



University of Houston–Downtown 2026 Chili Cook-Off Safety Protocols

Fire Safety:

- Open flame sources should never be left unattended.
- Open flame sources should not be located under tents/flammable materials.
- Keep area around open flame sources free from tripping hazards.
- Fire extinguishers will be available for use. In the event of a fire:
 - If safe to do so, attempt to turn off the fuel source/unplug cooking appliances from power.
 - Use the PASS method when using a fire extinguisher:
 - **Pull** the pin...This will allow you to discharge the extinguisher.
 - **Aim** at the base of the fire. Hit the fuel, if you aim at the flames the extinguishing agent will fly right through and not do any good.
 - **Squeeze** the top handle. This depresses a button that releases the pressurized extinguishing agent.
 - **Sweep** from side to side until the fire is completely out.
 - Start using the extinguisher at a safe distance away from the fire then slowly move toward the fire. Once the fire is out, keep an eye on the area in case it re-ignites.
 - Visit the UHD Fire Safety Website for a short video on the PASS method:
<https://www.uhd.edu/administration/emergency-management/campus-fire-evacuation.aspx>
- Before cooking operations can begin an inspection of ALL cooking areas must be completed by UHD Fire Safety which includes:
 - General area inspection
 - Propane tank and appliance inspection (see propane inspection checklist)
 - Electrical appliance inspection
 - Electrical cord and surge protector inspection

Food Safety:

- Each team must have **at least 2 members** that hold a **Food Handler Certificate**.
- Wear gloves and cover hair (Hair nets, Baseball caps).
- Wash hands before entering cooking area and handling food/ serving utensils.
- Use separate utensils for cooking and serving; maintain clean utensils.
- Food/ food related items must be stored at least 6 inches off the ground.
- No eating in designated cooking and serving area.
- Drinks in the designated cooking area must have lid and straw.
- Keep cooking and serving area clean; frequently remove older food particles.
- Maintain required serving temperatures:
 - Hot Foods (>135°F); Cold Foods (<41°F)
- If sick, refrain from cooking or serving food.
- Carry ice in a container; keep container low to the ground to avoid accidents.

Propane Tank/Fuel Inspection Checklist:

- **Tank condition:** Look for signs of corrosion, rust, dents, gouges, or other damage.
- **Connections and valves:** Check for leaks around valves and fittings.
- **Regulator:** Check the regulator for wear and tear and replace it if needed.
- **Appliances:** Turn on all propane-powered appliances to ensure they work properly.
- **Tank Base:** Check that the tank's supports and foundation are in good condition and free of cracking, or corrosion.
- **Fill port:** Check that the fill port is in good condition and free of debris.
- **Tank markings:** Check the tank for markings that indicate the manufacturing date (Tanks cannot be more than 12 years old), see picture below.



Food Safety Inspection Checklist:

- **Food Item Dates:** Check to ensure food items are within used by dates.
- **Hair Covering/ Gloves:** A hair covering must be worn while in the designated cooking area. Gloves should be worn when handling food or food-related items.
- **Cross-Contamination Prevention:** Use separate utensils for cooking and serving. Ensure raw meat, poultry, and seafood are stored separately from ready-to-eat items.
- **Food Hygiene:** No eating or drinking in the designated cooking area and wash hands before returning to designated cooking area.
- **Food Storage:** Check that all food items and food contact surfaces are stored off the ground (at least 6 inches).
- **Temperature Control:** Ensure that cold foods are maintained at temperatures below 41°F and verify that hot foods are kept above 135°F for serving.