

# The Flow of Food

## Guidelines for Food Preparation

### Receiving

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- Reject products that appear unwholesome
- **Inspect** packaging for signs of contamination
- Check receiving temperatures for Time and Temperature Controlled for Safety (TCS) foods



### Thawing

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- Move frozen food from your freezer to the refrigerator and within 24-48 hours it should thaw, depending on the thickness of the food
- Food can be quickly thawed beneath cold, **running** water or as part of the cooking process
- **NEVER** thaw food at room temperature or leave it in a sink with standing water
- Thaw food in your microwave **ONLY IF** you will be cooking the food right away.

### Handling

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- **WASH YOUR HANDS** before handling ready to eat foods
- Use gloves or other methods to limit bare hand contact with food
- **ALWAYS** wash your hands after touching raw food and before moving from one type of food to another



### Holding/ Serving

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- Use a metal-stem thermometer that measures from 0-220°F to test hot and cold food temperatures
- Cold food should be held at 41°F or lower
- Hot food should be held at 135°F or higher

## Cooking

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- Use a metal-stem thermometer to measure internal temperatures
  - 165°F – poultry, exotic meats, and stuffed meat/fish/pasta
  - 155°F- ground beef, pork, fish and eggs for hot holding
  - 145°F – fish and shellfish, eggs for immediate service, and whole cuts of meat
  - 135°F - vegetables, rice, and pasta for hot holding



## Cooling

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- Rapidly cool food within a total of six hours:
  - Cool from 135°F to 70°F within **two hours**
  - Cool further from 70°F to 41°F within the **next four hours**
- Cool in small portions and thin layers. Cut large pieces into smaller pieces to expedite the process
- **Refrigerate** in shallow pans, bowls or trays
- Ice baths or chill sticks may be used to expedite the process
- **Do not cover** food with plastic wrap or foil until it is cooled to room temperature

## Reheating

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- Reheat food to **165°F** within **two hours**
- **NEVER** reheat in steam tables or warming units that aren't intended for cooking
- Reheat food on the stove or in the oven



## Storage

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- Use a thermometer to make sure your refrigerator is holding TCS food at 41°F or lower
- Store all foods at least six inches off the floor
- Keep food covered or closed to prevent
- contamination
- Store raw animal products according to cooking temperature and separate from ready-to-eat foods
- Date mark open TCS food and use within 7 days