Introduction

Food Service has established cooling and freezing systems in order to prevent growth of bacteria in food and meet Statutory and Regulatory requirements. Cooling and Freezing Controls apply to all foods intended for cooling or freezing in the facility.

Procedure

Food Service recognises that bacteria can grow in foods that are cooled too slowly and applies controls to reduce this risk. Any food that has not been cooled down safely is thrown away.

Cooling/Chilling Hot Foods

It is Food Service Policy that cooked food that is not intended for immediate service is cooled down as quickly as possible and then placed it in the refrigerator within 2 hours.

Larger joints and whole birds a normally take a longer initial cooling period therefore are prioritise for blast cooling and if necessary divided into portions first.

Staff are trained not to put hot foods into the fridge as this may raise the temperature of the fridge and cause condensation.

Food is protected from dirt and bacteria at all times while cooling and chilling with special attention given to the prevention of cross-contamination from uncooked foods and staff. Warm cooked food represents a high risk because bacteria can grow rapidly on warm foods.

Blast Chilling

Food Service uses a blast chiller to cool hot foods rapidly as this is the fastest way of cooling the food. The Blast Chilling Units is capable of reducing food from a +70°C to +3°C or below, in a period not exceeding 90 minutes when loaded to capacity.
On reaching required food temperature the unit shall switch automatically to “hold” mode at or below +3°C. Once products have reached this temperature they are transferred to the cooked food refrigerator.

**Blast Freezing**

Food Service uses a blast freezer to cool hot foods rapidly until frozen as this is the fastest way of cooling the food. The Blast Freezing Unit is capable of reducing food from at least +70°C to -18°C or below, in a period not exceeding four hours when loaded to capacity.

On reaching required food temperature, the unit switches automatically to “hold” mode at -18°C. Once products have reached this temperature they are transferred to the cooked food freezer.

When required to be frozen, fresh food is placed in the freezer as soon as it has been prepared. Freezing is quicker when food is divided into smaller portions. Food Service normally puts food into labelled (with the type of food and the date of freezing) freezer bags before freezing. The smaller portions will freeze more quickly reducing the risk of food poisoning bacteria growing. The centre of larger portions takes longer to freeze, allowing food poisoning bacteria to grow. Freezer bags reduce the risk of cross-contamination.

**Other Cooling Aids used as required**

Food can be divided food into smaller portions which cool down more quickly.

Food can be placed pans of cold water. The cold water makes the food cool more quickly.

Food is stirred with a clean utensil while cooling down so that it cools evenly.
Cooling and Freezing

Hot food can moved to a colder area as food cools more quickly in a colder place.

Corrective Actions when having problems in Chilling Food

The Food Service Manager is informed immediately. The Food Service Manager reviews the cooling methods and changes the method of cooling, retrains staff and/or increases supervision if necessary.

The Food Service Manager may reduce food batch sizes as large quantities of food are more difficult to cool down quickly.

Cooling Rice

Rice represents a different risk in food service as uncooked rice contains bacteria like Bacillus cereus that form a spore that can survive the cooking process. This means the handling of cooked rice is very important and this is emphasised to all staff.

When the rice is cooked it is kept hot until serving or chilled down as quickly as possible (within 1 hour) and then kept refrigerated at 1 – 5 °C. This is because when the rice is cooked, the spores can survive and if the cooked rice is left standing at room temperature, the spore germinate and grow. These bacteria will multiply and may produce toxins which are not destroyed by reheating. The toxins cause vomiting or diarrhoea.

Large batches of rice are divided into smaller portions to enable more rapid cooling. If the rice is still not cooling quickly enough then clean cold water is added for 1 minute then drained and the rice refrigerated.

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<th>Summary of Changes made from previous revision</th>
<th>Requested By</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Update to meet the requirements of General Food Hygiene Regulations 2006</td>
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<td>Director</td>
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