

Meal Counting and Site Operations

Virginia Department of Health

Special Nutrition Programs

2015

Module #3: Meal Counting

Objectives:

- Comprehend and clarify procedures for counting and consolidating meals for your reimbursement claim
- Comprehend and clarify procedures for site operations



Module #3: Meal Counting

Meal Service

- Any combination of two meals can be claimed **except** lunch and dinner at Open and Closed-enrolled sites.
- Camps and migrant sites may claim up to three meals per day.
- Meals must meet the USDA standards as described in the “Menu Planning” module.

Module #3: Meal Counting

Waiver of Meal Time Restrictions

Sponsors are no longer required to ensure that specific periods of time elapse between the meal services. Sponsors are to:

- Serve meals at a reasonable time for the type of meal served
- Maintain food temperatures as required by state and local health department
- Allow enough spacing between meal types to prevent food waste.



Module #3: Meal Counting

Waiver of Unitized Meal Requirement

Offer Versus Serve (OVS) Meal Service Option

USDA now allow non-school sponsors to use OVS. Schools electing to use OVS must use the options relevant to their menu planning approach. Other SFSP sponsors wishing to use OVS must follow the OVS requirements for the food-based menu planning approach. This means a child may decline only one food item offered at breakfast and up to two of the food items offered at lunch or supper. **There is no OVS option for snacks.**



Module #3: Meal Counting

Waiver of Unitized Meal Requirement

Offer Versus Serve (OVS) Meal Service Option

Using OVS meal service in SFSP can simplify Program administration while maintaining the nutritional integrity of the SFSP meal served. The OVS is a concept designed to reduce food waste and food costs by allowing a child to choose food they like to eat.

Module #3: Meal Counting

Waiver of Unitized Meal Requirement

Offer Versus Serve (OVS) Meal Service Option

NOTE: Sponsors must offer a complete meal to SFSP participants (i.e., all required food items/component must be offered and children must not be urged to decline components).

Module #3: Meal Counting

Waiver of Unitized Meal Requirement

Offer Versus Serve (OVS) Meal Service Option

The sponsor must request and be *pre-approved* to use OVS!



Module #3: Meal Counting

Waiver of Unitized Meal Requirement

Offer Versus Serve (OVS) Meal Service Option

Sponsors are strongly encouraged to take extra care to ensure that child walks away with a reimbursable meal when serving ***combination food items*** with more than one component meeting the minimum meal requirements such as pizza, tacos, soups, or spaghetti.



Module #3: Meal Counting

Waiver of Unitized Meal Requirement

Offer Versus Serve (OVS) Meal Service Option

Meal	Minimum number of food components that must be offered	Minimum number of food components that must be on the child's plate
Breakfast	3	2
Lunch	5	3
Dinner	5	3

Module #3: Site Rules

Sponsors are encouraged to establish *Site Rules* in accordance with SFSP guidelines. These site rules may include language such as:

- Meals are for children 18 years or younger.
- Food cannot be taken from the site.
- Meals only served during the posted meal times.
- Second meals may be served only after all children have received a first meal.
- Parents may assist their children in carrying their meals or opening meal packages; parents may not consume any part of the meal.
- The site can be closed if these rules are not followed.



Module #3: “Traveling Apple”

“Traveling Apple” Policy

- Site staff may permit a child to leave only with a fruit or vegetable.
- Children MAY NOT leave with the main entrée, milk or other foods.
- For snacks and breakfast, children may leave with no more than one item (fruit or vegetable)
- Site staff must be trained as to what foods may leave the site



Module #3: Transport Records

Transport records allow the sponsor to track meals delivered or prepared by type (breakfast, snack, lunch, supper)

- Vended program must support this information with a signed delivery receipt.
- Programs with a central kitchen should also support this information with a signed delivery receipt for good program management.



Module #3:

Point-of-Service Meal Count

- A system developed to count complete meals
- A Daily Meal Count Form must be used
- Meal counts must be taken at the point-of-service where the person counting the meal can see that all components have been given to the child
- Meal counts must agree with the site monitoring report completed for the same day



Module #3: Daily Meal Counts & Consolidation

Accurately completing meal counts is one way to prevent meals from being disallowed during an administrative review.



Module #3: Daily Meal Counts & Consolidation

- The person counting the meals must sign the Daily Meal Count Form each day.
- The total number of meals available on the Daily Meal Count Form should match the total number of meals on the meal count form.

Module #3: Daily Meal Counts & Consolidation

- If using a hand counter or tickets, record the total number of meals served on the Daily Meal Count Form. Indicate on the meal count form that a hand counter or tickets were used.

Module #3: Daily Meal Counts & Consolidation

- The use of a month consolidation form will help to reduce errors when adding the weekly totals prior to submitting your claim.
- Sponsors should build into their procedures an edit check of all meal counts to ensure accuracy (i.e., second level review by another staff)

Module #3: Eligible First Meal

Eligible first meals are those that are served to children that include all food components that meet the Meal Pattern requirements.



Module #3: Eligible Second Meals

- Second meals may be served after all children have received a first complete meal at sites that have fluctuation in attendance
- Sponsors may claim up to 2% of all eligible first meals served as second meals (if served) for all sites during the claiming period.
- Camp sites cannot claim second meals.

Module #3: Meal Counting for Camps

To determine the number of eligible meals served for claiming purposes:

- Roster can be used to take an actual count of meals served. *Camp sponsors can only be reimbursed for meals served to children who are eligible for free or reduced price meals.*

Module #3: Field Trips

- An ***open site*** must remain open if the number of children participating in the field trip is less than the site's ADP (Average Daily Participation) as approved by VDH.
- For ***Closed-enrolled*** and ***Camp*** sites, the site may close during the field trip.

Module #3: Field Trips

To be reimbursed for meals taken on field trips, the sponsor must:

- Report all field trips to VDH **prior** to the trip date.
- Conduct a point-of-service meal count at the filed trip location where meals will be served.
- Document meals by using a meal count form.
- Maintain documentation that all meals taken on the field trip complied with the meal pattern requirement & food safety regulations.
- If the site is approved to be closed on the trip date, post a notice to announce when the site will be closed and when it will resume meal service.

Module #3: **Unacceptable** Meal Counting Methods

- Counts based on the number of trays or plates available and left over after the meal service.
- Counts taken at the beginning of the serving line without checking to see if the meals served were claimable.
- Counts based on the number of children in attendance.
- Counts based on the number of tickets distributed, but not received

Module #3: **Unacceptable** Meal Counting Methods

- Counts based on the number of meals received
- Counts based on previous meal counts
- Always claiming the number of meals prepared or ordered as the number served
- Claiming the same number of meals every day; this is referred to as “Block Claiming”

Red Flags

- Excessive leftovers (no upward or downward adjustments)
- Incomplete paperwork (daily meal count forms, monitoring reports, transport records, menu production records)
- Lack of documented follow-up by sponsor or monitor on meal count problems identified during a site visit or site review
- Claiming meals above Average Daily Participation (ADP)

Module #3: Common **Errors**

The following are common errors which may result in a loss of reimbursement.

- Failure to request prior approval for a change in meal time
- Failure to request prior approval for a change in serving dates
- Failure to request prior approval for a change in ADP

Module #3: Common **Errors**

The following are common errors which may result in a loss of reimbursement.

- Failure to complete and submit a site application for site approval
- Failure to report Field Trips prior to the trip date
- Failure to submit application changes to VDH

Module #3: SUMMARY

- Adhere to your approved meal times(s), meal date(s), and site(s) ADP as approved in SNP
- Submit site level changes to meal service time(s), meal services date(s) and ADP for approval prior to the change
- Properly complete your meal count form to ensure SFSP reimbursement
- Ensure all meals are eaten on site, except those fruit and vegetable items that qualify under the 'traveling apple' policy
- Report field trip(s) prior to the trip date.

