



Date Marking Ready-to-Eat, Time and Temperature Control for Safety Foods Standard Operating Procedure

PURPOSE: To ensure appropriate rotation of ready-to-eat food to prevent or reduce foodborne illness from *Listeria monocytogenes*.

SCOPE: This procedure applies to foodservice employees who prepare, store, or serve food.

KEY WORDS: Ready-to-Eat Food, Time and Temperature Control for Safety Foods (TCS), Date Marking, Cross-Contamination

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Train foodservice employees on using the procedures in this SOP. The best practice for a date marking system would be to include a label with the product name, the day or date, and time it is prepared or opened. Examples of how to indicate when the food is prepared or opened include:
 - Labeling food with a calendar date, such as “cut cantaloupe, 08/1/18, 8:00 a.m.”
 - Identifying the day of the week, such as “cut cantaloupe, Monday, 8:00 a.m.” or
 - Using color-coded marks or tags, such as cut cantaloupe, blue dot, 8:00 a.m. means “cut on Monday at 8:00 a.m.”
2. Follow State or local health department requirements.
3. Label ready-to-eat, TCS foods that are prepared on-site and held for more than 24 hours.
4. Label any processed, ready-to-eat, TCS foods when opened, if they are to be held for more than 24 hours.
5. Refrigerate all ready-to-eat, TCS foods at 41 °F or below.
6. Serve or discard refrigerated, ready-to-eat, TCS foods within 7 days.
7. Indicate with a separate label the date prepared, the date frozen, and the date thawed of any refrigerated, ready-to-eat, TCS Foods.
8. Calculate the 7-day time period by counting only the days that the food is under refrigeration. For example:
 - On Monday, 8/1/18, lasagna is cooked, properly cooled, and refrigerated with a label that reads, “Lasagna, Cooked, 8/1/18.”
 - On Tuesday, 8/2/18, the lasagna is frozen with a second label that reads, “Frozen, 8/2/18.” Two labels now appear on the lasagna. Since the lasagna was held under refrigeration from Monday, 8/1/18 – Tuesday, 8/2/18, only 1 day is counted towards the 7-day time period.
 - On Tuesday 8/16/18 the lasagna is pulled out of the freezer. A third label is placed on the lasagna that reads, “Thawed, 8/16/18.” All three labels now appear on the lasagna. The lasagna must be served or discarded within 6 days.

MONITORING:

A designated employee will check refrigerators daily to verify that foods are date marked and that foods exceeding the 7-day time period are not being used or stored.



CORRECTIVE ACTION:

1. Retrain any foodservice employee found not following the procedures in this SOP.
2. Foods that are not date marked or that exceed the 7-day time period will be discarded.

VERIFICATION AND RECORD KEEPING:

The foodservice manager will complete the Food Safety Checklist daily. The Food Safety Checklist is to be kept on file for a minimum of 1 year.

DATE IMPLEMENTED: _____ **BY:** _____

DATE REVIEWED: _____ **BY:** _____

DATE REVISED: _____ **BY:** _____