



## How the Food Premises Regulation affects Ontario churches

In the past there have been outbreaks of illness associated with meals prepared and served by members of community groups.

The goal of the Food Safety Regulations is to reduce the incidence of foodborne illness in the public by ensuring food is stored, prepared and served properly. In Ontario, the Food Premises Regulation sets the minimum standards for food handling.

Church groups are exempt from the Regulation if they are preparing meals for their members, personally invited guests or if conducting bake sales. For functions where the general public can attend, the exemption no longer applies. Therefore, compliance must be ensured and all food needs to be prepared in a kitchen inspected and approved by the Health Unit.

Food Regulations are reminding these organizations of their responsibilities and how the Ontario Food Premises Regulations apply to them. As mentioned above, if an organization is preparing and serving meals only to their members and guests they may be exempt from the requirements. However, the concern for safe food handling does not disappear. The Health Unit still wishes to provide information and review practices in our ongoing efforts to minimize the potential for a foodborne outbreak.

Those organizations who have their facilities located in a rural area with their own water supply are also reminded that Ontario Regulation 170 is still applicable to their system. The Ministry of Environment may introduce amendments to ease the current burden faced by church groups.

In situations where the Regulation does not apply, the Health Unit strongly recommends that hazardous food be prepared in an approved kitchen to reduce the risk of foodborne illness.

Hazardous food may include cream and custard filled pies, as well as entrees and salads containing meat, poultry, seafood and dairy products.

## A Few Tips for Safe Food Handling

All hazardous food should be kept below 4°C (40°F) or above 60°C (140°F).

Hazardous food should not be in the Danger Zone (between 4°C and 60°C or 40°F and 140°F) for more than 2 hours.

If transportation is necessary ensure the food is kept in proper containers and that the temperature is

NOT in the Danger Zone.

Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water before starting to handle food. Do not handle

food if you are ill.

Ensure meat and poultry are cooked thoroughly.

Use clean utensils to handle food.

Make every effort to ensure all ingredients are in good condition and are from approved sources.

Prepare food as close to service as possible.

Protect all food from contamination.

Also remember to:

Keep traffic in kitchen to a minimum during food preparation and always keep it free from pets.

Cover all food with food grade materials, e.g. plastic wrap or aluminum foil.

Keep raw food, especially meat & poultry away from ready to eat foods.

Keep all household cleaning supplies and other chemicals away from food.

For individuals on private wells, it is strongly recommended that you have a history of safe water results.

Members that are involved in direct food preparation are strongly encouraged to take the Food Handler Certification Course which is offered by the City of Ottawa