



Health Department Amends Temperature Control Requirements Monitor Food by Using Time as a Public Health Control

Food establishments can now hold potentially hazardous foods without temperature control for four to six hours if they meet certain time limits and other guidelines. Using time only to monitor food, instead of time and temperature, is called Time as a Public Health Control. Before this Health Code change, potentially hazardous hot foods had to be maintained at a minimum hot temperature, and cold foods at a maximum cold temperature at all times.

Which foods can be monitored by time alone?

All potentially hazardous foods can be monitored by time alone, **EXCEPT**:

- Smoked and vacuum-packed foods.
- Raw eggs awaiting preparation at senior centers, assisted living and health care facilities, day care programs and schools.

Once time is used as the control, food cannot be returned to hot or cold holding again to be saved and used at a later time. It must be discarded at the end of the time allowed.

Which food service establishments can use time alone as the public health control?

All food establishments can now monitor food safety by time alone instead of time and temperature, **EXCEPT**:

- Mobile food vending units
- Self-service salad bars and buffets
- Temporary food service establishments (for example, street fair or flea market vendors)
- Food vending machines

At what temperature should hot or cold food be when I start monitoring it?

When you remove it from temperature control:

- Hot food must be at 140° F (60° C) or higher.
- Cold food must be at 41° F (5° C) or lower.

How long can I keep food from hot or cold holding?

- Food must be labeled, whether it is hot or cold.
- You can keep hot or cold food without temperature control for up to four hours.
- You can keep cold food without temperature control for up to six hours, if you follow additional temperature-tracking procedures.

How do I track food by time?

- As soon as you remove a food item from hot or cold temperature holding, you must record the following information on the food's container, the food item or its tray:
- Temperature of the food item when removed from hot or cold holding
- Time food item was removed from hot or cold holding
- Time food item will be discarded four hours later

Labels may be hand-written, but must be clear. The Health Department suggests that food service establishments provide pre-printed labels like the samples below and have food workers fill in the appropriate information.

Sample Tracking Label: Four-Hour Time Limit for Hot and Cold Food

<p>Date: January 1, 2012 Food item: Peking Duck Holding temperature of food item: 155° F Time removed: 11:30 AM Discard time: 3:30 PM</p>
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What foods can I hold out of temperature longer than four hours?

You can keep **COLD** food without temperature control for up to six hours if you record the following information on the food's container, the food item or its tray:

- Temperature of the food item when removed from cold holding
- Time it was removed from cold holding
- Time it will be discarded six hours later
- Temperature of the food at the four-hour time limit and write the temperature and the time you took it on the label or container.

You must immediately throw away food if its temperature is 70° F (21° C) or higher at the four-hour time limit.

Sample Tracking Label: Six-Hour Time Limit for Cold Food Only

<p>Date: January 1, 2012 Food item: Sushi rice and raw fish Holding temperature of food item: 38° F Time removed: 11:30AM Temperature at four hours: 59° F at 3:30 PM Discard time: 5:30 PM</p>

What should I do with food not served within the four- or six-hour time limit?

You must throw away:

- Hot food not served after four hours
- Cold food not served after six hours, or after four hours if its temperature is 70° F (21° C) or higher

Do I have to save the tracking labels or marked containers after food is served or thrown away?

No. You do not have to save labels or marked containers after serving or throwing away food.

Can I get a notice of violation or fine for failing to comply with this rule?

Yes. If you don't properly label food or discard food you're monitoring by time, a health inspector can issue a notice of violation for food out of temperature or a violation for adulterated food, and the hearing examiner at the Administrative Tribunal may issue fines of \$200 to \$2,000 for each violation.