

# TIME AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CONTROL



With **written procedures approved by the Regulatory Authority**, it may be possible for your operation to allow time and temperature control for safety (TCS) foods that are ready-to-eat (hot or cold) to be stored without temperature controls for a certain time frame after which the food **must be discarded or immediately consumed. No food may be reused or packaged and sold for retail sale.**

When a written procedure is approved by the Regulatory Authority, only time rather than “temperature with time” is the control to prevent the growth of bacteria associated with foodborne illnesses if the food is discarded at the end of the time frame.

The operator shall work with the Regulatory Authority to determine a suitable procedure for their process and keep a copy of the approved written procedure on the premises.

## **Use Time as a Public Health Control for a Maximum Time of up to 4 Hours For:**

- Food that has an initial temperature of 41°F or less when removed from cold-holding temperature control
- Food that has an initial temperature of 135°F or greater when removed from hot-holding temperature control
  - Mark or otherwise identify the food to indicate the time that is 4 hours past the point in time when the food is removed from temperature control
  - Food shall be cooked and served, served at any temperature if ready-to-eat, or discarded within 4 hours from the point in time when the food is removed from temperature control
  - Food in unmarked containers or packages, or marked to exceed the 4-hour limit, shall be discarded

# TIME AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CONTROL

## Use Time as a Public Health Control for a Maximum Time of up to 6 Hours For:

- Food that has an initial temperature of 41°F or less when removed from temperature control and does not exceed 70°F
  - Monitor the temperature of the food to ensure the warmest portion does not exceed 70°F during the 6-hour period, unless an ambient air temperature is maintained that ensures the food does not exceed 70°F during the 6-hour holding period
  - Mark or otherwise identify the food to indicate the time when the food was removed from 41°F or less cold-holding temperature control and the time that is 6 hours past the point in time when the food was removed from cold-holding temperature control
  - Discard the food if the temperature exceeds 70°F
  - Food shall be cooked and served, served at any temperature if ready-to-eat, or discarded within 6 hours from the point in time when the food was removed from 41°F or less cold holding temperature control
  - Food in unmarked containers or packages, or marked with a time that exceeds the 6-hour limit, shall be discarded

## Points to Remember

- Review your establishment's processes to determine whether to use the 4-hour or 6-hour time limit.
- All food must be properly cooked and/or cooled before using time as a public health control
- All food must be otherwise protected from contamination
- Food cannot be reused or packaged and sold for retail sale. It must be discarded or immediately consumed when using Time as a Public Health Control

## What's needed before implementing Time as a Public Health Control?

- ✓ Approved written procedures, including a process for temperature monitoring
- ✓ Marking the food container to identify the time that is four or six hours from the point of removal from temperature control
- ✓ Instructions for serving, cooking, or discarding the food within four or six hours of removal from temperature control
- ✓ Assurances that the food is properly prepared, cooked, and refrigerated before time is used as a public health control
- ✓ Instructions for discarding food in unmarked containers or exceeding the four- or six-hour limit