



B'NAI TIKVOH-SHOLOM KASHRUT POLICY

The purpose of this document is to define how B'nai Tikvoh-Sholom (BTS) adheres to the laws of kashrut in the purchasing, preparation, and serving of food for events sponsored by the synagogue, congregational affiliated groups, and all private rental parties and caterers that use BTS for both member and non-member functions.

As a Conservative congregation, affiliated with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, one of our most sacred obligations is to inspire, teach, and uphold the laws, traditions, values and customs of Judaism. The mitzvah of kashrut is one of the basic tenets of Conservative Judaism. While we recognize different members of our community observe kashrut in different ways, it is our goal to make sure that everyone who enters BTS, be they members or guests of our community, feels welcome and comfortable eating here. [Note: "BTS" applies to the kitchen, sukkah and anywhere food is consumed on our premises or under our auspices.]

WHEN QUESTIONS ARISE

As the local halakhic – Jewish legal - authority [*mara d'atra*], the rabbi of BTS rules on kashrut questions for our community.

ANY MEAT MUST BE PREPARED UNDER RABBINIC SUPERVISION

Any meat meal at BTS must be prepared in its entirety (including bread, side dishes, dessert and condiments) either by a commercial establishment/caterer under rabbinic supervision or by a congregational committee supervised by the rabbi and/or other approved *mashgiach* (kashrut supervisor). **Prior approval** of the caterer by the rabbi is required. (We have a list of approved caterers we are glad to provide.) **Under no circumstances may anyone bring meat cooked at home into the synagogue.**

KOSHER HOMES MAY PROVIDE COOKED DAIRY AND PAREVE FOOD

Members whose homes are kosher according to BTS' definition (see below), may cook dairy or *pareve* food and bring it to BTS for private or group consumption.

NON-KOSHER HOMES MAY PROVIDE UNCOOKED FOOD OR PURCHASE KOSHER FOOD

Members whose homes are not kosher according to BTS' definition (see below), may prepare cut raw fruits & vegetables, hard boiled eggs, egg or tuna salad*, with all kosher ingredients, for private or group consumption at BTS. Those who live in non-kosher homes may also purchase and bring packaged certified kosher foods.

(*Note that canned tuna requires kashrut certification, since certain brands cook their tuna in chicken broth. Non-certified brands might also not be “dolphin-safe.” Such brands by definition include a non-kosher animal in their product.)

COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS

The rules articulated above apply to private homes, and are designed to enhance all community members’ sense of belonging, and their ability to contribute to communal meals. They do not apply to restaurants, delis and caterers.

Since no non-kosher restaurant or caterer meets BTS’ standards for kashrut, it is not permissible to bring in any cooked food from a non-kosher restaurant or caterer – for example, cheese pizza from non-kosher establishments, and fish or vegetarian food cooked at an otherwise non-kosher restaurant.

In summary: Commercially prepared cooked food may be brought into BTS only if it is prepared under rabbinic supervision.

BAKED GOODS

Breads, bagels and other baked goods should be purchased from a bakery under rabbinic supervision (e.g., Crown Market, Big Y in West Hartford, Stop & Shop in West Hartford or Bloomfield) or be marked with a kosher certification symbol (see below).

BEVERAGES

Aside from water, all beverages to be served to the community (hot or cold) must have Kosher certification. Coffee and other drinks may be brought into BTS **for private consumption only**.

FRIDAY NIGHT ONEG/SHABBAT/HOLIDAY MORNING KIDDUSH

Since many people eat a meat meal before attending services on Friday nights, the Oneg Shabbat should always include some pareve foods as well as pareve coffee whiteners.

Pareve and dairy items should be clearly marked with signs.

After a meat meal has been served at BTS (even if it does not include everyone, such as a USY or Hebrew school program), no dairy foods should be served for three hours.

WHEN IS KASHRUT CERTIFICATION REQUIRED?

Many kinds of foods brought to BTS to be shared for communal meals require a recognized kashrut symbol, such as the O-U, Star-K, Kaf-K, Triangle-K or any number of others. (A non-

exhaustive list of common certification symbols can be found at www.kashrut.com/agencies/ and there is a list appended to these guidelines.)

A simple “K” usually is not sufficient. (However for some companies, like Kellogg’s cereals, a “K” is backed up by a recognized supervisor.) Similarly, many types of ingredients that go into home-cooked food brought from kosher kitchens to BTS require certification.

In general, processed and cooked foods, those with additives, and those whose ingredients are unclear need certification. Raw and single ingredient foods generally do not.

The following foods require no certification:

- Fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables (including those cut up by grocery stores)
- Pure fruit juices
- Dry grains, legumes and beans
- Dried fruit
- Dry roasted nuts and nuts still in the shell. (Oil roasted nuts should be certified.)
- Honey
- Olives
- Extra Virgin olive oil
- Milk
- Coffee and tea
- Sugar, salt and most spices

Again, this list is not exhaustive. When uncertain about whether a food needs certification, please consult the rabbi.

FISH

Fresh (or frozen) raw, unprepared fish of a kosher species (fins and scales, no shell fish) may be purchased at any market. If the fish must be sliced, please ensure that the knife used is wiped clean first. A list of kosher species can be found on the internet www.kashrut.com/articles/fish/.

Fish which has been prepared (e.g., breaded or with a sauce) must have kosher certification.

Smoked or processed fish must have kosher certification.

No swordfish and sturgeon. (Although some Conservative and even Orthodox authorities permit it, we do not serve these fish at BTS.)

WINE & CHEESE

All wine and grape juice should bear a *hechsher* (accepted kosher certification marking). Welch’s grape juice is under rabbinic supervision and may be used although there is only a “K”; the rabbi has investigated the matter and found this supervision to be reliable.

All cheese must be certified kosher. (Although many Conservative authorities permit it, we do not use non-certified cheese at BTS.) This applies to the synagogue kitchen as well as to food prepared in kosher homes and brought to BTS.

FOOD MUST BE NOT PURCHASED OR PREPARED IN VIOLATION OF SHABBAT & HOLIDAYS

Food brought into BTS may not be cooked on Shabbat, and may not have been purchased on Shabbat or the Yom Tov days of major holidays.

It is permissible in Jewish law to cook on Yom Tov days – the first two and final days of Pesach or Sukkot, as well as Rosh Hashana or Shavuot, when they do not fall on Shabbat. Thus, one may cook – though not shop – on a Yom Tov morning and bring the food to share that day.

One may not prepare food on Shabbat for Saturday evening

This is to be stressed in particular with respect to food brought to eat in the Sukkah. It is not permissible to purchase food on the first two or final two days of major holidays or on Shabbat and bring it to BTS.

Use of the microwave oven or the Keurig coffeemaker is forbidden on Shabbat and holidays.

Hot water may be provided for Shabbat by filling the large coffee urn and plugging it in before Shabbat begins. The custodian usually does this on Friday on his own schedule. A timer may be attached to the urn to ensure shut-off on Shabbat afternoon.

Foods that have been par-cooked or fully cooked before Shabbat may be reheated on Shabbat, provided that the oven/warming tray is already on and the food is already in an edible state prior to reheating. Such food must be in the synagogue kitchen **before** Shabbat begins.

For Shabbat use, the oven/warming tray should be set on low or not above 300 degrees. Crock pots should be set on low.

Food may be cut up on Shabbat.

Canned and bottled foods may be opened on Shabbat for consumption on Shabbat.

USING THE BTS KITCHEN

The BTS kitchen has clearly marked “Meat” and “Dairy” sides, each of which includes sinks, cabinets, utensils, pots and pans, and dishes.

All soaps, cleansers, scouring pads with soap, etc. must be certified kosher. Sponges used for cleaning surfaces (counters, sinks, etc.) may not be used for washing dishes.

Cloth dishtowels may be used to dry either meat or dairy dishes, but not both (unless they are laundered in between.)

Glass dishes may be used for either meat or dairy, but must be washed promptly in the correct sink.

The long steel table is used for food prep and should always be covered with butcher paper. At the conclusion of the prep or serving, the paper should be discarded and new paper rolled out. If the paper has not been pre-cut, the used paper should be rolled up, to be cut and discarded after Shabbat.

All those using the kitchen, whether congregants or caterers, must ensure that the kitchen is left clean and that all leftover food is stowed away in sealed containers or the freezer or refrigerator.

The freezer and refrigerator may be used to store meat, dairy and *pareve* (neutral, neither meat nor dairy) food.

The ovens and stovetops may be used to cook meat, dairy or *pareve* food. Please note that meat and dairy food may not be baked together in the same oven. If *pareve* food is baked in the same oven as meat or dairy food, it loses its *pareve* status.

PASSOVER RULES

On Passover, no food cooked in any private home may be brought into BTS. Only sealed, packaged food and drink, bearing certification from a rabbinical supervisor, may be brought anywhere in the building. This applies to our staff and renters as well.

DEFINITION OF A KOSHER HOME

Different households will practice kashrut as they determine. For purposes of BTS' communal kashrut, the following practices constitute having a kosher home.

- Exclusively kosher foods are brought into the home.
- All meat and poultry is purchased from a kosher butcher or is prepackaged and has rabbinic certification.
- Only kosher fish – that is, those with fins and scales – are used. Shellfish and eels are not used. A list of kosher and non-kosher species can be found on the internet www.kashrut.com/articles/fish/.

- All packaged, canned, or frozen products are certified kosher, or are checked to be sure they contain no non-kosher ingredients. (It is preferable not to rely on a kosher-by-ingredient approach, but such a home may still be regarded as kosher.)
- Commercially cooked food must come from establishments/caterers that are under rabbinic supervision.
- Commercially baked goods must come from establishments described or have kosher certification.
- Eggs are checked for blood spots and spotted eggs are discarded.
- Meat and dairy dishes are completely separated in the kitchen:
- Separate dishes, pots, pans, utensils and flatware are used for meat and dairy foods. Utensils that become non-kosher are properly kashered.
- Meat and dairy dishes, pots, utensils, etc. are washed separately. Separate sponges, cloths, towels are used. Meat and dairy dishes are not washed together in the dishwasher.
- Products (including those labeled "non-dairy") are checked for milk derivatives, such as casein, sodium caseinate and lactose, if they are to be used with meat.

If you do not currently have a kosher home, and want to *kasher* your kitchen, *mazal tov!* Please contact Rabbi Cantor for help.

Approved by the BTS Ritual Committee, December 2013