

Kosher Guide to the *Shul* Kitchen

**Cincinnati Kosher
Cincinnati, OH**

5775

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(Revision 08/11/15)

Section A – General Guidelines

1. The policies below apply to all *shul* events, defined as those which are open to the entire community. Provided that the *shul* kitchen and utensils are not being used, private events are not bound by these guidelines. *shul* events include, but are not limited to: *kiddushim*, *se'udah shelishis* and *tikkunim*.
2. While private events are not subject to the full extent of these guidelines, they nevertheless must be cleared by the *shul* rabbi. Additionally, private events require prominently placed signage indicating that the event is **not** endorsed by the *shul*. To obtain acceptable signs for this purpose, please contact the *shul* rabbi.
3. These policies comprise the minimal guidelines deemed acceptable by Cincinnati Kosher for *shuls*. Individual *shuls* may employ higher standards than those listed below – please be sure to comply with any additional guidelines that may be in place.
4. To minimize complications, the *shul* rabbi and/or a *kashrus* representative should be informed of planned events – both *shul* and private – as soon as possible, and (in most circumstances) no later than two weeks in advance. Please have an organized plan for when preparation in the *shul* kitchen would take place, so that proper supervision can be arranged (see section C, 2 for further details on this point). The necessity for a paid *mashgiach* (kosher supervisor) to be present during food preparations and/or the event is to be determined by the *shul* rabbi.
5. The *shul* rabbi is the ultimate presiding authority over the operation of the kitchen, as well as over any food served in the *shul* building or at a *shul*-sponsored event. All questions that arise, including those that involve non-*kashrus* matters of Jewish law, must be addressed to him.

Section B – Ingredients/Products

I. General Guidelines

1. All food must be delivered to the *shul* in its (unopened) packaging with an approved certification (a list of approved certifying agencies is attached). See below for exceptions to this rule.
2. All additional preparation of food must take place on *shul* premises.
3. Food items used as garnishes or other non-food purposes must be in compliance with these guidelines.
4. The following ingredients and products do not require any certification, and already-opened packaging of these ingredients and products may be brought to the *shul* for use: Sugar, salt, flour, unflavored seltzer, unflavored water, pure spices, pure cocoa, raw nuts, unflavored coffee and unflavored teas.

II. Product-specific Guidelines

a. Beverages

1. Uncertified liquor and soda may be used, provided that they are approved for use on the CRC or Star-K list (see appendix).
2. In addition to proper certification, all wine and grape juice must be *mevushal*.

b. Candy

1. All candy distributed in the *shul* (e.g. youth groups, celebrating *semachos*, *Simchas Torah*, etc.) must be *pareve* with an approved certification on the label. See section D, III-9 for important information with regard to candy and *Shabbos*-related issues.

c. Dairy Products

1. As *shul* kitchens usually service meat events, the use of dairy ingredients requires preliminary consultation with the *shul* rabbi (see section C, 6 for more details).
2. While it is not required that dairy products be *chalav Yisrael*, it is advisable that those running a dairy event be aware of products' status in this regard and make efforts to note the status of each product served.

d. Eggs

1. Although eggs can be used without certification, each egg must be checked for blood spots.

e. Fish and Meat Products

1. Certification is not required for packaged fresh or frozen salmon, provided that there are no added ingredients (color and salt are permitted as added ingredients). All other fish and meat products must have an approved kosher certification.

2. To prevent the mixing of meat and fish, all fish products served at a *kiddush* must be clearly marked as such (unless its fish status is clearly apparent – e.g. gefilte fish). Additionally, it is preferred that all fish products have a separate set of cutlery and plates stationed alongside of it, and that they are kept at some distance away from meat products.

f. Fruit and Vegetable Guidelines

1. The cleaning and peeling of fruits and vegetables must be done in the *shul* kitchen. See section D, II-7 for important information with regard to fruits and vegetables and *Shabbos*-related issues.

2. Due to concerns of *tola'im* (insect infestation), the use of fruits and vegetables require various degrees of washing and/or inspection. In some circumstances, washing and/or inspection can be done by kitchen staff, but in others a trained *mashgiach* is necessary. Please consult the guidelines below with attention to this detail.

3. The use of Israeli produce entails additional complications for which consultation with a *mashgiach* or the *shul* rabbi is required. Please note that tomatoes, red and yellow peppers, oranges and grapefruits are often imported from Israel.

i. Fruits

Canned: Canned fruit is acceptable without kosher certification if it meets **all** of the following criteria:

- The fruit is not a product of China or Israel
- The fruit is not cherries, grapes, and/or olives
- The fruit has no additional ingredients listed besides the fruit's own juices and/or heavy/light syrup

Note that flavors – both those listed as artificial and natural – can pose a problem and necessitate an approved kosher certification.

Frozen: All frozen fruits are acceptable without certification if no additives are listed in the ingredients. Sugar however, is a permitted additive.

Fresh: Fresh fruits are generally permitted, though note the following exceptions:

1. Blackberries and raspberries may not be used.
2. Strawberries require inspection **of a *mashgiach***.
3. Carobs should be broken open in a few places to check for insect infestation (if infested, the inside will contain a white stringy webbing; holes on the outside may also indicate infestation).
4. Dates and figs (unless listed as products of the USA) require a check for insect infestation or an approved kosher certification. To check, remove a few from a batch and open them up for a basic visual inspection – if no insects are found, one can assume that the rest of the batch is uninfested.

ii. Vegetables

Canned: All canned vegetables must have an approved kosher certification.

Frozen: Kosher certification is not required for any frozen vegetables that (1) do not list additional ingredients on their packaging (e.g. salt, preservatives) **and** (2) are not listed as a product of Israel.

Exceptions to the above rules are leafy vegetables including (but not limited to) asparagus, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cauliflower, and spinach. For these vegetables insect infestation is of concern and an approved kosher certification is required. For questions about any specific vegetables, consult a *mashgiach* or the *shul* rabbi.

Pre-packaged Fresh: All pre-packaged fresh vegetables are subject to the guidelines below for fresh (i.e. non-packaged) vegetables, though certification from an approved agency removes the need for washing and examination.

Fresh: Fresh vegetables can fit one of five categories listed below.

1. The following vegetables may be used with a simple wash:

- Alfalfa sprouts
- Bean sprouts
- Beans

- Beets
- Carrots
- Corn on the cob
- Cucumbers
- Eggplant
- Green beans
- Iceberg lettuce (when pre-washed)
- Kohlrabi onions
- Parsnips
- Peas
- Peppers
- Potatoes
- Pumpkins
- Radishes
- Rutabagas
- Squash
- Sweet potatoes
- Tomatoes
- Turnips
- Zucchini

2. The following vegetables should be washed thoroughly under a stream of water:

- Baby mushrooms
- Celery stalks (note: leaves must be cut off prior to washing)

3. The following vegetables (including those varieties grown hydroponically) require inspection **of a *mashgiach***:

- Asparagus
- Bibb lettuce
- Bok choy
- Boston lettuce
- Broccoli
- Cabbage
- Cauliflower
- Collard
- Endives
- Escarole
- Iceberg lettuce (closed-head)
- Kale
- Leek
- Mustard leaves
- Portabello mushrooms

- Red cabbage
- Red leaf lettuce
- Romaine lettuce
- Scallions¹
- Spinach greens

4. The following fresh stem herbs (including those varieties grown hydroponically) require inspection **of a *mashgiach***:

- Basil
- Cilantro
- Dill
- Mint leaves
- Parsley
- Rosemary
- Sage

5. The following vegetables may not be used at all as they cannot be properly checked:

- Artichoke hearts
- Brussel sprouts

¹ Alternatively, one may cut off the roots at the end of the bulb and the area where the stalks of the scallion intersect (about an inch in total). The remainder of the scallions (i.e. the section between the roots and the intersection, as well as the green stalks) may be used without inspection.

Section C – Utensils & Process

1. To maintain the integrity of these guidelines, the *shul* kitchen must be locked when not in use. Only individuals approved by the *shul* rabbi may be given a key to the *shul* kitchen.
2. The *shul* rabbi should be made aware of all activities taking place in the *shul* kitchen – without exception, no activities should ever take place in the *shul* kitchen without his knowledge.
3. Only the *shul's* utensils may be used. When this presents a difficulty, consult with the *shul* rabbi for possible solutions.
4. All flames and heating equipment must be started by a *Shabbos*-observant Jew – this includes ovens, stove tops, hot boxes, sternos, woks, etc., whether the items are fueled by gas or electricity).
5. Fish and meat must be prepared with and served on separate utensils. One may use a utensil for fish and then wash it with soap in order to use with meat and vice-versa.
6. All utensils in the *shul* kitchen (including ovens), unless marked otherwise, are designated as meat. Dairy and *pareve* utensils must be clearly marked as such. Please note that as a matter of policy, utensils become designated as dairy or meat when used for any component of a meat or dairy event – only new/*kashered* utensils used exclusively for *pareve* events may be treated as *pareve*. Utensils should never be used for events of a different type. As *shul* kitchens usually service meat events, dairy and *pareve* events require preliminary consultation with the *shul* rabbi.
7. The lining of sinks should not be relied on as a safeguard against *kashrus* concerns. Please consult the *shul* rabbi for alternative solutions.
8. The *kashering* of utensils must take place under the supervision of a *mashgiach* or the *shul* rabbi.
9. *Tevilas keilim* must be done with many items in the kitchen. See the CRC guidelines (in the appendix) for more information. Disposable items which will only be used once (e.g. aluminum pans) do not require *tevilah*.

Section D – *Shabbos*-related Issues

I. General Guidelines

1. As a general rule, a non-Jew may not be asked or hinted to perform any activities on *Shabbos* or *yom tov* which a Jew may not perform on *Shabbos* or *yom tov* her/himself. Exceptions do exist, but in all instances, consultation with the *shul* rabbi is required.

2. Jewish, non-*Shabbos*-observant staff may not be put in a position to do prohibited activities on *Shabbos* (e.g. driving to an event).

II. Preparations Before *Shabbos*

The following preparations must be made before *Shabbos* for any equipment/foods that are to be used on *Shabbos*:

1. All lights must be turned on or set to a time clock.

2. All heating equipment (ovens, stoves, hot boxes, warmers, crock pots, coffee urns, etc.) must be turned on (by a *Shabbos*-observant Jew – see Section C, 5).

3. Stove tops must be covered with a sheet of metal. Crock pots must be covered with a layer of aluminum foil. All controlling knobs, switches, or dials of heating equipment should be covered.

4. Food to be heated on *Shabbos* must (minimally) be precooked to a somewhat edible state (according to the *shul* rabbi's standards). Exceptions do exist – if needed, consultation with the *shul* rabbi is required.

5. Food that is to be placed directly over a (covered) flame or in an oven must be placed in those locations prior to the onset of *Shabbos*. Additionally, liquids or food containing substantial liquids must be hot before the onset of *Shabbos*.

6. Food decorations, including the artistic cutting of foods (e.g. radish flowers, icing designs, etc.) must be completed.

7. It is recommended that all fruit be peeled and cut (in the *shul* kitchen; see Section B, II-f-1 above). Please speak to the *shul* rabbi if you need to do any cutting and/or peeling on *Shabbos*.

8. All cans and **metal** twist-off bottle caps **must** be opened before *Shabbos*. Plastic twist-off bottle caps and other packaging should preferably be opened before *Shabbos* but may be opened on *Shabbos* when necessary, provided that no letters are destroyed in the process.

9. Ensure that the city *eruv* is up. If the *eruv* is not up, all supplies and food must be brought in so that carrying is not done on *Shabbos*.

10. Jewish paid staff that will be working on *Shabbos* must also work a minimal amount either before or after *Shabbos*. Payment should consist of a single sum covering all services provided.

III. On *Shabbos*

1. No deliveries may be made to or from the event site by the caterer or any outside distributor on *Shabbos*.

2. All reheating of foods performed on *Shabbos* requires the consultation of the *shul* rabbi or a *mashgiach*.

3. No gas or electric equipment (e.g. ovens, stoves) may be turned on or off on *Shabbos*, even by use of a non-Jew. Exceptions do exist – if needed, consultation with the *shul* rabbi is required.

4. Ovens and warmers may not be opened by a Jew, as doing so impacts the operation of the ventilation system and/or digital display (for questions about a specific device, consult the *shul* rabbi). However, these devices may be opened and closed by a non-Jew (who can be directly instructed to do so), provided that no uncooked food is left in the oven/warmer.

5. Concerning the use of tea bags and coffee bags, consult with the *shul* rabbi.

6. Lemon wedges may not be served at events.

7. On *Shabbos* and *yom tov*, foods may not have lettering or pictures that will be broken during the serving process (letters which will only be broken while eating them are permitted).

8. Slotted spoons may not be used, as they sort out different elements of food.

9. All tied bags to be distributed on *Shabbos* or *yom tov* (e.g. candy bags) must be tied in a manner that they may be untied on *Shabbos* (e.g. with a single bow; double knots are prohibited).

IV. Post-*Shabbos* Concerns

1. As preparation on *Shabbos* for after *Shabbos* is prohibited, only dirty dishes that will be used again on that *Shabbos* may be washed by a Jew (e.g. on *Shabbos* night for use on *Shabbos* day). This prohibition is not operative for non-Jews, who may be told to wash dishes without concern.

2. Following a *kiddush* or meal on *Shabbos* (with the exception of meals that take place shortly before the conclusion of *Shabbos*, e.g. *seudah shelishis*), areas may be cleaned if they may (within reason) be used for other activities on *Shabbos*. Tables and chairs should be put away as directed by the *shul* rabbi.

3. Preparations for post-*Shabbos* affairs may not begin in any manner until the conclusion of *Shabbos*, as noted in the *shul* schedule. This includes activities which are not inherently forbidden on *Shabbos* (e.g. setting up tables and chairs). This prohibition is not operative for non-Jews, who may do preparations that are not inherently forbidden on *Shabbos*.

Appendix A – Contact Information

Cincinnati Kosher

Rabbi Michoel Stern (*mashgiach*) – 513-526-4162 – michoel_stern@yahoo.com

Congregation Sha'arei Torah

Rabbi Ezra Goldschmiedt – 347-443-8613 – rabbi@shaareitorahcincy.org

David Alden (keyholder) – 513-374-2928 – thekosherkid.daa@gmail.com

Rebecca Frankel (keyholder) – 513-673-6559 – chochol1@aol.com

Cynthia Rosen (keyholder) – 513-324-3687 – cyrosen@outlook.com

Ari Rubinoff (keyholder) – 513-344-3293 – kcchef.ar@gmail.com

Congregation Zichron Eliezer

Rabbi Avrohom Weinrib – 513-532-3800 – rabbi@czecincinnati.org

Rabbi Yosef Ottensoser (*kashrus* representative; keyholder) – 513-623-9916 – yottensoser@cedar-village.org

Jackie Rabenstein (keyholder) – 513-703-5954 – esales@closeouttown.com

Golf Manor Synagogue

Rabbi Stuart Lavenda – 513-305-4970 – stulavenda@gmail.com