



Time as a Public Health Control: Holding Potentially Hazardous Food(s) at 41–135°F

Purpose

The California Health and Safety Code (CalCode) allows use of time only, rather than time in conjunction with temperature, as the public health control for a working supply of potentially hazardous foods (PHF) before cooking or for ready to eat PHF that is displayed or held for service for immediate consumption at temperatures between 41-135°F (the danger zone). The food may only be held between 41- 135°F for no more than 4 hours total. The PHF is required to be thrown away after 4 hours. The purpose of this handout is to explain in detail the requirements of this holding process.

Types of PHF food that may be held between 41-135°F

Working supply of PHF before cooking (example: precooked rice, chow Mein, uncooked eggs)
PHF that is ready to eat and displayed or held for service for immediate consumption (example: sandwiches, prepackaged lunch plates, meat-filled croissants, pizza, sushi and similar foods) may be displayed or sold for immediate consumption.

Preparation time is included in the 4 hour limit.

Keeping track of the time

The PHF shall be marked or otherwise identified to indicate the time that is four hours past the point in time when the food is removed from temperature control (refrigeration or hot holding).

The food in unmarked containers or packages or marked to exceed a 4 hours limit shall be discarded.

After 4 hours is over

The food shall be cooked and served, served if ready to eat, or discarded within 4 hours from the point in time when the food is removed from temperature control.

Food shall not be placed back into a warmer or refrigeration unit for later use.

Written Procedures

Written procedure shall be maintained in the food facility and made available to the enforcement agency upon request that ensure compliance. These markings may be done directly on the food container or on a nearby log sheet with each food item listed individually.

*Please see the attached log you may use for proper documentation.

Log for Holding PHF at 41-135°F

DATE	FOOD ITEM	TIME REMOVED FROM TEMPERATURE CONTROL (REFRIGERATION OR HOT HOLDING)	DISCARD TIME (4 HOURS AFTER REMOVED FROM REFRIGERATION OR HOT HOLDING)