

## CONGREGATION SHAAREI KODESH KASHRUT POLICY, 2009-2010

In the past, and in many synagogues today, the synagogue kitchen is a more than adequate space to provide meals for communal meals and is certainly the ideal for preparing meals. It is also the ideal for preparing food for congregational purposes for many reasons, most importantly, the ability to oversee a unified standard of kashrut. Unfortunately, this is not a viable solution for us because we lack the proper space and resources in our synagogue kitchen. This kashrut policy is intended to be in place until we have a sufficient kitchen space in our synagogue. When this occurs, we will revisit our kashrut policy.

### SCOPE

Shaarei Kodesh's Kashrut policy applies to all individuals and groups in the synagogue, including all synagogue employees. The policy applies everywhere in the synagogue's premises, including the Sukkah. It applies both to food to be shared communally, and to food individuals will eat themselves on the premises.

### WHEN QUESTIONS ARISE

As local Halakhic authority [mara d'atra], Shaarei Kodesh's Rabbi ultimately rules on Kashrut questions for the facility and the kashrut policies.

Should there be a time if Shaarei Kodesh does not have a rabbi who serves as mara d'atra, the Board of Trustees should appoint a Va'ad HaKashrut of knowledgeable members to fill that role.

### MEALS MUST BE PREPARED UNDER RABBINIC SUPERVISION

Shaarei Kodesh has a small kitchen where some meals can be prepared for synagogue meals. It is preferred that all meals possible be prepared at the Shaarei Kodesh kitchen, however, some homes will be designated as "proxy" kitchens for Shaarei Kodesh. The kosher kitchen must be open/available for the Rabbi to be present for at least a part of the preparation of the meal whether at Shaarei Kodesh or at one of our "proxy" kitchens.

### KOSHER HOMES, AS DESIGNATED BY THE RABBI ALONE, MAY PROVIDE COOKED MEAT, DAIRY, AND PAREVE FOOD

In homes that keep kosher according to Shaarei Kodesh's definition (see below), one may cook meat, dairy or pareve food and bring it to Shaarei Kodesh for private or group consumption.

### NON-KOSHER HOMES MAY PROVIDE UNCOOKED FOOD (OR PURCHASE KOSHER FOOD)

In homes which do not keep kosher according to Shaarei Kodesh's definition (see below), one may prepare cut raw fruits & vegetables, or salads, including hekshered

tuna, with all certified kosher ingredients, for private or group consumption at Shaarei Kodesh if they follow these rules.

1. They buy a knife and cutting board that they will only use for these purposes and keep these items completely separate from other dishes.

Those who live in non-kosher homes are encouraged to purchase and bring packaged certified kosher foods.

## COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS

Since no non-kosher restaurant or caterer would meet Shaarei Kodesh's standards for Kashrut, it is not permitted to bring in any cooked food from a non-kosher restaurant or caterer – for example, cheese pizza from non-kosher establishments, or fish or vegetarian food cooked at an otherwise non-kosher restaurant. This applies also to non-certified bagels and breads purchased from restaurants that also sell non-kosher meat or shellfish. Boca Raton and South Florida have numerous kosher establishments where one can buy fully prepared and cooked kosher foods at a reasonable price. **We urge our members to use these resources.**

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

## BAKED GOODS

Ideally, breads and other baked goods should be purchased from a bakery under rabbinic supervision or baked goods that have a reliable hekhsher.

Note that Halakha frowns on, but does not forbid, the use of dairy breads, since bread is so often eaten with meat. Please ascertain whether it is pareve or dairy, and if Shaarei Kodesh is having a meat meal, please only bring in pareve bread. Pareve bread is always preferred as to avoid any problems of mixing dairy and meat.

## WHEN IS KASHRUT CERTIFICATION REQUIRED?

Many different foods brought to Shaarei Kodesh 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/](http://www.kashrut.com/agencies/).) 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 Shaarei Kodesh require certification.

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

The following foods require no certification:

Fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables (not including those cut up by grocery stores without proper rabbinic supervision)

Pure fruit juices, including those with grape sweeteners (Though traditional Halakha bans unsupervised grape products, our policy is to permit these, which are often used as ingredients in other 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 are acceptable from any restaurant (This applies both to purchasing coffee and tea for your own preparation, and to purchasing prepared coffee from an otherwise non-Kosher restaurant, since the urns used for hot water and coffee handle only this item)

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

Vegan certification: Please note that foods bearing the “V” symbol of Vegan Action, or Vegan.org are unacceptable without a recognized hechsher. Vegan rules are not the same as laws of Kashrut, and therefore it is unwise to confuse these eating systems.

## FISH

Fresh or smoked 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. Many stores have kosher tables, which are preferred. A list of kosher species can be found on the internet [www.kashrut.com/articles/fish/](http://www.kashrut.com/articles/fish/).

Raw fish, like Sashimi (i.e. fish only) is acceptable from a kosher species. When accompanied by cooked rice, it should not be brought into the synagogue without certification.

Conservative practice permits the eating of swordfish and sturgeon; however, because many Conservative kosher-keeping people do not follow this ruling, if you contribute these fish to any communal meal, please place a sign on the dish, so people can choose accordingly.

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

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

Any food that will be consumed on Shabbat must be brought in BEFORE Shabbat or Yom Tov unless the house is in walking distance to the synagogue and the food is carried in. If you live in walking distance, please consult with the Rabbi if you would like to bring food in on Shabbat. Shaarei Kodesh is within the South Palm Beach Eruv:

([http://www.fruminthesun.com/images/map.cfm?menu=Map\\_Boca\\_Raton\\_S](http://www.fruminthesun.com/images/map.cfm?menu=Map_Boca_Raton_S)), therefore, one can bring in food in on Shabbat if s/he lives within the Eruv and walks to synagogue on Shabbat.

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 HaShanna or Shavuot, when they do not fall on Shabbat. Thus, one may cook, if the house has turned on the oven BEFORE Yom Tov on a Yom Tov morning and bring the food to share that day.

One may not buy food on a Yom Tov to bring in for consumption.

This is to be stressed in particular with respect to food brought to eat in the Sukkot. 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 Shaarei Kodesh.

## **PASSOVER RULES**

On Passover, no food cooked in any private homes may be brought in to CSK. 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 annual tenants as well.

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN KASHERING YOUR HOME, PLEASE CONTACT RABBI BAUM TO ARRANGE THE KASHERING.**

## **DEFINITION OF A KOSHER HOME**

Different households will practice kashrut as they determine. For purposes of Shaarei Kodesh's 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. Shell fish and eels are not used. A list of kosher and non-kosher species can be found on the internet

[www.kashrut.com/articles/fish/](http://www.kashrut.com/articles/fish/). Conservative practice permits the eating of swordfish and sturgeon, although many people do not follow this ruling. (Some Orthodox authorities also eat swordfish.)

All packaged, canned, or frozen products are certified kosher.

Commercially cooked food must come from establishments that are under Rabbinic supervision.

Commercially baked goods must come from establishments described.

One should be careful to wash vegetables to ensure that no insects are found in them to the best of one's knowledge.

Eggs are checked for blood spots and spotted eggs are discarded. (Checking is especially necessary for "free-range" and organic eggs. For regular "factory eggs" this practice is not necessary, but a blessing alights on the scrupulous). In all events, if blood is found, the eggs must be 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 koshered. (Kashering processes should be discussed with Rabbi Baum.)

These dishes, pots, utensils, etc. are washed separately. Separate sponges, cloths, towels are used. Meat and dairy dishes are not washed together in the dishwasher. However, we allow for one dishwasher to be used for both dairy and meat, just not at the same time. It is recommended that if you wash all dairy utensils, remove them, make sure that there are no big food pieces in the dishwasher, and then wash your meat dishes.

All wines and cheeses are permitted, however, only kosher wine and cheese will be used to cook meals to be eaten at Shaarei Kodesh (please read explanation below):

## WINE & CHEESE

In keeping with common Conservative practice, all domestic cheeses and all wines are permitted for consumption at Shaarei Kodesh.

One should not use wine without rabbinic supervision for rituals and blessings.

Non-certified domestic cheeses may be permitted on two grounds: 1. the USDA may be relied upon when it certifies that the milk in a cheese comes only from kosher animals; and 2. coagulants used in cheese production are themselves kosher ingredients. Some authorities in previous eras argued that even animal-derived coagulants should be considered kosher. But in our era, almost all industrial cheese production in America uses microbial coagulants, and thus should be considered kosher by all.

## PROXY KITCHENS

For a list of proxy kitchens, kitchens which are approved for communal cooking for Shaarei Kodesh, please contact the office.

\*This document can be amended by the spiritual life committee and board of Shaarei Kodesh at any time.