

# Hot and Cold Food Holding Guide

Potentially hazardous foods must be maintained in a manner that prevents bacteria growth. It is critical that foods be kept at the appropriate temperature, hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Hot-holding equipment must be able to keep hot foods at 135°F or higher. Cold-holding equipment must be able to keep food at 41°F or colder. If hot and cold holding rules have been compromised it is advised to resolve the concern in favor of food safety. It is always better to discard potentially hazardous foods than risk the health and safety of a customer.

The guidelines below are to be used when holding hot and cold foods at your food service establishment.

## Hot-Holding

- Cook hot foods to the appropriate internal temperature then transfer to a hot-holding container
- Hot-holding containers should **not** be used for reheating purposes
- Stir food at regular intervals to distribute heat evenly and keep the food hot
- Use a food thermometer to ensure the internal temperature of hot-held foods
- Discard food that has not been maintained at 135°F or higher

## Cold-Holding

- Ensure all cold food has a cover to prevent contamination
- Use a food thermometer to ensure the internal temperature of cold-held foods
- If food should fall below 41°F take corrective action
- Discard food that has not been maintained at 41°F or lower
- Cold food must be in containers placed on ice, do not store directly on ice