

Food Preparation and Storage Practices

Receiving food

Keeping food safe starts from the moment that the food arrives:

- Check that your food suppliers are supplying safe food.
- Ensure that perishable food arrives in a refrigerated food vehicle, and check the temperature of deliveries when they arrive. Then transfer to the correct type of storage.
- Dry goods, dry ingredients or canned foods should be in good condition, without torn packaging or heavily dented cans.

Preparing food

- Use separate utensils, including cutting boards and knives, for raw food and cooked food. If this is not possible, thoroughly wash and sanitise equipment before using it.
- Wash all fruit and vegetables in clean water before using them.
- Don't use food from damaged packaging.
- Don't let raw food come into contact with cooked food to avoid cross contamination.

Handling food

- Cooked, or ready-to-eat food shouldn't be handled with bare hands. Use tongs, spatulas, spoons, or disposable gloves.
- Raw food to be cooked can be handled with bare hands.
- Change disposable gloves every hour and/or when they tear and/or when you change tasks.

Cooking and heating

- Thaw frozen food before cooking in microwave or at the bottom of the refrigerator.
- Never put thawed food back in the freezer.
- Cook thawed food immediately after thawing.
- Cook all foods completely, especially red meat, fish and chicken.
- Reheating: bring to the boil and simmer for a minimum of 5 minutes before serving (or microwave using manufacturer's guidelines)

Storing food

Temperature: meat, dairy or fish (not already processed by heat) are high-risk foods.
Store at the correct temperature, frozen (hard) at -15°C or cooler or refrigerated at 5°C or cooler.

Time: Don't keep food in storage for too long. Record dates, 'first in - first out' rule. Food should be out of refrigeration for a maximum of four hours.

Displaying food

- Wrap or cover all food on display. Tag or label food trays, not the food.
- Refrigerated displays must be 5°C or cooler and hot displays 60°C or hotter.
- Don't use hot display equipment to reheat food.

Transporting food

- Keep cold by using insulated containers such as an Esky™ with ice or cold blocks.
- Food which is to be served hot should be transported cold and heated at the event.

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