



Beth Abraham Guide to Kashrut Supervision

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Chapter 1 WELCOME

This Guide is addressed to all people who work or volunteer in the food services at Beth Abraham. Its purpose is to acquaint everyone with how the laws of kashrut are interpreted at Beth Abraham to provide our congregation with a kosher food service that the entire Jewish community will feel comfortable using. Only persons who are well-versed in the laws of kashrut and who maintain kosher homes themselves will be approved to supervise Kashrut at Beth Abraham. Therefore this Guide is not intended to be a comprehensive or exhaustive study of kashrut, but a reference manual for maintaining a high standard of kashrut in our synagogue.

As with every matter of Jewish law in the synagogue, the rabbi is our *Mara d'Atra* (halakhic authority) for all questions involving kashrut.

Chapter 2 KASHRUT SUPERVISION AT BETH ABRAHAM

The rabbi is the ultimate halachic authority to rule on any issue that arises in kashrut supervision. In general, Beth Abraham follows the kashrut guidelines of the Conservative Movement. However, not all of the leniencies of the Movement are permitted in the synagogue kitchen, in order to ensure that more traditional members of the community will feel comfortable attending functions held at Beth Abraham. For instance, all wines and cheeses served at Beth Abraham must bear a *heksher* (certification) of kashrut, despite various opinions within the Movement. On the other hand, Beth Abraham does accept the ruling of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Conservative Movement that the immersion in a *mikveh* of kitchen equipment and vessels (*tevillat kelim*) is not necessary.

Kashrut for the synagogue is supervised by *mashgichim*, or authorized supervisors, appointed by and under the authority of the rabbi. **These supervisors are the only persons authorized to work without direct supervision in the kitchens.** However, if an authorized supervisor is engaged in food preparation, it is desirable to have another *mashgiach* functioning as supervisor. Whenever possible the *mashgiach* should not supervise her/himself.

A *mashgiach* must be present for all phases of food preparation in the synagogue, including (1) bringing food into the synagogue, (2) all food preparation and cleanup in the synagogue, and (3) all cleaning activities that occur for the purpose of kashering kitchen equipment.

Chapter 3 KOSHER FOODS AND BRINGING THEM INTO BETH ABRAHAM

Beth Abraham allows only kosher food to be brought into the synagogue (with the exception of foods brought in for personal use by the non-Jewish synagogue staff, and which may only be eaten in designated areas of the office). All packaged food (except as noted below) must bear a *hekhsher*. All food and kitchen equipment that enters the synagogue must be inspected by an authorized *mashgiach*. Call the synagogue office at 293-9520 to arrange for a *mashgiach* to be present when bringing food into the synagogue.

Hekhshered foods must be sealed when brought to Beth Abraham. Kosher packaging may not be opened before inspection by the *mashgiach* in the synagogue. If the food (such as bulk cheese or meats) is sliced at the store, the store must have kosher slicing equipment, and must repackage the food in a sealed container bearing a *hekhsher*.

All food served at Beth Abraham must be prepared at Beth Abraham or at another kosher facility. Food cooked at other kosher sites should be sealed under the supervision of a recognized *mashgiach*, marked, and then inspected by our *mashgiach* when brought into Beth Abraham. Because we cannot be certain of the level of kashrut at an individual's house, no food cooked in a private home may be brought into the Beth Abraham kitchen or used at any Beth Abraham function.

Foods Allowed without Hekhsher

Fresh foods that have not been processed in any way may be brought in without a *hekhsher*. This may include packages of frozen vegetables and fruit with no added ingredients. Check with the *mashgiach* if there is any doubt.

Most Soft drinks are kosher. All Coca-Cola products, all Pepsi products, Canada Dry Ginger Ale, Dr, Pepper, and all 7-up products other than Cherry 7-up are certified kosher. Any flavored waters or iced teas need to have a visible *hekhsher*. A Soft drink list is attached to this Guide.

Alcohol and Wines

There are some "rules of thumb" that can make working with spirits a little easier

- All domestic (U.S.) beer is considered kosher. No *hekhsher* is needed.
- All spirits are considered kosher. No *hekhsher* is needed.
- The only allowable rum is white rum .
- Beer from small microbreweries must have a *hekhsher*.
- Liqueurs must have a *hekhsher*

All wine served at Beth Abraham must bear a *hekhsher*.

Chapter 4 KITCHEN USE AND FOOD PREPARATION

In order to ensure strict adherence to our standards of kashrut, the Beth Abraham kitchen cannot be used without permission from the synagogue office or rabbi under any circumstances. All food preparation in the Beth Abraham kitchen must conform to the practices outlined in this manual. The *mashgiach* may stop any or all kitchen operations to prevent a violation.

A big part of keeping our synagogue food services kosher is the proper use of the kitchen and careful food preparation. **A *mashgiach* must be present for all food preparation in the kitchen.** If necessary, the synagogue office can assist in providing for the presence of a *mashgiach*.

Beth Abraham's kitchen is provided with separate dishes, pots, pans, utensils, serving trays, preparation areas, stove tops, ovens, refrigerators and sinks for meat and dairy. Mixing of meat and dairy kitchen equipment is absolutely forbidden. Meat and dairy foods are not to be prepared at the same time in the kitchen facilities.

To avoid setting off the sprinkler system, fans in the hoods over the stoves must be turned on before using the stoves.

There is only one steamer in the kitchen, **which may only be used for parve foods**, i.e. specifically for steaming vegetables.

There are several common hazards that should be avoided to maintain the integrity of the Beth Abraham kitchen.

- Make sure non-dairy creamers are served for coffee with a meat meal. Check the *hekhsher* carefully; not all "non-dairy" creamers are truly *hekhshered* as parve. When storing such creamers in the kitchen, make sure they are separate from the dairy creamers and clearly marked.
- Butter is always dairy. Parve margarine may be used with any meat meal.
- Pay attention to the dessert planned for a meat meal; many desserts and candy are dairy by nature.

Any new equipment brought into the kitchen must be inspected by the *mashgiach*, determined if it will be used for meat, dairy, or parve, and marked appropriately.

Eggs are considered *treife* (non-kosher) if they contain a drop of blood. To keep a single egg from ruining an entire dish, each raw egg should be broken separately in a

small cup or bowl, inspected for blood, and then added to the main dish. Eggs boiled in the shell are allowed without individual inspection.

Many leafy vegetables may contain insects, and insects are not kosher. To prepare these vegetables, they must be soaked in a vinegar/water solution and then rinsed with clear cold water. "Leafy vegetables" include (but are not limited to) asparagus, cauliflower, broccoli, parsley, lettuce, kale, scallions, and any other densely packed leafy vegetable. If you have any questions on a particular vegetable you are using, contact the *mashgiach* or rabbi.

When storing leftovers, clearly mark the container with any restrictions (e.g. meat, dairy, parve) and store the container in the appropriate kitchen area.

Latex gloves are provided in the kitchen and should be used during food preparation.

Dishwashing

Because we have a single dishwashing station, particular care must be taken to maintain the integrity of meat/dairy separation.

Do not mix meat, dairy, and parve dishes in the dishwasher. At the end of any session of dishwashing, run the dishwasher a cycle without a load, drain the dishwasher, and thoroughly clean out the filter trap. Between sessions of cleaning meat, dairy, and parve, the dishwasher should be drained, the filter cleaned, and an empty cycle run.

The soap and rinse products used for dishwashing must bear a heksher.

Re-kashering Kitchen Equipment

If any kitchen equipment is used in an inappropriate way (e.g. the meat oven used for dairy, a non-kosher ingredient placed into a bowl, etc.) that piece of equipment is considered *treif* and cannot be used until it is re-kashered by the *mashgiach*. The item should be immediately brought to the attention of the *mashgiach*, and separated or marked appropriately so it is not accidentally used until re-kashered.

To re-kasher an oven or stovetop, first clean it extremely thoroughly, removing even the smallest particle of food from all surfaces, crevices, hinges, etc. For an oven, heat to 500 degrees for one hour. For a stove top, turn onto high for one hour.

For utensils, start with a thorough cleaning and let the item rest 24 hours. The next steps vary slightly depending on the material.

Metal utensils, flatware, and other simple equipment that can stand high-heat should be cleaned thoroughly and then immersed in boiling water. If the item is too large to fit in a pot of boiling water, then boiling water should be poured over it directly from the pot.

Utensils which come in direct contact with fire (barbecue grill, broiling pan, baking tins) are kashered by open flame. Put the item under or over an open flame and thoroughly heat until the metal glows red hot.

Glassware (including ovenproof ceramics) when washed may be considered as new.

Unglazed pottery, woods utensils, and earthenware may not be re-kashered.

Chapter 5 WORKING WITH A CATERER

All caterers using the synagogue's facilities must be approved by the synagogue. The caterer must be familiar with kosher cooking and willing to abide by synagogue policies. Appendix One shows the agreement the caterer will be required to sign.

Caterers using Beth Abraham's kitchen or serving in the social hall must abide by the rules in this manual. In particular, all caterers must be supervised by a *mashgiach* and have all incoming food and equipment inspected.

Open items (spices, knives, etc) brought in or out by caterer, to be used again at a kosher institution must be sealed and signed by the *mashgiach* or rabbi.

Rented kitchen equipment must be kashered before use. See the chapter on food preparation for details on the proper kashering techniques for various equipment at Beth Abraham.

Chapter 6 THE KITCHEN ON SHABBAT

Beth Abraham maintains a strict *Shomer Shabbat* policy on synagogue grounds. The following additional guidelines are to be followed on Shabbat and on all *Yamim Tovim* (holy days).

No cooking may occur on Shabbat. In this context, “cooking” refers to any change in the state of the food (a solid being melted, two ingredients being mixed under heat and forming a new substance). Reheating is allowed, if the temperature is kept under 250 degrees. Mixing of ingredients is allowed, as long as those ingredients do not interact - for example, mixing a salad.

A non-Jew may operate some appliances for the purposes of re-heating food or brewing coffee.

Any staff that is hired to serve or clean a Shabbat meal must be non-Jewish.

Because carrying in and out of the synagogue is not permitted on Shabbat, no food or equipment may be brought into or taken out of the building on Shabbat. All foods must be brought to the synagogue no later than 3:00pm on Friday prior to the Sabbath of the celebration.

Chapter 7 PERSONAL FOOD AND OTHER TOPICS

Food Brought In for Personal Use

The only non-kosher food that may be brought into the synagogue is the food intended for the personal use of non-Jewish synagogue personnel. Such food may only be eaten in the designated area of the office.

Any food brought into the synagogue for personal use of Jewish staff or congregants must be dairy, parve, or kosher meat in new unopened packages with acceptable kosher certification or directly from approved vendors. No meat prepared in one's home or any non-kosher facility may be brought to the synagogue (except as permitted for non-Jewish staff).

No food brought into the synagogue for personal use may be carried into the kitchen of the synagogue. Utensils from the kitchen are not to be used with such food.

Other Kosher activities in the Synagogue Family

The laws of Kashrut are observed in all activities of the congregation that are held outside the building. So, for example, if Beth Abraham holds a picnic, or a Shabbat service at a congregant's home, the food provided would follow the rules outlined in this manual. See the *mashgiach* or Rabbi for exact details on any situation that you may encounter.

Appendix 1: Caterer's agreement for Using the Beth Abraham Synagogue Kitchen

For a copy of the caterer's contract, please contact the synagogue office

: Table of Allowable Hekhshers

There are well over 800 different hekhsher marks used world-wide, and it is impossible to list them all here. There are also changes going on at any given time; not all hekhshers are trusted at all times. If you are in any doubt, contact the mashgiach. A list of acceptable hekhshers is attached to this Guide. Some of the more common hekhshers used at Beth Abraham include:



The Union of Orthodox Rabbi



United Mehadrin Kosher, U.S.A.



Kof-K from the Kof-K organization



Chicago Rabbinical Council, U.S.A.



"Tablet K" from Rabbi Saffra of New York



Kashrut Council of Canada - COR



Circle K from OK Kosher, USA



Kosher Supervision of America



KAJ - Kehilla Adat Yeshurun

The mark of a simple "K" is not considered a trustworthy hekhsher. Because there is no trademark on a "K" (a single letter cannot be trademarked) there is no way of knowing what authority stands behind this mark. Products marked only with a K cannot be brought into Beth Abraham unless the specific product has been verified by the rabbi as kosher. (Such verification cannot be done at the last minute, so in general the use of such products should be discouraged.)