

Guidelines for Final Cooking Temperatures of Potentially Hazardous Foods

Introduction

Potentially hazardous foods, both raw and ready-to-eat, may contain harmful microorganisms, such as bacteria, viruses, or parasites. Adequate cooking will destroy these harmful microorganisms and is an important step in food borne illness prevention.

Time-Temperature Relationship

Both time and temperature are necessary to kill harmful bacteria, viruses, and parasites which may have contaminated food.

Guidelines for Final Cooking Temperatures

The table below provides the minimum recommended time-temperature needed to destroy harmful microorganisms in food that is cooked by conventional methods (i.e., heat sources other than a microwave) and also microwave cooking.

Food Product	Minimum Internal Temperature (FE) – Conventional Cooking	Minimum Internal Temperature (FE)– Microwave Cooking	Minimum Time
Poultry	165	190	0 seconds
Stuffed Meats	165	190	0 seconds
Ground beef, Ground pork, Sausage	155 157	180 182	15 seconds 3 seconds
Pork, ham, and bacon	155	180	0 seconds
All other potentially hazardous foods, including eggs, fish, beans, rice, whole meat and seafood	145	170	0 seconds
Beef roast (rare)	140	--	12 minutes
Beef roast (rare)	130	--	121 minutes

**Note: The minimum temperature must be reached, then maintained for the minimum amount of time.

Microwave Cooking

Microwave cooking requires additional steps to ensure food is evenly and thoroughly cooked. Follow these simple steps:

- ◆ Heat food 25 degrees F higher than conventional cooking (refer to table above).
- ◆ Rotate and stir food during cooking.
- ◆ Cover the food product to retain surface moisture.
- ◆ Allow food product to stand covered for at least 2 minutes after cooking to obtain an even temperature.

Additional Safe Food Handling Tips

Heat will not destroy:

- toxins produced by bacteria
- bacterial spores which can later produce harmful numbers of bacteria.

It is, therefore, important to maintain the food product:

- at 41 degrees F or colder, or
- at 135 degrees F or hotter, and
- protect from possible contamination by unclean hands, utensils, or overhead drippage.

Reheating Foods

If you reheat potentially hazardous foods that you have prepared and then cooled down, you must reach a minimum internal temperature of 165EF before storing it at 135EF. (If reheating in a microwave, you must reach a minimum internal

For More Information

For more information on food protection, please contact the Environmental Health Division at (530) 621-5300 in Placerville or (530) 573-3450 in South Lake Tahoe.

EL DORADO COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT • ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

2850 Fairlane Court, Building C, Placerville • (530) 621-5300

3368 Lake Tahoe Blvd., Ste #303, So. Lake Tahoe, CA 96150 • (530) 573-3450