

**15A NCAC 18A .3626 REFRIGERATION: THAWING: AND PREPARATION OF FOOD**

- (a) All potentially hazardous foods requiring refrigeration shall be kept at or below 45 degrees F (7 degrees C), except when being prepared or served in resident camps. An air temperature thermometer accurate to 2 degrees F (1 degree C) shall be provided in all refrigerators.
- (b) Refrigeration and freezer space shall be provided to accommodate the volume of food handled.
- (c) Potentially hazardous foods shall be thawed:
- (1) in refrigerated units at a temperature not to exceed 45 degrees F (7 degrees C);
  - (2) under potable running water of a temperature of 70 degrees F (21 degrees C), or below, with sufficient water velocity to agitate and float off loose food particles into the overflow;
  - (3) as a part of the conventional cooking process; or
  - (4) 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.
- (d) Anyone preparing food shall have used anti-bacterial or liquid soap, immediately prior to food preparation or shall use clean, plastic disposable gloves or sanitized utensils during food preparation. This requirement is in addition to all handwashing requirements in this Section. Food shall be prepared with the least possible manual contact, with utensils and preparation surfaces that have been cleaned and rinsed prior to use. Preparation surfaces that come in contact with potentially hazardous foods shall be sanitized as provided in Rule .3629 of this Section. 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 F (63 degrees C) except as follows:
- (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 F (74 degrees C) with no interruption of the cooking process;
  - (2) pork and any food containing pork shall be cooked to heat all parts of the food to at least 150 degrees F (66 degrees C);
  - (3) ground meat food products shall be cooked to an internal temperature of at least 155 degrees F (68 degrees C);
  - (4) roast beef shall be cooked to an internal temperature of 130 degrees F (54 degrees C); and
  - (5) beef steak shall be cooked to a temperature of 130 degrees F (54 degrees C) unless otherwise ordered by the immediate consumer.
- (f) Liquid, or uncooked frozen, dry eggs and egg products shall be used only for cooking and baking purposes. This Paragraph does not apply to pasteurized products.
- (g) Potentially hazardous foods that have been cooked and then refrigerated shall be reheated to 165 degrees F (74 degrees C) or higher throughout before being served or before being placed in a hot food storage facility except that, food in intact packages from food manufacturing plants may initially be reheated to 135 degrees F (57 degrees C). Reheating time shall not exceed two hours.
- (h) All potentially hazardous foods, except roast beef, shall be stored at temperatures of 135 degrees F (57 degrees C) or above; or 45 degrees F (7 degrees C) or below except during necessary periods of preparation and serving. Roast beef shall be stored at a temperature of at least 130 degrees F (54 degrees C) or above; or 45 degrees F (7 degrees C) or below.
- (i) Time only, rather than the temperature requirements set forth in Paragraph (h) of this Rule, may be used as the public health control for a working supply of potentially hazardous food before cooking, or for ready-to-eat potentially hazardous food that is displayed or held for service for immediate consumption if:
- (1) the food is 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;
  - (2) the food is cooked and served, served if ready-to-eat, or discarded, within four hours from the point in time when the food is removed from required temperature control;
  - (3) food in unmarked containers or packages or marked to exceed the four hour limit in Subparagraph (1) of this Paragraph, is discarded; and
  - (4) written procedures approved by the Department, as being in accordance with the rules in this Section, are maintained in the resident camp for the handling of food from the time of completion of the cooking process or when the food is otherwise removed from required temperature control. These procedures shall be made available to the Department upon request.

(j) Time only, rather than temperature requirements as set forth in Paragraph (h) of this Rule, may be used as the public health control for a working supply of potentially hazardous food before cooking, or for ready-to-eat potentially hazardous food that is displayed or held for staff or camper take-out, if:

- (1) the food is marked or otherwise identified to indicate the time that is two hours past the point in time when the food is removed from temperature control;
- (2) the food is cooked and served, served if ready-to-eat, or discarded, within two hours from the point in time when the food is removed from required temperature control;
- (3) food in unmarked containers or packages or marked to exceed the two hour limit in Subparagraph (1) of this Paragraph, is discarded; and
- (4) written procedures approved by the Department, as being in accordance with the Rules in this Section, are maintained in the resident camp for the handling of food from the time of completion of the cooking process or when the food was otherwise removed from required temperature control. These procedures shall be made available to the Department upon request.

(k) A resident camp wishing to move foods controlled under Rule .3626(j) to Rule .3626(i) for immediate consumption on the premises, shall have their written procedures for the handling of the food from the time of completion of the cooking process or when the food was otherwise removed from required temperature control, approved by the Department, as being in accordance with the rules in this Section, and shall maintain those approved procedures in the resident camp. These procedures shall be made available to the Department upon request.

(l) In a resident camp that serves a highly susceptible population, time only, rather than temperature, may not be used as the public health control for raw eggs.

(m) All potentially hazardous food that is transported must be maintained at temperatures as noted in Paragraph (h) of this Rule.

(n) A metal stem-type food thermometer accurate to 2 degrees F (1 degree C) shall be available to check potentially hazardous food temperatures.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-235; 130A-248;*

*Eff. October 1, 2007;*

*Pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A, rule is necessary without substantive public interest Eff. July 20, 2019.*