



## **Florida Department of Health Bureau of Environmental Health Food Safety and Sanitation Program**

### **Time as a Public Health Control Procedures**

Improper time/temperature control is a leading cause of foodborne illness. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 3,000 people die each year in the United States due to foodborne illness and 48 million more become ill. Time/Temperature control is an important factor in preventing foodborne illness.

When Time/Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) foods are removed from heat or refrigeration and allowed to remain at room temperature, disease-causing organisms (pathogens) multiply more rapidly. In addition to the threat present from the pathogens themselves, some pathogens also produce poisons (toxins) as they grow. These toxins cannot be removed from the food once they are present.

Studies have shown that it takes a while for TCS foods to warm up or cool down. It also takes a period of time for pathogens to be able to multiply at a fast rate. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has established guidelines to safely hold TCS foods at room temperature for a short period of time. Holding TCS foods at room temperature (or any less than required temperature) is known as using “time only” (instead of time and temperature) to control the growth of pathogens in the food - or “Time as a Public Health Control”.

There are two different time control options – 4 hours or 6 hours. TCS foods that begin cold and remain cooler may be held at room temperature longer.

#### **Main Requirements When Using “Time Only” as a Public Health Control:**

- ◆ Written procedures explaining your food service operation must be available at all times.
- ◆ If foods are cooked, cooled and kept cold before being held using time as a public health control, written procedures must be available for each process. Temperatures must be monitored and recorded for the cooking, cooling and cold holding processes to ensure the foods reach the proper temperature within the required amount of time and are held at the proper temperature.
- ◆ The foods must be marked or identified to indicate when time control begins and when the time limit expires (4 hours or 6 hours).
- ◆ Foods that are not marked or identified as required must be discarded immediately.
- ◆ Foods must be discarded when they have reached the time limit (4 hours or 6 hours).
- ◆ Once food has been held using time as a public health control, it cannot go back to being held using temperature control regardless of the temperature of the food.

#### **Specific Requirements Based Upon the Time Option Chosen:**

##### **4-Hour Option**

- ◆ The food must begin at 41°F or below; or 135°F or above.

##### **6-Hour Option**

- ◆ The food must begin at 41°F or below.
- ◆ The food may not rise above 70°F while held using time as a public health control.
- ◆ Temperatures of the food must be taken periodically to ensure the food does not rise above 70°F OR the food must be held in equipment that has an ambient air temperature cold enough to maintain the food at 70°F or below.
- ◆ Food that rises above 70°F must be discarded immediately.

Establishments serving a highly susceptible population, such as immunocompromised individuals, young children and the elderly, may not use time as a public health control for raw shell eggs.



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## Time as a Public Health Control Written Procedures

(For using Time control only to hold Time/Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) Foods)

Facility Name		Permit Number		
Owner (Corporation, Partnership, Individual, etc.)		Date		
		Month	Day	Year
Street Address of Business				
City	State	Zip Code		
Type of Facility: _____				

**Important Note:** Improper time/temperature control is a leading cause of foodborne illness. Time/Temperature Control is an important factor in preventing foodborne illness.

I am completing this written procedure because I desire to utilize time only as a public health control to hold working supplies of Time/Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) food(s) in my Florida Department of Health (DOH) regulated food service facility.

The following is a description of the standard procedures and policies I will use to operate my business in order to protect the health and safety of the public.

<b>RULES AND REGULATIONS</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	I understand the life of all food(s) held utilizing only Time as a Public Health Control is limited to 4 hours (if the food is removed from temperature control at 41°F or below; or 135°F or above) – <b>OR</b> – 6 hours (if the food is removed from temperature control at 41°F or below and the food temperature may not exceed 70°F while out of temperature control).
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	I understand once only Time as a Public Health Control has begun, the food(s) may not be returned to temperature control.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	I understand food(s) must be marked or identified to indicate the time that is 4 or 6 hours past the point in time when the food is removed from temperature control.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	I understand if foods are cooked, cooled and cold held prior to the use of time only as a public health control, I must have written procedures and monitoring documentation available to ensure foods are properly cooked, cooled and cold held.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	I understand food(s) must be cooked and served, served if ready-to-eat, or discarded within the specified time frame (4 hours or 6 hours) from the point in time when the food(s) are removed from temperature control.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	I understand food(s) which are not marked, exceed 70°F during the 6-hour period, or are marked to exceed the specified time frame (4 hours or 6 hours) must be discarded.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	I understand these written procedures and any required monitoring documentation must be available at all times in the establishment and made available for review upon request.



<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
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<b>REQUIREMENT</b>
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Indicate the manner in which the 4-hour or 6-hour time limit will be marked for each identified food item or group of food items (i.e. temperature log, holding chart, cook line time board, pan marked with grease pencil).

<b>PROPOSED PROCEDURE</b>
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<input type="checkbox"/> Time marked on the food tray/container
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<input type="checkbox"/> Time marked on a log, chart or board
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<input type="checkbox"/> Specific timeframe(s) used (i.e. 10AM to 2PM, 2PM to 6PM, and 6PM to 10PM). Indicate timeframe(s), location(s) and food item(s):
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<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
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<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
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<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
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<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
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<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
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<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
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**COMPLETED BY**

I understand that I must operate my business according to these procedures each day the establishment is in operation using Time as a Public Health Control.

Name (please print)	Title (please print)
Signature	Date

