

HACCP-Based Education Module

Date Marking Ready-to-Eat (RTE), Potentially Hazardous Food(PHF)

Definition: To ensure appropriate rotation of ready-to-eat food to prevent or reduce the risk of foodborne illness.

Process for Date Marking RTE / PHF:

1. The best practice for a date marking system would be to include a label with the product name, the date, the time it is prepared or opened and a “use by” date. Examples of how to indicate when the food is prepared or opened include:
 - Labeling food with a calendar date, such as “cut cantaloupe, 5/16/08, 8:00 a.m. use by 5/23/08,”
2. Follow State or local health department requirements.
3. Label all ready-to-eat, potentially hazardous foods that are prepared on-site and are held.
4. Label any processed, ready-to-eat, potentially hazardous foods when opened, if they are to be held.
5. Refrigerate all ready-to-eat, potentially hazardous foods at 41 °F or below.
6. Serve or discard refrigerated, ready-to-eat, potentially hazardous foods within 7 days.
7. Foods to be frozen - Indicate with a separate label the date prepared, the date frozen, and the date thawed of any refrigerated, ready-to-eat, potentially hazardous foods.
8. Calculate the 7-day time period by counting only the days that the food is under refrigeration. For example:
 - On Monday, 8/1/08, lasagna is cooked, properly cooled, and refrigerated with a label that reads, “Lasagna, Cooked, 8/1/08.”
 - On Tuesday, 8/2/08, the lasagna is frozen with a second label that reads, “Frozen, 8/2/08.” Two labels now appear on the lasagna. Since the lasagna was held under refrigeration from Monday, 8/1/08 – Tuesday, 8/2/08, only 1 day is counted towards the 7-day time period.
 - On Tuesday 8/16/05 the lasagna is pulled out of the freezer. A third label is placed on the lasagna that reads, “Thawed, 8/16/05.” All three labels now appear on the lasagna. The lasagna must be served or discarded within 6 days.

MONITORING:

A designated employee will check refrigerators daily to verify that foods are date marked and that foods exceeding the 7-day time period are not being used or stored.

CORRECTIVE ACTION:

1. Retrain any foodservice employee found not following these procedures.
2. Foods that are not date marked or that exceed the 7-day time period will be discarded.