



**STATEMENT**  
Insurance Agency

# REFRIGERATED FOOD SAFETY

## INTRODUCTION

Carriers who operate a refrigerated trailer have a responsibility to not only make sure that the food is kept safe, but also that the public is kept safe. Refrigerated or frozen food that has been exposed to temperature abuses can cause foodborne illness in consumers and cost food companies thousands, if not millions, of dollars in profit due to unsafe food having to be destroyed.



## HAZARDS

Refrigerated and frozen foods that get exposed to temperature abuses can expose the public to foodborne illnesses, including:

- Salmonella
- E. Coli (Escherichia coli)
- Listeria
- Vibrio

## TEMPERATURE CONTROLLED FOODS

Foods that require temperature control for safety generally include:

- Meats such as poultry, fish, and beef (raw or previously cooked)
- Foods of plant origin that have been cooked
- Raw seed sprouts
- Cut melons
- Cut leafy greens
- Cut tomatoes
- Garlic-in-oil mixtures

## WHO SPECIFIES THE TEMPERATURE?

Shippers are responsible for specifying controlled temperatures. The temperature will be specified on the paperwork given to the carrier.

The shipper can also help in temperature control by having procedures in place that facilitate short loading and unloading times.

Questions? Call 1-800-734-3574





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## SAFETY TIPS FOR KEEP REFRIGERATED FOOD SAFE DURING TRANSPORTATION

Before a load is even loaded into the trailer, a carrier can take proactive steps to ensure that refrigerated and frozen foods are kept safe. Such proactive steps should include:

- Cleaning and sanitizing the trailer before and after deliveries.
  - Grooves should be checked after delivering raw meats as blood and other items can get caught in the grooves which could result in cross-contamination or cross-contact.
  - Blocked grooves can cause air not to circulate throughout the box.
- Inspecting the air chute. If the chute is torn, report it to your supervisor and have it replaced.
  - Employees should ensure that chute openings are not closed. Closed openings could lead to air not being able to circulate through the box.
- Doing a pre-trip test on the unit before setting the specified temperature. If a pre-trip alerts you to an issue, report the problem and do not load the box until the problem has been looked into and needed repairs have been completed.
- Getting the box pre-refrigerated before loading. The temperature should be set according to the shipper's instructions.
- Shutting off the refrigerating unit before opening the doors for loading. This step will help prevent the loss of the cooler air from the box and keep the box from taking in the warmer air from outside.

The loading process is another area in which proactive steps can be used to help protect temperature-controlled foods from temperature abuses. Such steps should include:

- Not opening the doors to the box until the load is ready to be loaded into the box.
- Stacking the load to allow for proper air flow.
  - Pallets should have openings or vents to allow for proper air flow. The openings on the pallets should not be wrapped in plastic.
- Securing the pallets or other containers so that they cannot move around during transit.
- Ensuring that foods that require ice or have the potential to drip juices or other fluids are not stacked on top of other times.

While transporting the load, carriers should check on the temperature during the trip. Depending on the model of the vehicle, a carrier can monitor the temperature from the cab or check on the digital display during rest stops. Carriers should also have a contingency plan in place in case of equipment failure or unforeseen delays.

- *Note: During multiple deliveries, the box doors should be opened and closed as little as possible. Every time a door is opened, a carrier risks letting out the colder air while allowing warmer air to enter.*

## CONCLUSION

Transporting refrigerated food from one location to another is a very important job that comes with additional responsibilities. Refrigerated and frozen food items need to be at specified temperatures to remain safe. When refrigerated and frozen foods suffer temperature abuses, they become a health hazard to the public and businesses can lose a lot of money on food that needs to be destroyed. By taking a few minutes to ensure that a refrigerated trailer is operating properly and is clean, a carrier can do their part in protecting everyone from foodborne illnesses.