

July 1, 2020 • Information for school food programs

Guidance for School Food Programs

Food preparation.

- Follow safe food handling practices to prepare meals.
- Do not work or volunteer if you are sick.
- Wash hands with soap and warm water when you enter the kitchen, change tasks, after handling raw meat and frequently during your shift.
- Wear gloves when handling ready-to-eat foods.
- Pre-package all meals in the kitchen. There should be no food handling at meal sites.

Food transportation and distribution.

- Limit the time you spend interacting with people while delivering meals.
- Wear a cloth face covering when around others.
- Aim for 15 minutes or less of contact time and stay 6 feet apart.
- Consider providing meals that can be reheated at home.
 - If heating is a required food preparation step in the prep kitchen, ingredients must be properly cooled and 41°F or below when packaging for service.
- Keep foods cold using coolers or ice.
- Keep foods hot using insulated warming units or Cambros.
- If you can't keep foods cold or hot during transportation or distribution, use time as a control.

Time as a control.

- Using time as a control, you can hold food for up to 4 hours.
- Follow these guidelines:
 - Record on a log sheet the food item, time and temperature of the food when removed from temperature control.
 - Record on a log sheet the food discard time. The discard time can't be more than 4 hours.
 - Examples: Chicken burgers: 10:30 a.m., 162°F. Discard at 2:30 p.m. OR Corn dogs: 11:00 a.m., 157°F. Discard at 3:00 p.m.
 - Cold items must be at or below 41°F and hot foods at or above 135°F when the time starts.
 - Food items left at the end of meal service must be thrown away. They can't be reused.
 - Keep a written copy of the time as a control procedure on site and review with all food employees.
 - Foods that don't require temperature control but are served warm don't need to be on the log sheet (e.g. warm bread or tortilla chips).
- Time as a control is for meals that will be eaten immediately.
- If serving lunch and breakfast for the next day, you can only use time as a control for lunch.
- If the meal service window lasts more than 4 hours, it may be necessary to have 2 meal batches prepared at different times.

For more information on COVID-19, visit www.tpchd.org/coronavirus.