

The growth of pathogenic bacteria to dangerous levels can result when potentially hazardous foods are held at refrigerated temperatures for extended periods. To monitor and limit refrigeration time, refrigerated ready-to-eat potentially hazardous foods must be date marked to ensure that the food is either consumed or discarded within seven days.

Food must be date marked if it is:

- Prepared on-site or commercially processed, and
- Refrigerated, and
- Potentially hazardous, and
- Ready-to-eat, and
- Held for more than 24 hours

Mark the food with the date by which it must be consumed or discarded.

Allow seven days if held at 41° F or below. The day the food was prepared, or the day commercial processed food was opened, counts as day one.

When food is removed from the freezer, mark it with a consume-by date that is seven days minus the length of time food was refrigerated before it was frozen.

