

Food Safety Fact Sheet

Reheat Foods Quickly and Safely

When food is held, cooled, and reheated in a food establishment, there is an increased risk from contamination caused by personnel, equipment, procedures, or other factors. If food is held at improper temperatures for enough time, pathogens can multiply to dangerous numbers. Proper reheating provides a major degree of assurance that pathogens will be eliminated. It is especially effective in reducing the numbers of *Clostridium perfringens* that may grow in foods that were improperly cooled.

Requirements for reheating food for hot holding¹:

- Reheat previously cooled foods to an internal temperature of 165°F or above
- Reheat commercially processed cooked foods the first time to 135°F or above (Examples: Canned vegetables, frozen fully cooked chicken, hot dogs, and frozen pizza)
- Rapidly reheat the food from 41°F to the appropriate temperature (see above) within two hours
- If reheating exceeds two hours, discard the food
- After reaching 165°F, the food must be held at 135°F or above

¹ Foods heated to order for immediate service may be heated to any temperature

Reheating Methods:

- Direct heat (stove top) is best. Steam cookers, ovens, and microwaves² may be used if reheating achieves the appropriate temperature (see above) within two hours
- Stir foods frequently to distribute the heat
- Measure the internal temperature with a thermometer
- Reheating in steam tables and crock pots is unsafe and not recommended

² Foods must sit covered for two minutes after reheating in the microwave

