From its beginnings, Conservative Judaism has affirmed the value of kashrut. The Preamble to the Constitution of the United Synagogue of America (1913) states that the organization’s purpose is: “the advancement of the cause of Judaism in America and the maintenance of Jewish tradition in its historical continuity, to assert and establish loyalty to the Torah and its historical exposition, and to further the observance of the Sabbath and the dietary laws.”

The “Standards for Synagogue Practice” of the United Synagogue affirm, “Recognizing kashrut as another basic tenet of Judaism, congregations shall take all steps necessary to ensure proper observance of kashrut at all functions on the premises of the synagogue and at functions away from the synagogue which are held under their auspices.”

While our congregants have a variety of observance patterns with relationship to kashrut, everyone expects the synagogue to adhere to a standard that is inclusive of everyone. Among the many reasons Conservative Judaism values kashrut are:

- Kashrut is first and foremost a mitzvah—a religious obligation stipulated in the Torah and subsequent commentaries—and a way of showing our love and reverence for God.
- Kashrut is a discipline of holiness. Wherever the dietary laws appear in the Torah, it is in the context of kedushah (holiness). Kashrut, along with the blessings and rituals of meals, raises the act of eating from merely satisfying an appetite to a consecrated act.
- Kashrut is a statement of Jewish identity. It links us to the worldwide community of observant Jews, and to past generations of Jews. It reminds us, every time we eat, of our Jewish commitments.
- Kashrut, through its rules of humane slaughter, and through limiting the kinds of creatures we can eat, is a way of enacting reverence for life and understanding that consumption of the flesh of living creatures is a Divine compromise with human nature.

**Consistency**

As a congregation, we have one more reason for assuring the kashrut of foods we serve. We are a kehillah k’doshah, a sacred community, and as such we must be welcoming and inclusive of members and guests who observe the dietary laws. Any group using our facilities must adhere to our standards of kashrut. Various people may have different interpretations of specific aspects of kashrut, but the synagogue must have one clear consistent policy. We trust that all of our members and friends, whatever their personal practice may be, are committed to the observance of these policies in the Har Shalom kitchen, so that most members of the Jewish community can feel comfortable eating in our building.

**Kashrut Standards for the Synagogue Kitchen**

1. Dairy and meat utensils shall be kept absolutely separate. Kitchen scheduling must be arranged with the Team Leader, Buildings and Grounds so that dairy and meat meals will not be prepared at the same time.
2. All caterers and meal preparers must have their foods and cooking ingredients checked by the appointed synagogue representative to confirm that they are legitimately kosher.

3. Only those caterers approved by Ahavath Torah Congregation may use the kitchen.

4. Members wishing to cook in the synagogue kitchen must contact the Team Leader, Buildings and Grounds ahead of time to avoid conflicts with caterers or others using the kitchen.

5. Baked goods may only be supplied by a bakery approved by Ahavath Torah Congregation. Proper labelling is required.

6. No deliveries or cooking may take place on Shabbat. Previously cooked food may be warmed on Shabbat, provided the stove is not turned on or adjusted by a Jewish person. Left overs may not be taken out of the synagogue kitchen on Shabbat or holidays. Families wishing to reclaim left-over food must return to the synagogue on Sunday or a weekday to pick-up left-over food.

7. Cooking for events taking place after Shabbat may not commence until 10 minutes after the conclusion of Shabbat.

8. Only outside foods prepared at a kosher facility under recognized rabbinic supervision may be served in the synagogue.

Standards for Raw Ingredients and Processed Foods

1. Fresh fruits, vegetables, eggs, and milk do not require kosher certification.
   a. Most eggs in the United States are unfertilized; therefore, the presence of blood does not render the egg non-kosher. If a blood spot is seen, it should be removed from the rest of the egg. The remaining part of the egg may then be used.
   b. All fresh fruits and vegetables should be washed before serving, with special attention given to examining for bugs in leaves, stalks, florets, etc. Bagged lettuce bearing a hekhsher does not need to be rewashed. All fresh, non-bagged lettuce must be separated by the leaf and washed individually, checking for the presence of bugs.
   c. Canned, jarred and frozen fruit are acceptable without specific kosher certification if they only contain fruit, sugar, ascorbic acid, and/or citric acid. Accordingly, those which contain flavors, colors, carmine, fruit juice, grape juice, or other sensitive additives, must bear a reliable kosher certification.

2. All meat products must come from a kosher butcher under rabbinic supervision, as approved by the Rabbi.

3. Fresh fish (kosher species having fins and scales) does not require rabbinic supervision but must be rinsed thoroughly before being cooked.

4. Because processed foods must both contain kosher ingredients and be prepared in a kosher manner, all prepared or packaged food (including canned, frozen, baked, or foods otherwise changed from their natural state) must bear kosher certification from a recognized authority.

5. The letter “K” is not trademarked and is not a symbol for a specific certification authority. Therefore, it is not sufficient to certify that the ingredients and manner of preparation are kosher. There are a few exceptions to this rule, including: Kellogg’s (K or Kd, under the supervision of the Vaad Ha’Rabbanim of Massachusetts), Tabasco brand hot sauce (K), and all flavors of Starbucks frappuccino (Kd) sold in bottles.

6. Only wines, grape juices, and grape products with kosher certification may be used for kiddush, though fresh grapes do not require certification.

7. Marshmallows and marshmallow products require a hekhsher, as do all gelatin products. A handful of Kraft Jell-O products have OK certification, while others do not. Of the kosher varieties, some are dairy while others are pareve.
Dairy
In order to be inclusive and respectful of varying levels of kashrut observance within the Har Shalom community, cheese and dairy products must bear an appropriate hekhsher. A “Cholov Yisroel” certification is not required.

Pareve
Pareve means foods that are neither meat nor dairy. Because of the complexities of food additives, a kosher certification is required for pareve, multi-ingredient products. Obviously, any foods served with a meat meal must be pareve. A “P” on a kosher product does not mean that it is pareve; it designates an item kosher for Passover.

Wine/Grape Juice
The synagogue should view as part of its mission the support of kosher, and specifically Israeli wineries. Kosher wines are widely available in numerous varieties and qualities. Kosher grape juice should always be used in the synagogue. Wines & grape products do not have to be “mevushal.”

Hekshers
There are numerous legitimate supervising agencies. A list may be obtained from the Rabbi’s office or from the Facilities/Kitchen Manager. Currently Har Shalom does accept Triangle-K/Hebrew National products (based on the endorsement of the Rabbinical Assembly’s kashrut authorities). Tablet-K cheeses and other products are not acceptable for use at Har Shalom.

Preparation and Accidental Mixing
Dairy and meat food preparation may not be done at the same time. Utensils must be stored and locked before switching to the other category of food preparation. Countertops and cart-tops are considered meat surfaces and must be covered for dairy preparation and service. Additionally, meat and dairy sink inserts must be switched as appropriate.

If a cooking utensil is accidentally mixed or used incorrectly, the utensil must immediately be set aside, and the Rabbi or Robert Bornstein notified to determine the status of the food being cooked. The Facilities/Kitchen Manager or Rabbi will be responsible for either re-kashering or disposing of the utensil as deemed appropriate by Jewish law.

Supervision
Kitchen scheduling and catering issues should be addressed to the Teal Leader, Buildings and Grounds.