



Safety Note 40

Barbecues - food hygiene & safety information

It is University policy that only Catering Services or suppliers contracted by Procurement can be used for the provision of food for official events on campus. For events on campus run by affiliated organisations such as RUSU, JCRs and the Chaplaincy, and for School/department social events the following information must be followed.

For general safety reasons, as well as food safety, all BBQs must be approved 28 days in advance. Applications should be submitted to event.approval@reading.ac.uk – see Safety Guide 33.

Organisers should note that no events will be allowed during the summer term exam period.

FOOD SAFETY

Outdoor cooking can create food hygiene hazards and increase the risk of food poisoning because it is difficult to keep food very hot or cold as required. Inadequate cooking of high-risk food such as meat and also cross contamination may result in food poisoning.

Campylobacter and *E. Coli* food poisoning need only low infective doses to cause illness and hence prevention of cross contamination is very important.

Planning

A responsible person must ensure that food is not contaminated and is not harmful. This will involve considering purchase, storage, cooking, keeping hot and service of food. Wherever possible, ready prepared, containerised small portions should be used because they are easier to prepare and cook. Avoid large joints or whole birds on the barbecue as it is difficult for heat to penetrate and there may be uneven temperatures within the food.

Layout

It is essential that cross contamination is avoided, that is, the possible transfer of bacteria from raw to cooked food. Try to arrange food flow from clean to dirty areas, e.g. separate the preparing, handling and storage of raw food from the cooked/ready to eat food area. These areas could be separated by the barbecue itself.

Equipment

Separate utensils should be used for cooked and raw food. Tongs used for serving cooked food should be separate from those used for raw food and during cooking. Separate plates should also be used. Close fitting lidded waste bins should be provided to prevent pest problems.

Washing facilities

People handling food must have access to hot water, soap and paper towels. Hands should be washed before touching foods and after handling raw foods - especially raw meat and poultry. Where this is outside a bowl and a supply of hot and cold water, soap and towels would be sufficient. A means of cleaning and disinfecting utensils must also be available and used. This will normally be hot and cold water and detergent.

Cooking and preparation

The following cooking and preparation points should be noted.

- Frozen meats and poultry must be completely defrosted (preferably in a refrigerator) prior to cooking unless the instructions state otherwise.
- Light traditional barbecues well in advance of cooking as it can take up to 1½ hours to reach the correct temperature. Gas fuelled barbecues are quicker. Modern units normally indicate when they have reached the correct temperature.
- Always cook barbecued meats thoroughly. Thick slices or thick pieces of chicken should be pre-cooked in an oven or microwave and then finished off on the barbecue. The time between pre-cooking and barbecuing should be kept to an absolute minimum. Rare or pink burgers must not be eaten but cooked until the juices run clear and no pink bits remain. A method to assess if the meat has been suitably cooked must be in place. This could be to cut open items to ensure they are cooked. An alternative could be to use a probe thermometer to ensure cooking temperature is above 75°C.
- If food starts to char or burn the height of the grill should be raised or water sprayed on the coals or an air vent closed. Charring food provides insulation and the inside may remain raw.
- Thoroughly wash salads and raw vegetables to remove all traces of soil and insects, and do not prepare too far in advance.
- Keep meat, salads and perishable foods in the fridge until they are ready to cook or eat.
- Eat food as soon as it is ready or keep it hot until it is served.
- Discard perishable food that has been left out at ambient air temperature for more than two hours.

Personal hygiene

People preparing and cooking food must be hygienic, not suffering from gastrointestinal infections, and have no skin lesions. Food must be handled, cooked and served by a trained food handler (Level 2 food hygiene training).

GENERAL SAFETY

Fire safety

Open fires and bonfires will not be allowed.

Due to the increased risk of fire, during hot dry spells of weather a general ban upon BBQs will be considered. This decision would be made after consultation between the Health and Safety Services Office, the Head of Maintenance & Grounds and Security Services.

Barbecue safety

- Disposable/ portable barbecues should be firmly placed on a suitable stand, they must not be placed directly onto grass.
- There must be arrangements in case of an emergency e.g. a fire. It is not acceptable to remove any fire fighting equipment from a building. A bucket of sand will normally be sufficient for small BBQs. This must be available from the start of the event and not disposed of until the BBQ has been safely cleared away.
- Only use enough charcoal to cover the bottom of the barbecue with a depth of about 50mm.
- Use only suitable fire lighters or fluids following the instructions – petrol must NEVER be used.
- Never leave the barbecue unattended.
- Make sure that there is nothing which could fall into the barbecue e.g. loose clothes or hair.
- Oil in pans must not be heated on the barbecue.
- Once cooking has finished make sure that the BBQ coals have cooled before moving the BBQ.
- The person(s) who are cooking must not drink alcohol until after they have finished their duties. Likewise, a responsible person must be ready and fit to tackle a fire if the need arises – they must therefore not drink alcohol during the event.
- Care should be taken to prevent people getting too close to the barbecue and burning themselves or knocking the barbecue over.

Gas barbecues

- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions regarding use of the barbecue.
- The tap must be turned off before changing the gas cylinder.
- Gas cylinders must be changed in the open air.
- If you suspect a leak to the gas cylinder or pipe work soapy water should be put around all joints to see if bubbles appear. If they do – there is a leak.
- If you find a leaky joint - turn off the gas supply and try to tighten it, but do not over tighten. If you cannot stop the leak, the BBQ must not be used.
- Gas hoses should be positioned as far as possible from hot surfaces and dripping hot grease or a heat shield installed to protect them.
- When you have finished cooking with a gas barbecue, turn off the gas cylinder before turning off the barbecue controls, this ensures that any residual gas in the pipeline is used up.
- In case of fire shut off the supply.

Location

The University does not currently have any dedicated sites for barbecues; applications will be dealt with individually taking into account various factors e.g. proximity to buildings and ventilation air intakes, weather conditions, surface that the barbecue is going to be put on, potential for damage to foliage etc.

The site should be chosen to ensure that there is no disturbance to the University or public and to minimise the risk of gatecrashers.

Damage to the landscape must be avoided and vehicles should not be driven off the roads.

The mobile phone number which has been provided as a contact must be available in case of an emergency and for security to be able to contact you if there are any complaints.

Noise

Amplified music is not permitted. Un-amplified music and entertainment is permitted subject to any licensing requirements. The organisers are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of any such requirements.

Alcohol

Although the consumption of alcohol is not banned, there must be none on sale unless the event has obtained a Temporary Event Notice from the local council – see Safety Guide 33.

Clear up

The site must to be cleared up after the event and all rubbish and litter must be removed and disposed of in a suitable bin (not a litter bin).

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