

Date Marking Ready-to-Eat, Potentially Hazardous Food SOP

PURPOSE: To ensure appropriate rotation of ready-to-eat food to prevent or reduce foodborne illness from *Listeria monocytogenes*.

SCOPE: This procedure applies to foodservice employees and volunteers who prepare, package, and store food for *Insert Business Name*.

KEY WORDS: Ready-to-Eat Food, Potentially Hazardous Food, Date Marking, Cross-Contamination

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Train foodservice employees on using the procedures in this SOP. The best practice for a date marking system would be to include a label with the product name, the date, and time it is prepared and opened.
2. Follow State and local health department requirements.
3. Label ready-to-eat, potentially hazardous foods when opened, if they are to be held for more than 24 hours.
4. Label any processed, ready-to-eat, potentially hazardous foods that are prepared on-site and held for more than 24 hours.
5. Refrigerate all ready-to-eat, potentially hazardous foods at 41 degrees F or below.
6. Serve or discard refrigerated, ready-to-eat, potentially hazardous foods within 7 days.
7. Indicate with a separate label the date prepared, the date frozen, and the date thawed of any refrigerated, ready-to-eat, potentially hazardous foods.
8. Calculate the 7-day time period by counting only the days that the food is under refrigeration. For example:
 - On 11/5/13, lasagna is cooked, properly cooled, and refrigerated with a label that reads, "Lasagna, Cooked, 11/5/13."
 - On 11/6/13, the lasagna is frozen with a second label that reads, "Frozen, 11/6/13." Two labels now appear on the lasagna. Since the lasagna was held under refrigeration from 11/5/13 to 11/6/13, only one day is counted towards the 7-day time period.
 - On 11/16/13 the lasagna is pulled out of the freezer. A third label is placed on the lasagna that reads, "Thawed, 11/16/13." All three labels now appear on the lasagna. The lasagna must be served or discarded within 6 days.

MONITORING:

A designated employee will check refrigerators daily to verify that foods are date marked and that foods exceeding the 7-day time period are not being used or stored

CORRECTIVE ACTION:

1. Retrain any foodservice employee found not following the procedures in this SOP.
2. Foods that are not date marked or that exceed the 7-day time period will be discarded.

VERIFICATION AND RECORD KEEPING:

The Processing Coordinator will complete the Food Safety Checklist daily. The Food Safety Checklist is to be kept on file for a minimum of 1 year.

DATE IMPLEMENTED: _____ **BY:** _____.

DATE REVIEWED: _____ **BY:** _____.

DATE REVISED: _____ **BY:** _____.