



## BURLINGTON BOARD OF HEALTH

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**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

### Potluck Dinners/Events – New MA Law

M.G.L. Chapter 94, Section 328A - Effective November 3, 2014

For the purposes of this section, “potluck event” shall mean an event that meets all of the following conditions:

- (1) people are gathered to share food at the event;
- (2) there is no compensation provided to people for bringing food to the event;
- (3) the event is not conducted for commercial purposes; and
- (4) the participants at the event shall be informed that neither the food nor the facilities have been inspected by the state or a local public health department.

Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, neither the department of public health nor any local board of health shall regulate the serving of food that is brought to a potluck event sponsored by a group of individuals or by a religious, charitable or nonprofit organization by individuals attending the potluck event for consumption at the potluck event. Individuals who are not members of the group or organization sponsoring the potluck event may attend the potluck event and consume the food at the event.

A business establishment dealing in the sale of food items shall not sponsor a potluck event. Potluck event food shall not be brought into the kitchen of a business establishment dealing in the sale of food.

**A temporary food permit is no longer needed for potluck dinners/events.**

**If the event does not meet the four (4) criteria above, a temporary food permit may be required. Contact the Board of Health for more information: 781-270-1955.**

The most commonly reported food preparation practices that contribute to foodborne illness are improper holding temperatures, poor personal hygiene, inadequate cooking, contaminated equipment and food from unsafe sources. For additional information on food safety, organizations looking to conduct potluck events may wish to consult the USDA's publication “Cooking for Groups: A Volunteer’s Guide to Food Safety”. [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/shared/PDF/Cooking\\_for\\_Groups.pdf](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/shared/PDF/Cooking_for_Groups.pdf)