

# Temple Beth Shalom

## Kashrut Policy Guidelines

4<sup>th</sup> of Av, 5775 — July 20, 2015\*

The following guidelines should not be viewed as to apply to any circumstances other than those described below (for example, these do not necessarily apply in the case of bringing food to a *shiva* home).

### **Meals Within our Synagogue Building**

All food consumed by an individual and especially as part of an official synagogue function and/or event must be kosher.

### **Communal Meals Outside of our Synagogue Building**

In recognizing the importance of Jewish dietary laws in the Life of Jewish communities, we honor our God, our ancestors, and the Jewish appreciation for the sanctity of all life as well as the unique blessing of sustenance. The care with which kosher products are produced, and in particular the care with which they are consumed, should reflect our high values that honor our religious and cultural heritage and the values that flow through them.

*Klal Yisrael*, the recognized interconnectedness and worth/importance of every Jew, one to the other, regardless of specific personal practices and circumstances, along with the many *mitzvot* that direct us to engage in the building of community and in the sustaining of it, leads us to consider the importance of a more complex understanding of the power and importance of communal meals. Such experiences are central to any Jewish community and even more so in communities where Jewish practice is diverse despite being of modest size.

To that end, the Temple Beth Shalom Religious Committee, with the authority of Rabbi Fox in his role as *Mara d'Atra*, has developed the following *kashrut* policy guidelines for official synagogue events outside of our synagogue building.

If, for any reason, anything in this document remains unclear, please contact Rabbi Fox to request further clarification.

### **Potlucks**

It is understood that potlucks are independent communal meals associated with official synagogue events and, therefore, require the adherence to these guidelines that will enable a maximalist approach to participation in such communal meals while sustaining a reasoned and reasonable respect for Jewish dietary laws. As such:

***Dairy/Vegetarian.*** All potlucks must be dairy/vegetarian. Prepared foods used in the preparation of any dish consumed at a potluck must be checked carefully for ingredients. Additives often are renamed, so please be careful when inspecting the food you are using to complete your dish.

**Fish.** While fish may be included in an official synagogue event that includes a potluck meal, its inclusion invites additional complexities as we strive to be as welcoming to attendees who, invariably, will have different sensibilities and strictures regarding kosher food. Fish choices that are “more safe” are Tuna, Salmon, Herring, and Whitefish due to their appearance that slightly protects mis-labeling non-kosher fish and disguising them as kosher fish. Regardless, be careful when choosing a fish to prepare. For a more comprehensive look at Kosher fish, please see the following websites: [http://www.crcweb.org/kosher\\_articles/kosher\\_fish.php](http://www.crcweb.org/kosher_articles/kosher_fish.php) and <http://www.kashrut.com/articles/fish/>

It should not be dismissed that many people have fish allergies, in some cases severe ones, and so all dishes that include any element of a fish, even something seemingly benign such as fish powder, paste, oil, or flavoring, must be clearly marked. Of course, all of those types of elements of foods that may be used in preparing your dish must be carefully investigated.

### **Gluten-free**

Many people have gluten allergies ranging from mild to severe. In keeping with one of the central goals of these Kashrut policy guidelines, which have within them a desire to being as inclusive as possible, we encourage at least some of the dishes served at any potluck to be truly gluten-free. When preparing gluten-free dishes, please continue to follow the other relevant elements of these kashrut policy guidelines.

### **Food Preparation**

In every case, if at all possible, one should strive to use new disposable (foil) pans when baking and avoid non-stick cookware when cooking. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES MAY MEAT/POULTRY OF ANY KIND BE USED IN THE PREPARATION OF COMMUNAL MEALS.

Milk/Dairy must ALWAYS be separated from any meat (even minimal ingredients in powders and sauces) in any meal to extent that Jewish dietary laws require that dairy and meat should not be served within the same mealtime as the other. This may be most easily broken with regard to foods that one might assume is *pareve*, such as bread (some are marked as kosher/dairy). Simply put: NO mixing of milk and meat.

If at all possible, food should be not cooked on Shabbat (preparing food that does not involve cooking/transforming it may be permitted); in most cases, it is possible to prepare food on Jewish holidays for consumption on that same Jewish holiday (seek out Rabbi Fox’s guidance for more details).

### **Prepared Foods**

Whenever possible, prepared foods should be marked as kosher; when this is not the case, the ingredients must be checked carefully for any possible sign of *treif* elements (pork, shellfish, non-kosher meat, etc.). In many prepared foods, *treif* additives are sometimes used, so please be careful when choosing a prepared food.

## **Ways to Participate in a Potluck without Preparing Food**

If you have concerns regarding the preparation of food for a potluck as described above, you may always bring unopened packaged food that has a kosher *hecksure* (kosher symbol). When choosing such items, please be careful to choose items that are marked as dairy or *pareve*. Especially popular prepared items are baked goods.

In addition, depending upon what is needed, you may be able to provide disposable napkins, plates, and/or utensils.

## **Alcohol**

To the extent that alcohol is consumed, all alcoholic beverages must be kosher, especially wine (or any other beverage, alcoholic or otherwise) that is used for ritual purposes and blessings. Generally, beers without flavoring or additives and hard alcohol without colorings, additives, or flavorings of any kind are kosher, but see this explanation for a better understanding: <https://oukosher.org/blog/consumer-kosher/hard-truths-about-hard-liquor/> For further guidance on what alcoholic beverages are kosher, please contact Rabbi Fox.

If you have any further questions regarding any of the elements above, Please contact Rabbi Fox prior to preparing or purchasing a dish/item.

\* This policy may be altered in the future; check with Rabbi Fox for any changes.