

TIME AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CONTROL

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Time without temperature control may be used for a working supply of time/temperature control for safety food (TCS food) under carefully controlled conditions. Some examples:

- A working supply of sliced tomatoes could be held without refrigeration at a sandwich-making table for up to four (4) hours if the proper public health controls are in place.
- Pizza for sale by the slice could be held in a display case at less than 135°F for up to four (4) hours if the proper public health controls are in place.
- A working supply of raw shell eggs could be held without refrigeration for up to four (4) hours next to a grill where eggs are cooked to order if the proper public health controls are in place.
- Slices of chilled melon could be put out for service on a buffet line for up to six (6) hours if the melon slices have a temperature of 41°F or less when they are put on display, their temperature never exceeds 70°F, and the proper public health controls are in place.
- A charcuterie board of meats and cheeses could be put out at a catered tailgate party for up to six (6) hours if the meats and cheeses have a temperature of 41°F or less when they are put on display, their temperature never exceeds 70°F, and the proper public health controls are in place.



A Written Procedure Is Required

To use time as a public health control instead of temperature control, the food establishment must do the following:

- Prepare written procedures in advance regarding how food products will be safely handled using time as a public health control.
- Maintain these written procedures in the food establishment where they are available for the Health Department to see, upon request.

Temperature monitoring is required. Keep records!



PUTNAM COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Food Safety & Environmental Services
(304) 757-2541 | pchdvw.org

Procedure for a 4-Hour Holding Time

The food must have an internal temperature of:

- 41°F or less when removed from cold holding temperature control, or
- 135°F or greater when removed from hot holding temperature control.

The food must be marked or otherwise identified to indicate the time 4 hours after the food was removed from temperature control. Within 4 hours after the time when the food was removed from temperature control, the food must be:

- Served at any temperature if it is a ready-to-eat food,
- Cooked and served, or
- Discarded.

Food not under temperature control in containers or packages not marked with the time they are to be discarded must be thrown out immediately.

Procedure for a 6-Hour Holding Time

The food must have an internal temperature of 41°F or less when removed from cold holding temperature control. The internal temperature of the food must be monitored, and it may not exceed 70°F during the 6-hour holding period (unless an ambient air temperature is maintained that ensures the food does not exceed 70°F during the 6-hour holding period).

The food must be marked or otherwise identified to indicate the time 6 hours after the food was removed from temperature control. The food must be discarded if its temperature exceeds 70°F.

Within 6 hours after the time the food was removed from temperature control, the food must be:

- Served at any temperature if it is a ready-to-eat food,
- Cooked and served, or
- Discarded.

Food not under temperature control in containers or packages not marked with the time they are to be discarded must be thrown out immediately.



NOTE: Food establishments such as hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, senior centers, or child or adult day care centers that serve a **HIGHLY SUSCEPTIBLE POPULATION** (persons who are more likely than other people in the general population to experience foodborne disease because they are immunocompromised, preschool age children, or older adults) may not use time as a public health control for raw eggs.



Using Time as a Public Health Control at Temporary Events

At temporary events such as fairs, festivals and other short-term events (lasting less than four hours), using time as a public health control can be a practical way to keep food safe.

Outdoor events often take place in hot weather, and mechanical refrigeration may not be available. Ice-filled coolers alone may not keep cold foods at the required temperature of 41°F or below.

The same challenge applies to hot foods. Without equipment such as hot holding cabinets or steam tables, it can be difficult to keep cooked foods at 135°F or above. Using time as a public health control allows vendors to safely serve food without relying on specialized hot- or cold-holding equipment, provided the proper procedures are followed.



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