



Potluck Events

What is a “potluck”?

A meal at which one or more of the attendees brings food that is donated and shared by the attendees. Also known as a potluck supper. Any fundraising efforts must be separate from the potluck event. Events sponsored by a licensed food establishment or for which food is prepared or held in the kitchen of a licensed food establishment is not a potluck event.

Following are some examples of potluck/not potluck events/special food events.

Situation 1:

Organization ABC publicly advertises a potluck event. The ad states that everyone bring a chicken (cooked at home or bought ready to eat from a store) and a side dish to serve. The organizers of the event will provide desserts, beverages, and paper supplies.

This is a potluck event because food and/or supplies are donated and shared by attendees.

Situation 2:

Organization ABC publicly advertises a food event. A member purchases and prepares all the meat and side dishes. Other attendees bring desserts and beverages. The member wants to be reimbursed for the cost of the food and charges each attendee.

This is not a potluck event because the member is not donating the food. This event requires a license.

Situation 3:

A religious group would like to sell frozen pizzas to the community to raise funds for a new addition.

This is a special food event, not a potluck, and the governmental agency may require a license.

Situation 4:

Organization ABC publicly advertises a food event that will be held at a licensed food establishment. All of the hot food will be held hot in the ovens in the kitchen of the licensed food establishment.

A food event does not qualify as a potluck event if it uses the kitchen of a licensed food establishment.

Situation 5:

A school PTA publicly advertises a potluck event for the parents of the third grade students. Each parent brings some food to share; the school provides paper supplies and beverages. The food is served in the school’s cafeteria, but it is not brought into the kitchen.

This is a potluck event. The food is donated and shared, and it is not brought into the licensed kitchen. (MN Statutes, chapter 157, requires school kitchens to be licensed).

Situation 6:

Organization ABC publicly advertises a lutefisk dinner. All of the food will be prepared at a local social club.

This is not a potluck event. This event requires a license. The attendees are not donating or sharing the food.

Situation 7:

Organization ABC publicly advertises a food event. Someone is willing to roast a pig for the event, but will not be reimbursed by the organization for the cost. All food is donated and shared among the attendees. The food is not brought into a licensed kitchen.

This is a potluck event. If the person is roasting and donating the pig as their contribution to the event, no license is required.