.
- Provide regular training for all staff involved with field trip meals.
- Reinforce proper procedures for field trip meals through various communication channels, such as staff meetings, emails, employee handbooks, written instructions, and the SFSP sponsor's website.

For additional guidance and technical assistance on implementing field trip meals, contact the CSDE's [Summer Meals](#) staff. For more information on food safety, visit the CSDE's [Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

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Resources

[2022 Food Code](#) (U.S. Food and Drug Administration):

<https://www.fda.gov/media/164194/download>

[Field Trip Meals](#) (“Meal Service” section of CSDE’s SFSP webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/summer-food-service-program/meal-service#FieldTripMeals>

[Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/food-safety-for-child-nutrition-programs>

[Requirements for Field Trip Meals in the Summer Food Service Program](#) (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/sfsp/field_trip_meals_sfsp.pdf

[Sample SOP: Hot and Cold Holding for Time Temperature Control for Safe Foods](#) (ICN):

<https://theicn.org/resources/181/food-safety-standard-operating-procedures/105686/hot-and-cold-holding-for-time-temperature-control-for-safe-foods.docx>

[Sample SOP: Transporting Food to Remote Sites \(Satellite Kitchens\)](#) (ICN):

<https://theicn.org/resources/181/food-safety-standard-operating-procedures/105731/transporting-food-to-remote-sites-satellite-kitchens.docx>

[Sample SOP: Using Suitable Utensils When Handling Ready-to-Eat Foods](#) (ICN):

<https://theicn.org/resources/181/food-safety-standard-operating-procedures/105735/using-suitable-utensils-when-handling-ready-to-eat-foods-2.docx>

[Sample SOP: Washing Hands](#) (ICN):

<https://theicn.org/resources/181/food-safety-standard-operating-procedures/105741/washing-hands.docx>

[SFSP Regulations 7 CFR 225](#) (USDA):

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-A/part-225>

[Standard Operating Procedure: Field Trip Meals](#) (Iowa State University):

<https://iastate.app.box.com/s/umtbvbe21qgrd5qy2pwan22ui9cavw3q>

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For information on Summer Meals, visit the CSDE's [SFSP](#) webpage or contact the [Summer Meals staff](#) at the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841. This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/sfsp/field_trip_meals_sfsp.pdf.



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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

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