

## **15A NCAC 18A .2807 FOOD PREPARATION**

(a) In child care centers, the preparation of food shall take place only in the kitchen or space equipped as required in Rule .2810 of this Section.

(b) Employees engaged in food preparation in the kitchen shall wear clean clothes and hair restraints, as set out in Part 2-402.11 of the Food Code incorporated by reference at 15A NCAC 18A .2650 as amended by 15A NCAC 18A .2652, and shall keep their fingernails trimmed. Hair spray is not a hair restraint for the purpose of this Rule. Employees engaged in food preparation who are wearing nail polish or artificial nails on their fingers shall wear intact gloves during food preparation.

(c) Food shall be prepared using utensils, deli paper, or disposable gloves to prevent exposed, ready-to-eat-food from coming into direct contact with an employee's bare hands or exposed skin. Food shall be prepared on food-contact surfaces that have been cleaned, rinsed, and sanitized prior to use. Food-contact surfaces and utensils that are exposed to bacterial, viral, fungal, or hazard contaminants during use shall be made clean, free from hazards, and sanitized before continued use.

(d) Raw fruits and raw vegetables shall be washed with potable water before being cooked or served.

(e) Potentially hazardous foods requiring cooking shall be cooked to heat all parts of the food to a temperature of at least 145 degrees Fahrenheit, except that:

- (1) poultry, poultry stuffings, stuffed meats and stuffings containing meat shall be cooked to heat all parts of the food to at least 165 degrees Fahrenheit with no interruption of the cooking process;
- (2) ground beef, other ground or comminuted meat or fish, and eggs pooled and cooked for hot storage shall be cooked to an internal temperature of at least 155 degrees Fahrenheit with no interruption in the cooking process; and
- (3) roast beef shall be cooked to an internal temperature of at least 130 degrees Fahrenheit with no interruption in the cooking process.

(f) Potentially hazardous foods that require cooking prior to consumption and cooked in a microwave oven shall be heated to an internal temperature of at least 165 degrees Fahrenheit.

(g) Potentially hazardous foods that have been cooked and then refrigerated, if served above 45 degrees Fahrenheit, shall be reheated to an internal temperature of 165 degrees Fahrenheit or higher before being served or before being placed in a hot food storage unit except that commercially packaged food in intact packages may initially be reheated to 135 degrees Fahrenheit. Hot storage equipment shall not be used for reheating of potentially hazardous foods. Potentially hazardous foods reheated in a microwave oven shall be heated to an internal temperature of at least 165 degrees Fahrenheit.

(h) Metal stem-type, thin probe, numerically scaled indicating product thermometers, accurate to  $\pm 3$  degrees Fahrenheit shall be used to ensure the maintenance of the internal cooking temperatures of all potentially hazardous foods required under this Rule.

(i) Potentially hazardous foods that are frozen shall be thawed using one of the following methods:

- (1) in refrigerated units at a temperature not to exceed 45 degrees Fahrenheit;
- (2) submerged under potable water of a temperature of 70 degrees Fahrenheit or below, with sufficient water velocity to agitate and float off loose food particles into the overflow;
- (3) in a microwave oven only when the food will be immediately transferred to conventional cooking equipment as part of a continuous cooking process or when the entire, uninterrupted cooking process takes place in the microwave oven; or
- (4) as part of the uninterrupted cooking process.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 110-91;  
Eff. July 1, 1991;  
Amended Eff. January 1, 2006; February 1, 1995; October 1, 1993;  
Readopted Eff. July 1, 2023.*