



TOWN OF CONCORD

BOARD OF HEALTH
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Religious or Charitable Organization Operator

FROM: Concord Health Department

RE: Potlucks at Charitable Organization

DATE: January 2015

We are pleased to announce that the State has loosened the regulatory requirements for potluck dinners which will allow charitable organizations to share food at communal events without regulatory oversight. Governor Deval Patrick signed into law chapter 230, section 328A, "An Act Relative to Potluck Events".

Under chapter 230 of the acts of 2014 all the following conditions must be met for the event to be considered an exempted "potluck Event".

- People must be gathered to share food at the event;
- No compensation may be provided for bringing food to the event;
- The event is sponsored by a group of individuals or by a religious, charitable or non-profit organization;
- The event may not be conducted for commercial purposes, but money may be collected to support the religious, charitable or non-profit organization; and
- **The participants at the event must be informed that neither the food nor the facilities have been inspected by the state or the local public health agency.**

A business establishment dealing in the sale of food may not sponsor a potluck event. Additionally, food from the potluck event shall not be brought into the kitchen of a business establishment dealing in the sale of food. If all of these qualifications are met, the event constitutes a "potluck event" under Massachusetts law and food brought to the event for consumption is exempt from regulation.

The Concord Health Department would like to remind all operators that the most common food preparation practices which contribute to food borne illness are improper hold/cold holding temperatures, poor personal hygiene, inadequate cooking, contaminated equipment and food from an unapproved source. The elderly and immune compromised are particularly vulnerable to food borne illness.

If you would like additional information on safe food handling for groups please refer to [“Cooking for Groups: A Volunteer’s Guide to Food Safety”](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/shared/PDF/Cooking_for_Groups.pdf), which can be downloaded from http://www.fsis.usda.gov/shared/PDF/Cooking_for_Groups.pdf

If you have any questions or need further guidance please contact our office at 978-318-3275.