



Policy: Kashrut and Kitchen Use

Date Approved: January 11, 2017
(Replaces Previous Policy Dated: August 20, 2013)

Approved By: Board of the Shaar Shalom Congregation

Policy Statement

As a Conservative synagogue, one of the Shaar Shalom Congregation’s most important ideals is to uphold and educate our members about the laws and traditions of Judaism. This policy has been developed in association and collaboration with the Ritual Committee to ensure kashrut observance for all functions held on synagogue property, in accordance with the practices of Conservative Judaism.

Definitions

Bal Tashchit - a Jewish principle that urges Jews not to squander or waste.

COR - the kosher certification trademark used by the Kashruth Council of Canada, the largest kosher certification agency in Canada. See www.cor.ca.

Hechsher - also known as a kosher symbol - is printed on food labels. The hechsher’s function is to indicate that a Jewish regulatory body has adjudged the food, product or service to be in conformance with Jewish laws of ritual purity. Go to www.cor.ca for a current list of acceptable hechsherim.

Mashgiach – the person designated to ensure the standards of kashrut are being followed at the synagogue

Pareve – or ‘neutral’ foods are prepared without meat, milk, or their derivatives and therefore permissible to be eaten with both meat and dairy dishes according to dietary laws.

Policy Objectives

The objective of the policy is to:

1. Describe the standards of observance of kashrut that are to be observed at all times in the Shaar Shalom synagogue and on its grounds; and

- All menus for private or congregational events must be presented in complete form to the Rabbi and the Kitchen Chair at least four (4) weeks prior to the event. A product list, containing ALL ingredients must be attached.
- No groceries may be used in the kitchens or elsewhere in the synagogue unless previously checked by the Rabbi or designated appointee. All groceries, with the exception of perishables (excluding leafy vegetables and certain berries), must arrive at the synagogue at least 48-hours in advance of use to ensure ample time to verify all products have an acceptable hechsher. This includes kosher candies.
- Due to the prohibition of eating bugs, leafy vegetables and certain berries must be thoroughly washed and this may require multiple rinses. The Rabbi or mashgiach must be present to supervise the cleaning.
- If a caterer runs out of an item, no replacements may be brought in without the Rabbi's approval and none purchased on Shabbat.
- Any food that is not approved will be returned to the purchaser and must be removed from the synagogue within 24 hours. Food not removed within that time will be donated to a food bank; infested perishables will be destroyed.
- No food (including coffee and tea) made outside the synagogue kitchens may be brought into the synagogue property, excluding manufactured foods that are in closed packaging and have an appropriate hechsher (for example, potato chips).

Booking the Kitchens:

- While work orders for functions held at the synagogue must be completed at least three (3) weeks prior to the event, work orders for kitchens use only can be completed two (2) weeks in advance. The synagogue office will provide the work order and will book the kitchen(s). (Refer to the Planning a Function at the Synagogue Policy for details on completing work orders.)
- When completing a work order for a caterer to use the kitchens, the caterer must be specified along with the mashgiach to be used. The caterer must be approved by the Rabbi and the Kitchen Chair and the caterer may be required to meet with the Kitchen Chair or appointee and/or the Rabbi prior to using the kitchen to familiarize the caterer with the kitchen rules and equipment.

Supervision of Food Preparation:

- Any function at the synagogue involving food requires supervision by a mashgiach. Mashgicha are appointed and arranged by the Rabbi and approved by the Kitchen Committee. The synagogue office provides a list of approved mashgicha.

Deliveries:

- All groceries, with the exception of perishables (excluding leafy vegetables and certain berries), must arrive at the synagogue at least 48-hours in advance of use to ensure ample time to verify all products have an acceptable hechsher. This includes kosher candies.
- It is important to contact the synagogue office to arrange a delivery time.
- No deliveries are to be made on Shabbat. All deliveries must arrive before 2pm on Friday. This includes balloons and flowers, etc.
- No old, dirty cartons can be used to bring food into the kitchens.

Using the Kitchens:

- Glassware may be rented, but must be in the synagogue three (3) days before the event so that it can be koshered by the Rabbi or designate. There may be a nominal charge for this service. Note that Pyrex and Durolex cannot be koshered.
- Any outside food preparation/presentation utensils and/or equipment to be used in the Shaar Shalom synagogue and on its grounds must be approved (and in most cases, also *koshered*) by the Rabbi or another Rabbi in our community. The Rabbi can perform the *koshering* with sufficient advance notice.
- No previously used containers may be brought into the kitchens. Only new containers are to be used for storage or removal of food. All foil, foil containers, waxed paper, parchment paper, plastic foil, etc. must have an appropriate hechsher.
- Foods prepared in the kitchens must be removed from pots and pans and labelled immediately for storage in the refrigerator, freezer or on the counter.
- Lunches/snacks for catering staff must be prepared on site. No outside drinks, other than bottled water with an appropriate hechsher, may be brought into the synagogue. This includes coffee/tea.
- Freezer space (if necessary) must be confirmed in advance as space may need to be shared with frozen foods prepared for other functions. The lower portion of the freezer must be left open for synagogue usage.

Cooking – not on Shabbat:

- Ovens can be turned on by anyone who the synagogue has appointed to cook in our kitchens (Jewish or not Jewish).

Cooking on Shabbat:

- The Rabbi supervises preparations for use of the kitchens on Shabbat. This includes heating, preparing and serving on Shabbat. The Shaar Shalom adheres to halachic precedent that enables anyone we designate as a caterer or caretaker to turn on ovens to cook for us. This means that anyone who we deem fit to act as a caterer or caretaker for the synagogue is permitted to turn on a flame or oven to cook for the synagogue.
- Turning on ovens:
Oven temperatures must be set at 250F before Shabbat begins and must remain on. Alternatively, timers can be set before Shabbat enabling the oven to automatically turn on and off at desired times on Shabbat.
- Cooking solids on Shabbat:
All cooking must be completed before Shabbat. What does "cooking" mean? A fish must be cooked enough before Shabbat so that it could - in theory - be served as 'rare'. Then, on Shabbat, in the oven pre-set at 250F, the cooking process can be completed to desired state.
- Cooking liquids on Shabbat:
Soups, sauces, gravies, etc. must be made before Shabbat. On Shabbat, they can be placed on a griddle or special range-top cover / heating tray (a 'blech' or 'plata') preventing boiling but enabling the liquid to warm-up to just below a simmer or boil. This will stay on throughout Shabbat or can be pre-set with a timer.

- Mixing a cooked solid with a cooked liquid on Shabbat:
Having been cooked and warmed up separately, the liquid can be poured over the solid before serving.
- Coffee on Shabbat:
Water for coffee may be boiled on Shabbat and the coffee may be brewed on Shabbat as long as:
 - a) It is boiled and brewed by someone who is not Jewish; and
 - b) The individual who boils and brews it pours him/herself a cup as soon as it is ready.

Kitchen Clean Up:

- Kitchens must be left in the same condition they were found. This includes the washing of dishes, pots, pans, silverware, serving pieces, and utensils. It also includes cleaning the counters, counter tops, stoves, sinks, and fridge. (Fridges may contain previously stored food and are to be cleaned to the level in which they were found.) Failure to do so may result in a cleaning charge.
- Following any event, all food must be removed by noon the next day, unless that day is Shabbat or a festival, in which case the food must be removed by noon the day following Shabbat or the festival.
- No food, flowers, vases, etc. may be removed from the synagogue by any person on Shabbat.
- In the spirit of Bal Tashchit, excess food should not be thrown out. Instead, arrangements should be made to deliver excess food to food banks or places where the food can be used.

General:

- No deviation from this policy will be permitted due to an unexpected circumstance mid-function.
- No Smoking is permitted in the building.

Policy Exceptions

A shorter timeframe for presenting a menu in complete form to the Rabbi and the Kitchen Chair is acceptable in the case of a bris, death or other unforeseen event.

Policy Monitoring

Adherence to this policy is monitored by the Rabbi and the Kitchen Chair.

Forms Included with this Policy as Attachments

N/A