

FOOD HANDLING: TIME AND TEMPERATURE CONTROL

INTRODUCTION

Some foods are especially liable to developing harmful pathogens. These foods are known as TCS because they need extra precaution for Time and Temperature Control Safety. These foods are in danger of developing harmful pathogens if entering the temperature danger zone between 57°F (5°C) – 135°F (41°C). If any TCS food is found to be inside this temperature range, you should notify a supervisor immediately. Food must never be kept at room temperature.

EXAMPLES OF TCS FOOD

The following foods are considered to be especially sensitive and require care for their time and temperature:

- Chicken
- Dairy and milk
- Eggs
- Cooked plant-based foods (rice, beans, vegetables, etc.)
- Meat, including beef, port, and lamb
- Fish, including shellfish and crustaceans
- Baked potatoes
- Tofu
- Soy protein
- Sliced tomatoes
- Cut melons
- Cut leafy greens
- Sprouts
- Sprout seeds
- Untreated garlic
- Oil mixtures



MEASURING FOOD TEMPERATURE

The only way to know the temperature of food is to test it. To test food temperature, stick the thermometer into the thickest part of the food, usually the center. Confirm the temperature by checking a second part of the food. Record all temperatures you check. Food must be checked at every step, from when it is received to when it is served. Ensure the thermometers are washed, rinsed, sanitized, and air-dried before and after each use. The containers used to store the thermometers must also be kept clean. Ensure all thermometers are calibrated.

HOLDING FOOD

Cold food can be held without temperature controls for 6 hours if it remains below 70°F (21°C). If at any time it becomes warmer than 70°F (21°C) it must be thrown out. After the 6 hours it must be thrown out. When removed from temperature controls it must be labelled with the time after which the food must be thrown out.

Hot food can be held without temperature controls for 4 hours. After the 4 hours it must be thrown out. When removed from temperature controls it must be labelled with the time after which the food must be thrown out.

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COOKING TEMPERATURE AND TIME REQUIREMENTS

Be aware of the internal temperatures, and the time they must be sustained, for cooking safely:

- Poultry (including whole or ground chicken, turkey, or duck) - 165°F (74°C) for 15 seconds
- Ground meat (including beef, pork, etc.) - 155°F (68°C) for 15 seconds
- Seafood (including fish, shellfish, and crustaceans) - 145°F (63°C) for 15 seconds
- Steaks, chops of pork, beef, veal, and lamb - 145°F (63°C) for 15 seconds
- Roasts - 154°F (63°C) for 4 minutes
- Hot held fruit, vegetables, grains (including rice and pasta), and beans – must reach 135°F (57°C)
- Hot held eggs - 155°F (68°C) for 15 seconds
- Eggs that are served immediately - 145°F (63°C) for 15 seconds
- Injected and tenderized meat - 155°F (68°C) for 15 seconds
- Stuffed food including pasta, seafood, poultry, or meat - 165°F (74°C) for 15 seconds
- Meat, seafood, poultry, or eggs prepared in microwave - 165°F (74°C)
 - *NOTE: Must be checked after setting for 2 minutes and in at least 2 places.*
- Hot held foods must always be above 135°F (57°C)
- Cold held foods must always be below 41°F (5°C)
- Hot and cold held foods must be checked every four hours.

THAWING FOOD

Thaw food in one of the four acceptable ways:

1. In a cooler at 41°F (5°C) or cooler
2. Microwave oven, if cooked immediately
3. Submerged under running water at 70°F (21°C) or lower
 - *Using this method food cannot be left above 41°F (5°C) for longer than 4 hours. Check regularly using a thermometer*
4. Thaw as part of the cooking process. (e.g. placing frozen hamburger patties directly on the grill)

CONCLUSION

It is important to observe proper time and temperature control for all foods, especially those marked as TCS. By following the safe work practices presented in this lesson, employees can help minimize the chances of causing or spreading a foodborne illness.

