

SAFE FOOD HANDLING PRACTICES

We hope you enjoy the food that you have purchased. Foods must be handled properly in order to stay a safe food product. Once the food has been purchased, it is up to you to keep it safe for your family and guests.

Food Storage Temperatures

- 1) All perishable foods shall be maintained hot at 135°F or above; or maintained at 41°F or below in order to keep them safe. A food thermometer should be used to monitor these temperatures.
- 2) If you transport the foods for the holiday, please make sure it is at one of the above temperatures and stays at these temperatures during transport. A cooler may work to keep foods hot and cold during transport. Do not allow foods that are stored hot to fall below 135°F; or do not allow cold foods to rise above 41°F.

Cooling of Cooked or Hot Held Foods

Cooling cooked or hot held foods is very difficult to do with a home-style refrigerator, especially when you are trying to cool such large amounts of food, such as a barbecue shoulder. Cooling can also be difficult because the door(s) of a home refrigerator are constantly being opened and shut allowing cold temperatures to escape.

So, the best way to cool the food may be to leave it hot at or above 135°F, but if you must cool your foods, here are some ways to make the cooling process quicker, easier and safer.

- 1) Cooked or hot held foods shall be rapidly cooled from 135°F to 70°F within 2 hours. Food should continue to cool from 70°F to 41°F within an additional 4 hours. (A total cooling time of 6 hours from 135°F to 41°F is allowed for proper cooling.)
- 2) Cooling of cooked or hot held foods can be made quicker by separating or slicing the food into smaller or thinner portions. This allows the heat to escape the food quicker. Spreading large amounts of food into thinner portions allows for quicker cooling. Foods can also be placed into the freezer to rapidly cool them, and finally do not tightly wrap or cover hot foods. The covers or wraps help hold the heat in and does not allow it to escape the food.

Reheating the Cooled Foods

Once the food has been cooled, you may want to re-heat the food before serving it later. Food should be reheated as quickly as possible. Rapidly reheat foods to 165°F or higher within 2 hours.