

LABELING & RECORD KEEPING

5.3 DATING & LABELING OF FOOD IN PRODUCTION



All foods opened, prepared and used in the unit must be dated and labeled. Date marks are important for all TCS foods because while growth of bacteria in refrigerated foods is largely controlled by temperature, it is not stopped altogether. Date marks indicate when foods have been in refrigeration too long and have reached unsafe levels of bacterial growth. Common name labeling is also important since certain foods can be difficult to identify once they are processed or removed from their original package.

STANDARD

- All foods, including prepared items, bulk foods, frozen foods, and ingredients present in a Compass Group facility must be labeled at all times.
- TCS foods requiring a date mark shall be labeled with the common name, preparation date, discard date, and associate initials. Fresh produce shall be considered TCS for the purpose of date marking once it has been washed or processed in some way (cut, chopped, shredded, etc.).
- Non-TCS foods that have been removed from their original packaging shall be labeled with the item name, open date, original manufacturer's expiration date, and associate initials. See *Food Dating Chart below for products with an unknown manufacturer's expiration date*.
- Prepared or opened foods that were **not** previously frozen must be labeled with the date they are placed into the freezer, the common name, and the associate's initials. If a manufacturer expiration date is present, the item must not be used beyond that date, whether frozen or not.
- RTE, TCS food that is **prepared onsite** (including all fresh produce that has been washed or processed) and held refrigerated for more than 24 hours, must be used within 4 days including the day of production.
- RTE, TCS food that was **commercially processed, opened by the unit**, and held refrigerated for more than 24 hours must served on the premises, sold, or discarded within 7 days*. The day the original container is opened is counted as day 1. * see exceptions on page 2
- A date marked food that is subsequently combined with additional ingredients or portions of food must retain the date marking of the earliest-prepared or first-prepared ingredient.

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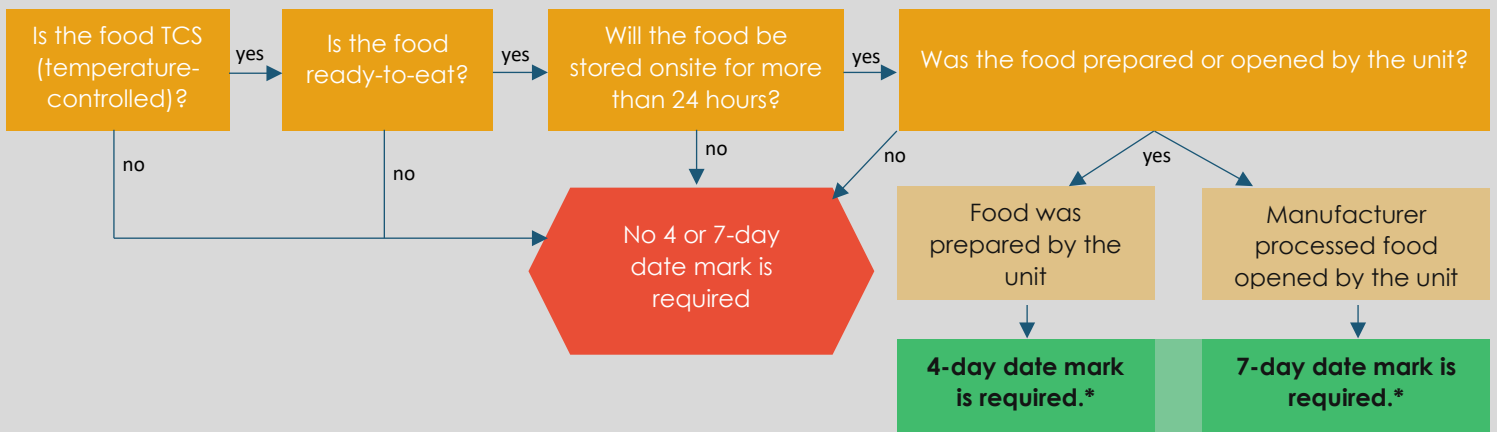


MUST DO

- **Date** and label all foods opened or prepared in-house according to the standard (this includes bulk items removed from their original containers, as well as working containers of water, oil and other liquid items).
- **Train** associates on proper date marking and labeling procedures.
- **Monitor** TCS foods in storage to ensure proper date marking procedures are being followed.
- **Rotate** inventory according to the date mark label.

DATE MARKING DECISION CHART

Fresh produce that has been washed or processed in some way requires a 4-day date mark



Unit-applied date marks may not exceed the manufacturer's use-by date

Note: Date marks indicate the minimum timeframe for food safety, but items should be monitored regularly, as they may decline in quality before the marked expiration date.

* EXCEPTIONS:

- Sliced or unsliced bulk deli meat – 4-day date mark once original packaging has been opened.

The following items must be used within **30 days** of opening or by the **printed expiration date**, whichever is sooner:

- Commercially prepared mayo and salad dressings
- Shelf-stable dry fermented sausages (pepperoni and Genoa)
- Hard and semi-soft cheeses (cheddar, gruyere, parmesan, etc.)
- Shelf-stable salt-cured products (prosciutto, Parma, etc.)
- Cultured dairy products (yogurt, sour cream)

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CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

- Bulk food or working food containers that are not properly labeled must be discarded UNLESS the item can be identified without a doubt, in which case it must be labeled immediately.
- Discard any foods with expired manufacturer-labeled or unit-labeled expiration dates.

COMBINED ASSESSMENT

- Q500 - Observe the labels of TCS, RTE foods in storage and on display for customer self-service.
- Q550 - Observe the labels of open/working containers of foods, ingredients and unit-packaged juice in storage, preparation and display.

NOTE

- For quality purposes, you may elect to use a shorter date mark time.
- Date marking labels may be obtained from your Foodbuy approved food safety small wares vendor. Labels with the names of the days of the week are preferred. Labels are available in multiple languages. Use labels with enough space to record all of the required information.
- Date marking is often confused with sell-by dates. When we refer to date marking, we are talking about dating foods that have been opened, produced by and stored in the unit, whereas sell-by dates are the dates by which *finished*, packaged foods must be sold.
- *Best Practice*: Date all foods when they are prepared or when the original package is opened. At the end of the production day or after the last meal of the day, check all foods for proper date marking and discard any food that will expire the next day.
- *Best practice*: All TCS, RTE that are packaged for retail sale, such as sandwiches, salads, yogurt, and cut fruit salads must be date marked with an easily identifiable date marking system. These foods should be sold within 24 to 48 hours from the time of preparation to maintain product quality.
- Date marking directly on foil, plastic wrap, masking tape, or containers is not permitted in Compass Group operations.
- Labels must be removed before washing containers, and are best used for metal, glass, and plastic containers in refrigerator and freezer applications.

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AVAILABLE TRAINING

- Video training: [Date Marking and Labeling](#)
- [5 Minutes on Food Safety - Topic 11](#): Food Storage Practices

HELPFUL LINKS

- Refer to [Section 5.1](#) Manufacturer Labeling
- Refer to [Section 5.2](#) Finished Product Labeling
- Refer to [Section 5.4](#) Food Expiration & Rotation

While non-TCS foods do not require date marking, the FSQA team is often asked about best practice for these items for freshness once opened. Please see recommendations in the chart below. Note these are **not** requirements- only recommendations.

RECOMMENDED FOOD EXPIRATION CHART

Once opened, use the time limits below unless the manufacturer's date is earlier.

Non-TCS Food Type	# Days until expiration
Oils	30 days after opening
Syrup, peanut butter, dried fruit	60 days after opening
Cereal, sugar, honey, (cake, brownie, pancake) mixes, rice, pasta, flour, dehydrated potatoes	6 months after opening
Spices	6 months after opening
Unopened canned, carton boxed, or bottled goods	1 year after receiving
Salad dressings, mayonnaise, tartar sauce, cake icing (shortening based), jam, jelly, fruit sauces, soup base	30 days after opening
Ketchup, BBQ, Tabasco, steak sauce, mustard, horseradish, relish, pickles, (chocolate, caramel, strawberry) sauces	60 days after opening
Any food stored frozen, unless manufacturer date is sooner	See chart in Section 5.4

FOOD CODE REFERENCES

- 3-302.12 Food Storage Containers, Identified with Common Name of Food
- 3-501.17 Ready-to-Eat, Time/Temperature Control for Safety Food, Date Marking

OTHER REFERENCE

- <https://www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/HHS/HHS-785-W.pdf> Food Storage Guide