

Hot and Cold Holding Guidelines

Food being held for service is at risk for time-temperature abuse and cross-contamination. If your operation holds food, you must make policies that reduce these risks.

- Food covers and sneeze guards.
 - Cover food and install sneeze guards to protect food from contaminants.
- Temperature - Hold TCS food at the correct internal temperature.
 - Hold hot food at 135°F or higher.
 - Hold cold food at 41°F or lower.
- Thermometer - Use a thermometer to check a food's internal temperature.

Time: Check food temperatures at least every FOUR hours.

- Throw out food that is not 41°F (5°C) or lower or 135°F (57°C) or higher.
- It is recommended to check temperature every two hours. This will leave time for corrective action.

Hot-Holding Equipment.

- NEVER use hot-holding equipment to reheat food unless it is built to do so.

Cold food can be held without temperature control for up to SIX hours if:

- It was held at 41°F (5°C) or lower before removing it from refrigeration.
- It does not exceed 70°F (21°C) during service. Throw out food that exceeds this temperature.
- It has a label specifying time it was removed from refrigeration and time it must be thrown out.
 - It is sold, served, or thrown out within SIX hours.

Alternatives for cold holding ready to eat food with a discard time of FOUR hours:

If the food was held at 41°F (5°C) or below and discarded at FOUR hours, the food can be allowed to reach any temperature.

Hot food can be held without temperature control for up to FOUR hours if:

- It was held at 135°F (57°C) or higher before removing it from temperature control.
- It has a label specifying when the item must be thrown out.
- It is sold, served, or thrown out within FOUR hours.