



Food Storage:

During storage, the safety and suitability of food needs to be maintained by ensuring food is stored in an appropriate environment and protected from the likelihood of contamination. Potentially hazardous food must be stored at temperatures that minimise the opportunity for food poisoning bacteria to grow. Food is considered to be 'stored' if it is not being processed, displayed, packaged, transported or identified for disposal.

Dry Storage:

Food must be stored in an environment to protect it from contamination and to maintain the safety and suitability of the food. Contamination can result from pests (insects, rodents, birds etc); cleaning chemicals stored inappropriately next to or above foods; staff personal belongings; or environmental factors such as excessive humidity.

- Ensure all cracks, crevices and holes are sealed to prevent the entry of pests to the food premises, and to prevent harbourage and breeding of pests;
- Reject and discard any food with damaged packaging;
- Store opened packaged foods in clean and sanitised food grade containers with well fitting lids;
- Look for signs of pest activity in dry storage areas;
- Store all food off the floor and ensure the area is not overcrowded to facilitate easy and effective cleaning;
- Ensure the dry storage area is cleaned regularly ;
- Check that all chemicals are stored away from food;
- Ensure stock is rotated 'first in – first out' and is within 'use-by' or 'best before' dates;
- Store food in accordance with manufacturers specifications;
- Have the premises treated regularly by a licensed Pest Control Operator.

Cold Storage:

Potentially hazardous foods are foods that might contain food poisoning bacteria and are able to make people sick if the food is not stored at the correct temperature. Potentially hazardous food must be stored at 5°C or colder to prevent bacteria from multiplying.

- Check and record the temperature of food stored in the fridge or coolroom using a digital probe thermometer - it should always be 5°C or colder;
- Ensure the cold storage area is not overcrowded to enable cool air to circulate freely and to keep the food cold;
- All foods need to be stored in clean, sanitised food grade containers with lids or wrapped in a suitable protective covering and be clearly labelled and dated to allow for easy identification and stock rotation;
- Make sure all raw meats (including chicken and seafood) and raw eggs are separated from and stored below ready to eat foods;
- Store all food off the floor;
- Check that the inside of your fridge or coolroom is clean and free from mould;
- Do not use food past its 'use-by' or 'best before' dates, or is damaged or deteriorated;
- Clean refrigerators and coolrooms regularly in accordance with your cleaning schedule.

Frozen Storage:

Freezing is an excellent way of keeping potentially hazardous food for long periods of time. However if frozen food begins to thaw it should be used straight away and never refrozen.

- Ensure frozen food is stored frozen hard (not partially thawed), to stop bacteria multiplying;
- Make sure food is stored in suitable clean, sanitised and covered containers, and containers are clearly labelled and dated to allow for easy identification and stock rotation;
- Never store food on the floor of freezer rooms;
- Check food regularly to ensure food is not damaged, deteriorated or perished;
- Keep freezers clean;
- If food is partially thawed, but colder than 5°C, then place food in the refrigerator and use as a refrigerated food, or use straight away;
- If the freezer isn't working properly and you are unsure about the safety of any food, discard the food.

Thawing:

Thawing frozen potentially hazardous food can pose a food safety risk, and may allow food poisoning bacteria to grow. Thawing potentially hazardous food out of refrigeration (i.e. in water or on the bench at room temperature) can cause bacteria to grow.

- Plan ahead; allow sufficient time to thaw potentially hazardous food in the refrigerator or coolroom. This may take a couple of days for some foods to completely thaw;
- Thaw potentially hazardous foods in the microwave, however, there may be uneven heating of the food using this method;
- Remember to thaw raw frozen food on a shelf below any ready to eat food to ensure that cross contamination does not occur;
- Keep all food protected, covered or wrapped during thawing;
- Do not re-freeze thawed or partially thawed foods;
- Do not use potentially hazardous food until it is completely thawed;
- Discard any potentially hazardous food that has been outside temperature control for more than 4 hours.