A Guide for Food Temperature Management

Maximum cold holding temperature* 41°F

Recommended long-term frozen storage temperature 0°F

The “temperature danger zone” (TDZ) for food 42°F to 134°F

Minimum food thermometer temperature range 0°F to 220°F

Minimum hot holding temperature 135°F

Minimum cooking temperature for ready-to-eat food (packaged, pre-cooked or canned goods) 135°F

Minimum cooking temperature for whole meats/fish 145°F

Minimum cooking temperature for chopped meats/fish 155°F

Minimum cooking temperature for poultry 165°F

Minimum reheating and microwave cooking temperature 165°F

To safely cool down “time and temperature controlled for safety” (TCS) hot foods, both of the following steps must be met;

1. After the temperature of the cooling food falls below 135°F, the food must continue to cool within two (2) hours to 70°F and then,

2. Within six (6) hours total, foods must finish cooling to 41°F or below.

*Note: Foods capable of growing bacteria and stored from 32°F to 41°F may only be held in that temperature range for a maximum of seven days. But because the day of preparation counts as day one, the actual food product’s expiration or “use thru” date is determined by counting six (6) days ahead and marking that date on the food product.