



Laughter is brightest in the place where the food is. -- Irish proverb

Food is our common ground, a universal experience. -- James Beard

First we eat, then we do everything else. -- M.F.K. Fisher

2017 Saratoga Springs Kitchen Use Guidelines and Parameters for Self-Catering Groups.

When a Group self-caters at Saratoga Springs, it is usually because doing so comprises a core-element of 'community building' that so many of our Groups aspire to - we respect this and do our best to work with Organizers to facilitate this option.

One way that we assist you in this process is by **not** requiring that Groups use a Professional Catering service.

However, this flexibility on our part means that we often end up with helpers/ volunteers who do not necessarily have an adequate understanding of how a commercial kitchen operates, or worse, the kitchen is treated as a 'free for all' with no oversight from Event Organizers as to what is happening in that space.

It is not unusual for Saratoga Staff to pass through the kitchen late at night and find ovens and burners left on, water running from a spigot that has not been turned off, equipment left on or refrigerator/freezer doors left open and no guests to be seen. Or if there are guests around, no one paying attention because that area is 'nothing to do with them'.

Signage that is posted in the kitchen explaining our basic guidelines and operating procedures is routinely ignored and there is very little oversight as to how the kitchen is being run as a whole, with attention only being given to actual food preparation and cooking.

People do exactly what they do at home and disregard our requests/signage to follow our procedures and guidelines.

The purpose of this document is to provide an understanding of the procedures that we have in place and our expectations for how the space is to be used over the course of your event.

It is based on situations and experiences that Saratoga Staff have encountered over the past seven years and so while some items may seem completely understandable and obvious, they have been included because others have not had that sense of understanding.

We ask that you do take the time to read through this document thoroughly, both new and returning groups alike.

Thank you.

Understanding how Self-Catering operates:

Great emphasis is placed by Organizers on the people who are doing the actual cooking and food prep however, management of the kitchen is just as important, but yet often overlooked or understaffed by groups.

Managing the kitchen involves having **at least** two people in charge of making themselves aware of our Guidelines and Parameters and then in turn, ***instructing and monitoring all helpers and volunteers who are assisting in the kitchen so that our guidelines continue to be followed throughout the event.***

Our Guidelines and Parameters exist for good reason and are geared towards water conservation, correct and safe use of our equipment, preventing the encroachment of vermin and (most importantly) guest safety.

Volunteers and helpers, no matter how well-intentioned they may be, often put into practice their own kitchen habits which can and do, run detrimental to operations and procedures at Saratoga Springs.

It is therefore necessary that all groups provide Kitchen Managers to oversee the kitchen operations and use throughout your event and that no unauthorized use of the kitchen area be allowed outside of your group's kitchen schedule of prep, cooking and clean-up.

Who is actually in charge in the kitchen?

There are two roles of responsibility – the Kitchen Manager and the 'Meal Lead'.

'Meal Leads' are those people taking on the role that a professional Caterer or Chef would normally play.....that is to say, they are the people cooking the food. Many self-catering groups have different Meal Leads for each meal and because of this, there is a breakdown of communication in ensuring that the smooth running of the kitchen as a whole is maintained.

This is why we ask that at least two Kitchen Managers are provided so that there is always a person around during prep and service to ensure that the kitchen is operating as it should be while the Meal Leads are concentrating on their food preparation.

What does a Kitchen Manager actually need to do?

The best way to explain the need for/function of a Kitchen Manager is to show the following examples of things that regularly happen with our self-catering Groups:

- Trash and recycle cans are often filled to the brim....and beyond. This causes trash to fall on the floor creating more mess as well as for the bags to become heavier and harder to lift (either for your helpers or Saratoga Staff) and possibly break open. The Kitchen Manager will point out to the helpers that the trash needs to be emptied or, if necessary, do it themselves.

Sometimes the kitchen trash cans contain 'heavy mass' items and even just a half-filled trash can of 'heavy mass' can make it challenging to empty for both your helpers and Saratoga Staff. The Kitchen Manager will endeavor to make the volunteers more aware of what is going into the cans so that they can be emptied earlier if necessary.

- We have separate green Recycle tubs specifically for glass but also for cans. This is for safety reasons so that when the Recycling is being handled (either by your helpers or our Staff) there is less risk of injury from glass that may be broken and unseen. The kitchen Manager will oversee that glass is being placed in the correct Recycle container and remind other kitchen helpers of the need to do so.
- Guests often stack plates into the bussing tubs until it starts to resemble the 'Leaning Tower of Pisa'.....sometimes as much as two feet over the top of the tub. No-one takes a moment to ask the dishwashers for a new tub or even to point it out the accident waiting to happen. They just keep stacking and the pile just keeps on growing, ready to topple on to the head of one of the many children running around or smash at the feet of guests who may get cut.

The Kitchen Manager will have the awareness to watch for this and organize a solution, be it bringing it to the attention of the dishwashers so they can begin washing them or perhaps having a helper set out another tub and move the excess plates into it or even just removing some of the excess plates and placing them on the counter. There are many possibilities available.

- It is not unusual to see plates and cups left lying around the property (both inside and out) for hours and even days. The Kitchen Manager will remind guests to bring their items back to the kitchen so that they can be washed and readied for the next service or, if necessary, collect these items themselves.
- There are two sets of dish towels/rags available for use. One set is for 'dirty jobs' such as wiping down the stove or cleaning up greasy messes from the floor. They are easily recognizable because they look very well worn and even though they have been washed, they have the unmistakable kitchen grease smell about them.

The 'clean' dishtowels are used for tasks such as drying dishes and wiping down tables. They are easily recognizable because they are white (or close to it) and have yet to succumb to the rigors of the kitchen.

The Kitchen Manager will make sure that volunteers are aware of the difference and why it matters (because who wants to dry clean dishes with a nasty, greasy rag?) and that when you have finished with them that they are shaken out over the trash can and placed in the appropriate labelled crates to be then washed by Saratoga Staff.

- A huge amount of water is wasted in the kitchen when our guidelines are not followed. For example, people will use the water sprayer to rinse food from plates as opposed to scraping them. Often people will run the sanitizer machine with only a few items in it when it could have been hand washed using much less water.

We have seen sinks full of fresh, clean water become immediately tainted and useless because the dish person has washed a greasy item without scraping it first. Or, they continue washing dishes in the greasy water leaving a greasy film on them.

(Helpful Hint: When dealing with greasy items, scrape as much excess grease as possible from the item and then wipe any remaining grease off with a paper towel).

The Kitchen Manager will make sure that the dishes are being washed correctly and that water is not being wasted.

Very simply, the Kitchen Manager will make themselves aware of our procedures and guidelines and then in turn, make sure that all of the helpers throughout the weekend are adhering to them.

Specific Meal Lead items:

- We expect that all Meal Leads will keep a clean work space especially regarding the range, griddle and oven and wipe all spills from the range at the end of EACH service so that they do not become hardened/burnt on over the course of the event.
- Scrape and clean the griddle at the end of EACH service so that it is clean for the next meal. Remember to clean out the griddle grease trap (Saratoga Staff will show you how if you are unfamiliar with this procedure).
- There is a 'Grease Bucket' for excess grease – please make use of this.
- Our exhaust fan is not very strong – if the kitchen becomes too smoky, turn on the fans located around the kitchen and make sure that they are all pointed towards the open back door so as to assist in drawing out the smoke.
- We have trivets for hot items – please use them.
- Please be sure that all food is put away at the end of EACH service so as not to attract vermin.

- Please make sure that all kitchen and dining room area trash and recycle cans are checked regularly throughout service and (if needed) emptied, **especially before closing the kitchen for the night.**
- Upon arrival, once you have finished unloading, please make sure that any boxes are **broken down** and stacked by our outside recycle cans for Saratoga Staff to remove.

- **Practice mindfulness:**

For example:

- If you are cooking bacon, please do so in the oven using the large sheet pans and be sure to make use of the pan liners that we have as these keep the pans cleaner which means less water needed in the washing process.
- If you are using ingredients that can stain (such as berries or curry powders) and need to wipe an area down, use our older dish towels/rags for this purpose and not the white ones.
- If you burn a pan, please make sure that it is attended to immediately (soaking and/or scrubbing) so that it is easier to clean.

- **Practice Food Safety:**

Make sure that you (and any prep helpers) do not use our wooden cutting boards for raw meat products – we have plenty of plastic ones available for this purpose.

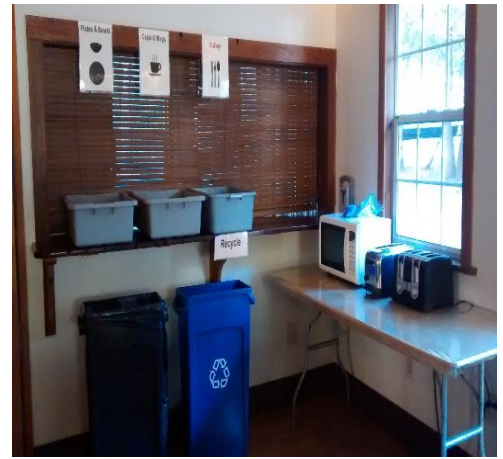
Be aware that your helpers may not understand the importance of sanitizing the cutting boards and show them how to do so.

Making sure that your prep helpers wash their hands regularly and the wearing of gloves is also recommended.

- **Anyone working in the kitchen MUST be dressed appropriately. This means enclosed footwear and being fully clothed so as to be protected from spills and burns and it is the responsibility of the Meal Lead and/or Kitchen Manager to make sure that their helpers are compliant.**

No loose flowing scarves or feathers boas (yes, we have seen them in there!) which are just waiting to catch fire from the range.





As mentioned previously, water conservation, correct and safe use of our equipment, preventing the encroachment of vermin and (most importantly) guest safety, are our main concerns and are the basis for most of our Operating Guidelines and Procedures that you are about to read.

General Information, in no particular order:

Kitchen Rental Agreement

Your Group has paid a Kitchen Fee for use of the kitchen space for your event. Part of this fee is for Saratoga Springs Staff to provide the final 'deep clean' of the kitchen after your departure. However, we do ask that you keep a clean-as-you-go space over the weekend. Extra cleaning (such as the range or dishes that need to be washed/rewashed) performed by Saratoga Staff may lead to deductions from your Security Deposit and we would prefer to avoid this situation.

After your final meal, all that you need to do is ensure that the usual 'clean-as-you-go' tasks have been attended to, that the kitchen has been left as shown in the Group Clean-Up Folder and that any remaining food items have been disposed of or packed away.

Kitchen Overview – we have:

- Two ranges (side-by-side) one with four burners and an oven, the other with two burners, a griddle and an oven.
- A large walk-in refrigerator as well as a smaller refrigerator (as found in most households).
- A sanitizer (not a dishwasher). More on this later.
- Various appliances (toasters, microwave, blender, mixer, food processor).

- Various large pots and pans
- Numerous sheet trays and serving bowls
- Dinner plates, coffee mugs, plastic cups and cutlery for approximately 200 guests.
- Various utensils (serving spoons, tongs, ladles, knives etc.)
- A large Commercial Coffee Machine (more on this later).
- Various miscellaneous items including trivets (please use them!)
- A large commercial salad-spinner
- A speed rack
- Aluminum foil, plastic wrap and paper towel rolls (please use sparingly).
- Dish towels
- Detergent, sponges and scrubbing brushes
- Radio and phone for connecting with Saratoga Staff (The phone is an unlisted number – if it rings, please answer it as it is either a Saratoga Staff member trying to connect with the kitchen or someone looking for one of your guests as we often give this number out as an Emergency Contact Number)
- A First-Aid Burn Kit located by the radio and phone.

We do our best to ensure that our kitchen and all of the items listed, are available and in good working order but when moving from one self-catering event to another, this is not always possible to guarantee as some items are mistakenly taken back to the Bay Area or broken due to improper use. Please let us know if something is broken or seems to be missing.

Kitchen Ranges:

These are to be **wiped down** after each service as part of the clean-as-you-go policy so as to prevent any build-up that may cause you to incur extra cleaning charges (as well as being the right thing to do in a kitchen!). The griddle in particular should be cleaned and the grease catcher emptied into the grease bucket.

If extra cleaning is needed during your event due to some 'mishap', please refer to the Kitchen Section of the Group Clean-Up Guide which can be found in the kitchen or with your Group Organizer. This will provide you with specific instruction on how to clean this equipment without damaging it (this usually involves the range/griddle).

Range Hood/Exhaust Fan and Range Light:

There is a switch for the exhaust fan and Range Light located on the left-hand underside of the hood. Unfortunately our exhaust fan is not as powerful as we would like it to be and we are in the planning process of updating our equipment but in the meantime, if you have created excess smoke, please turn on the fans that are located in the kitchen and in the windows and this will assist in drawing out the smoke.

We have LOTS of signs placed around the kitchen to assist you.....please take a moment to read them so that you can direct/pass on information to others.

Please remember to keep a 'CLEAN-AS-YOU-GO' kitchen.....there are signs explaining what is involved in this process located around the kitchen. This is very important so as to keep vermin at bay.

After each dinner service (when there are more volunteers to help) please make sure that the floor is swept and mopped.....doesn't have to be perfect but it takes away any 'attractions' that mice/rats/ants may have.

TRASH:

- Self-Catering Groups are responsible for making sure that all of the Kitchen and Dining area Trash & Recycle cans (including the small ones by the coffee station and the bucket for coffee grounds) are emptied on a regular basis. Please do not overfill them.

Self-Catering groups move the trash and recycling to the outside cans and then Saratoga Staff will empty them (usually in the morning and evening, depending upon the size of the group).

Please DO NOT leave half-filled trash and recycle cans in the Kitchen and Dining room overnight as they may smell and they will attract flies/vermin.

Trash – take the full bag and place it into the large trash can located outside the kitchen door. There is usually a spare trash bag on the side of the can – use that and replacements are located on the wall by the rear kitchen door.

Recycling – take the full bag and place it into the large recycling can located outside the kitchen door.

COMPOST:

- We have suspended composting for the time being while we review and revise our composting system. We have a compost pile that would rival the sheer size of Mt. Everest and cannot add to it any more.
- Please just scrape your food scraps into the trash can.
- We do have small 5 gallon buckets in the Kitchen and these are used as small, mobile trash cans and come in handy for prep work as they can be moved around the kitchen.

These buckets should always be used with a trash can liner and when full, the bag placed into the large trash can located outside the kitchen door.

Washing Up:

We lose a LOT of water through the kitchen sink and need to be thoughtful of usage. To that end:

- Please read ALL of the signs above the sink area.
- Please make sure that ALL dishes are SCRAPED using the **RED SPATULAS** (located near the sink and bussing areas). Do not use water to rinse food from the plates as it is a huge waste. Make sure that the Red Spatulas are returned to their place after service and ready for use by the next helper.
- **The dishwasher is in reality, only a Sanitizer and the dishes must be washed before being placed through the machine. Please use dishwashing practices that are mindful and ask Saratoga Staff for direction if needed.**
- Only the plates/cutlery and cups need to go through the machine.....the rest can just be washed by hand. This avoids wasting water when the machine is put through a cycle for just one large pot or bowl.

Dishtowels:

- We have older 'clean but stained/smelly/somewhat greasy' dishtowels for nasty greasy messes.....please use them for nasty greasy messes only and not for drying dishes.
- We have newer towels (usually white) that we keep for drying dishes and for 'clean messes'such as wiping down tables or kitchen benches.....NOT for wiping down the greasy stove.

Just some helpful items to ensure the smooth running of the kitchen.

Please check with Saratoga Staff (Celia or Arnna) if you have any questions.

Kitchen Managers and Meal Leads should be given a copy of this document prior to the commencement of your event and connect with our Events Manager upon arrival for a walk-thru of the kitchen and procedures.

This meeting will only be of 5-10 minutes duration and serves to ensure that everyone is on the same page. We ask that no work begin in the kitchen until the first Meal Lead and/or Kitchen Manager have completed this walk-thru. The onus is then

on them to either impart this information in full to the next Meal Lead/Kitchen Manager or have them meet with our Events Manager separately.

IMPORTANT:

If Saratoga Springs observes that a Group has failed to follow these Guidelines and/or has not provided Kitchen Managers to ensure the adequate operation of the kitchen, Saratoga Staff will be assigned to the role of Kitchen Manager and the extra staffing fees will be deducted from your Security/Cleaning deposit.

Organizers Initial: _____

Thank you for your help in keeping our kitchen in good order and being mindful of our resources. 😊