

Receiving Criteria

Temperature

Use thermometers to check food temperatures during receiving. The following examples explain how to check the temperatures of various types of food.

Checking the Temperature of Various Types of Food



Meat, poultry, and fish Insert the thermometer stem or probe directly into the thickest part of the food. The center is usually the thickest part.



ROP food (MAP, vacuum-packed, and sous vide food) Insert the thermometer stem or probe between two packages. If the package allows, fold it around the thermometer stem or probe. Be careful **NOT** to puncture the package.



Other packaged food Open the package and insert the thermometer stem or probe into the food. The sensing area must be fully immersed in the food. The stem or probe must **NOT** touch the package.



Deliveries should also meet the following temperature criteria.

Cold food Receive cold TCS food, such as the fish in the photo at left, at 41°F (5°C) or lower, unless otherwise specified.

Live shellfish Receive oysters, mussels, clams, and scallops at an air temperature of 45°F (7°C) and an internal temperature no greater than 50°F (10°C). Once received, the shellfish must be cooled to 41°F (5°C) or lower in four hours.

Shucked shellfish Receive at 45°F (7°C) or lower. Cool the shellfish to 41°F (5°C) or lower in four hours.

Milk Receive at 45°F (7°C) or lower. Cool the milk to 41°F (5°C) or lower in four hours.

Shell eggs Receive at an air temperature of 45°F (7°C) or lower.

Hot food Receive hot TCS food at 135°F (57°C) or higher.

Frozen food Frozen food should be frozen solid when received.

Reject frozen food for the following reasons:

- Fluids or water stains appear in case bottoms or on packaging.
- There are ice crystals or frozen liquids on the food or the packaging. This may be evidence of thawing and refreezing, which shows the food has been time-temperature abused. The food in the photo at left shows evidence of thawing and refreezing.



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Packaging

Both food items and nonfood items such as single-use cups, utensils, and napkins, must be packaged correctly when you receive them. Items should be delivered in their original packaging with a manufacturer's label. The packaging should be intact, clean, and protect food and food-contact surfaces from contamination. Reject food and nonfood items if packaging has any of the following problems.



Damage Reject items with tears, holes, or punctures in their packaging. Likewise, reject cans with labels that are not intact or have bulging or swollen ends, rust, or dents. All food packaged in a reduced-oxygen environment, such as vacuum-packed meat, must be rejected if the packaging is bloated or leaking. Items with broken cartons or seals, or items with dirty and discolored packaging should also be rejected. Do **NOT** accept cases or packages that appear to have been tampered with.

Liquid Reject items with leaks, dampness, or water stains (which means the item was wet at some point), as shown in the photo at left.

Pests Reject items with signs of pests or pest damage.

Dates Food items must be correctly labeled. Do **NOT** accept food that is missing use-by or expiration dates from the manufacturer. Reject items that have passed their use-by or expiration dates. Some operations label food items with the date the item was received to help with stock rotation during storage.

Documents

Food items must be delivered with the correct documents. For example, shellfish must be received with shellstock identification tags. These tags indicate when and where the shellfish were harvested. They must be kept on file for 90 days from the date the last shellfish was used from its delivery container.

Fish that will be eaten raw or partially cooked must also be received with the correct documentation. These documents must indicate the fish was correctly frozen before you received it. Keep these documents for 90 days from the sale of the fish. If the fish was farm raised, it must have documentation that states the fish was raised to FDA standards. These documents must also be kept for 90 days from the sale of the fish.

Food Quality

Poor food quality can be a sign that the food has been time-temperature abused and, therefore, may be unsafe. Work with your suppliers to define specific safety and quality criteria for the food items you typically receive. Reject food if it has any of the following problems.

Appearance Reject food that is moldy or has an abnormal color. Food that is moist when it should be dry, such as salami, should also be rejected. Do not accept any food item that shows signs of pests or pest damage.

Texture Reject meat, fish, or poultry that is slimy, sticky, or dry. Also reject it if it has soft flesh that leaves an imprint when you touch it.

Odor Reject food with an abnormal or unpleasant odor.

In addition to the guidelines above, you should always reject any item that does not meet your company's standards for quality.