

How to Run a Healthy Business

Cold Storage

Keeping food cold remains one of the best ways of reducing the risk of food poisoning and extending the life of the food.

It is vital that in a food business that all high risk foods and perishable foods are held at temperatures at or below 5°C.

Ensure all high risk foods are placed in cold storage areas and check the inside of the refrigerator or coolroom using a thermometer.

Refrigeration units should operate between 1°C and 4°C and it is important that the following steps are taken to ensure that these temperatures are maintained:

- Cool hot food before refrigerating ie. place in shallow containers so that it cools more quickly.
- Keep opening and closing of fridge doors to a minimum.
- Keep seals on refrigerator and cool room doors in good condition.
- Store raw and cooked/ready to eat foods separately to eliminate the risk of cross contamination.
- Store cooked and ready to eat foods above raw foods.
- Foods stored in cool rooms should be placed on shelving at least 30cm above the floor.
- Clearly label and date stored foods.
- Ensure stored foods are rotated on a first in, first out basis.
- Regularly check perishable products and discard any that are spoiled, contaminated or out-of-date.
- Regularly clean the refrigeration units including coolrooms and fridges.
- Do not store cans/tins in the refrigerator once they have been opened. Place contents in food grade containers.
- Do not over crowd refrigerators and cool rooms with product.

- Do not stack product in front of motors or fans.
- Do not let ice build up in the fridge. Defrost regularly.

Remember: All opened food packages should be stored on clean and sanitised surfaces in the cold storage area. They must be protected against contamination by covering with plastic wrap or foil, or by placing the contents in food grade containers with fitted lids. All items should be properly labelled and dated.

Thermometers

A thermometer must be used to determine the temperature of refrigerated storage units. The temperatures are recorded twice daily on the record sheet from the Food Safety Program.

If Problems Occur

The following may assist with cold storage problems:

- If the temperature of the refrigeration unit is above 5°C, check surface temperature of potentially hazardous foods. Throw away high risk food that has been between 5°C and 60°C for more than four hours. Adjust the temperature control and check temperature again within one hour.
- Call a refrigeration mechanic if the refrigeration unit or coolroom can't keep food at 5°C or colder.
- Reduce product levels will help to achieve better temperature control.
- Ensure staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to handle and store products correctly.
- Have a refrigeration mechanic check and service the refrigerators and/or cool rooms regularly.

For more information about cold storage in a food business please contact your Environmental Health Officer at the Health Services Branch on 9658 8831 / 8815.



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