

PREVENTING CONTAMINATION

3.5 FOOD STORAGE



All food shall be stored in such a manner as to prevent contamination and to maintain the safety and wholesomeness of the food for human consumption.

STANDARD

- Stored food and ingredients must be protected from contamination as required in by biological, chemical, and physical contaminants at all times as required by [Section 3.1](#), [Section 6.1](#), and [Section 3.2](#).
- TCS foods in storage must be maintained at the required internal temperature per [Section 4.3](#) and [Section 4.10](#) at all times.
- Foods in storage must be labeled as required by [Section 5.1](#), [Section 5.2](#), [Section 5.3](#), and [Section 5.5](#).
- Foods must be stored a minimum of 6" from the ground in a clean, dry location that is not exposed to dust, splash or other contamination. *Exception- food being delivered/actively being put away.*
- Foods may not be stored in locker rooms, restrooms, dressing rooms, chemical storage rooms, garbage rooms, mechanical rooms, under sewer lines, under leaking water lines, under condensation drips, under open stairwells, under other potential sources of contamination.
- Foods that have been opened or processed must be stored in NSF approved containers with tight-fitting lids (where appropriate) or covered or otherwise protected from overhead/environmental contamination when stored on equipment such as a speed rack.
- Fresh molluscan shellfish, including shell stock and shucked shellfish must be stored in their original container at all times while in storage as required by [Section 5.5](#).
- When whole, raw fruits or vegetables; cut, raw vegetables; and tofu is stored immersed in ice or water, it must be maintained at 41°F or less with ice or water and the container used for storage must be changed at least daily.

MUST DO

- **Separate** and store raw animal foods as indicated in [Section 3.1](#).
- **Store** food in at least 6" from the floor, in packages, covered containers, or wrappings.
- **Designate** an area for the storage of damaged, recalled, or spoiled food.
- **Monitor** all storage areas (refrigerated, frozen, and dry) for potential sources of food contamination.
- **Post** the FSQA Food Hierarchy sign anywhere foods are stored, FSQA Raw/RTE sign in refrigerated units where raw animal proteins are stored, and FSQA Return to Supplier sign in designated area.



Creation date: 10/01/2022	Revision date: 10/01/2025	Revision Number: 2
Approved by: Food Safety & Quality Assurance	Page 1 of 3	

Note: In all cases, compliance with stricter jurisdictional requirements is necessary.

PREVENTING CONTAMINATION

3.5 FOOD STORAGE



CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

- When foods are found to be stored improperly, move them to an appropriate location immediately and discard contaminated product.
- Train all associates on proper food storage practices.

AVAILABLE FSQA SIGNAGE

- [QAS-07](#) Raw Food Storage
- [QAS-32](#) Food Storage Hierarchy
- [QAS-02](#) Return to Supplier

AVAILABLE TRAINING

- [5 Minutes of Food Safety - Topic 11](#): Food Storage Practices

COMBINED ASSESSMENT

- Q301 - Observe food storage and production areas for the potential of cross-contamination.

HELPFUL LINKS

- Refer to [Section 3.1](#) Biological Contamination
- Refer to [Section 3.2](#) Foreign Objects & Physical Hazards
- Refer to [Section 4.3](#) Cold Holding & Storage
- Refer to [Section 4.10](#) Hot Holding
- Refer to [Section 5.1](#) Manufacturer Labeling
- Refer to [Section 5.2](#) Finished Product Labeling
- Refer to [Section 5.3](#) Dating & Labeling of Food in Production
- Refer to [Section 5.5](#) Shellfish Tags & Labeling Requirements
- Refer to [Section 6.1](#) Chemicals
- Refer to [Section 7.3](#) Storage Facilities for Dry Goods

PREVENTING CONTAMINATION

3.5 FOOD STORAGE



NOTE

- A clearance of 6-18" between stored items and walls permits thorough cleaning behind shelving and discourages pests from harboring in these areas.
- Where required, dry storage room temperature should be maintained at 50-70°F with 56-60% humidity. This is not a requirement in all sectors, consult with sector leadership.
- Observe safety practices. Store heavier items (25 pounds or more) on lower shelves between knee and shoulder height. Avoid stacking cases overly high. Stack cases with layers running perpendicularly.
- Best practice- the bottom shelf of all storage areas should be constructed with a solid barrier, such as a sheet of plastic, to protect product from splash, dust and other contamination.

FOOD CODE REFERENCES

- 3-302.11 Packaged and Unpackaged Food -Separation, Packaging, and Segregation
- 3-305.11 Food Storage
- 3-305.12 Food Storage, Prohibited Areas