



FOOD STANDARDS

From the Turks & Caicos Islands Environmental Health Department



What You Need to Know

In 2012 the Turks & Caicos Islands experienced an outbreak of the Norovirus. Foodborne illness can affect anyone at anytime and some are more at risk for developing foodborne illness than others. Pregnant women, young children, older adults and those with weak immune systems are most susceptible. Safe steps in food handling, cooking and storage are essential in preventing foodborne illness. You can't see, smell or taste harmful bacteria that may cause illness. In every step of food preparation, follow the guidelines to keep food safe.

Grading

The grading of food establishments is based on a system of scoring. A food establishment that earns a score of at least:

- a) 90 % shall receive a grade A
- b) 80 % and less than 90 % shall receive a grade B
- c) 70 % and less than 80 % shall receive a grade of C
- d) Closure notice will be given for food establishments receiving a score of less than 70 %

Dry Storage

- To prevent contamination from liquids, dust, insects and rodents, store food at least 6 inches above the floor.
- Allow for a 2-foot ceiling and 18-inch outside wall clearance to protect foods from higher temperatures.
- Store all cleaning and chemical products on shelves below dry goods (as well as utensils).
- Increase the shelf life of bulk products - such as flour, sugar, rice and grains - by transferring them from their original packaging into air-tight containers with proper labels.
- Store food in food grade containers that lock out moisture with easy Snap-on lids.
- Clearly label all containers including the delivery date and best by date.
- Toss out canned goods that are too dented to stack, bulging at the ends, punctured, or have leakage stains.
- Adhere to special storage instructions on packaging, such as "store in a cool, dry place" or "refrigerate after opening."
- Maintain a room's temperature between 50°F and 70°F.
- Use shelving units to maintain a clean and organized work area decrease the amount of time employees need to locate items during the day.
- Set up a regular cleaning and maintenance schedule for shelves and food surfaces.



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FOOD STANDARDS ■ ■ ■

Cold Storage—Refrigeration

- Maintain proper temperatures to prevent cross-contamination between raw and prepared food.
- Ensure food is thawed, cooled and handled properly cold storage guidelines (see safe defrosting methods).
- Refrigeration - Place items on shelves to allow for proper airflow and circulation; do not overload units or block vent.
- Properly wrap foods and label each with the date prepared or received.
- Store uncooked meat, fish and poultry on bottom shelves to avoid juices from leaking on other items.
- Always refrigerate perishable foods within 2 hours.
- Keep all prepared foods in sealed containers; cover with aluminum foil, plastic wrap or a tight-fitting lid.
- Follow the **FIFO** inventory management rule: **first in, first out**.
- Discard food after seven calendar days, and regularly check for and toss spoiled foods.
- Ensure your unit has a working refrigerator thermometer that is accurate to within 2°F.
- Eliminate bacterial hazards by maintaining stable and safe internal temperatures at or below 38°- 40°F.
- Regularly monitor and log internal equipment temperatures.
- Maintain cleanliness by wiping down shelves and mopping walk-in cooler floors on a routine basis.
- Organize similar products together such as dairy with other dairy products, produce with other produce, etc. so it's easier for your staff to understand. This helps them to remember where items are stored, creating a more

Cold Storage—Freezer

- Maintain proper air flow and circulation: do not overload unit or block vents.
- Use free-standing freezers for long-term storage (months) and mounted freezers for short-term storage (days or weeks).
- Properly package and cover food to maintain quality and prevent freezer burn.
- Follow the FIFO stock rotation rule: first in, first out.
- Ensure your unit has a visible, working thermometer that is accurate to within 2°F.
- Keep frozen foods solid with a unit temperature of 0°F or below to maintain quality.
- Regularly monitor and log internal equipment temperatures.
- Do not use freezers for cooling foods.
- Defrost units periodically and store frozen food in a separate freezer during the defrosting process.
- Make cleanliness a priority by wiping down shelves on a routine basis.



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Safe Defrosting Methods

As soon as raw or cooked meat, poultry or egg products begin to thaw and become warmer than 40° F, bacteria that may have been present before freezing can begin to multiply.

Perishable foods should never be thawed on the counter or in hot water and must not be left at room temperature for more than 2 hours. There are safe ways to thaw food: in the refrigerator, in cold water, and in the microwave.

Refrigerator Thawing

- Planning ahead is the key because large meats requires at least 24 hours for every 5 pounds.
- Small amounts of frozen food — such as a pound of ground meat or boneless chicken breasts — require a full day to thaw
- Food will take longer to thaw in a refrigerator set at 35 °F than one set at 40 °F.
- After thawing in the refrigerator, items such as ground meat, stew meat, poultry and seafood, should remain safe and good quality for an additional day or two before cooking.
- Red meat cuts (such as beef, pork or lamb roasts, chops and steaks) should remain safe and good quality 3 to 5 days.

Cold Water Thawing

- This method is faster than refrigerator thawing but requires more attention.
- The food must be in a leak-proof package or plastic bag. If the bag leaks, bacteria from the air or surrounding environment could be introduced into the food. Also, the meat tissue may absorb water, resulting in a watery product.
- The bag should be submerged in cold tap water, changing the water every 30 minutes so it continues to thaw.
- Small packages of meat, poultry or seafood — about a pound — may thaw in 1 hour or less.

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Microwave Thawing

- After thawing in the microwave, always cook immediately, whether microwave cooking, by conventional oven, or grilling.
- Holding partially cooked food is not recommended because any bacteria present wouldn't have been destroyed and the food may have reached optimal temperatures for bacteria to grow.
- Foods thawed in the microwave should be cooked before refreezing.
- Also, never thaw foods in a garage, basement, car, dishwasher or plastic garbage bag; out on the kitchen counter, outdoors or on the porch. These methods can leave your foods unsafe to eat.

Cooking Without Thawing

- It is safe to cook foods from the frozen state.
- The cooking will take approximately 50% longer than the recommended time for fully thawed or fresh meat and poultry.

Remember: Even though the center of the package may still be frozen as it thaws on the counter, the outer layer of the food could be in the "Danger Zone," between 40 and 140 °F — temperatures where bacteria multiply rapidly.

FOOD STANDARDS

Hot Storage

Safe temperatures and careful food handling are critical to destroy potential contaminants and prevent the spread of bacteria. Follow these hot storage tips to keep guests healthy and happy.

- Always clean holding units prior to use.
- Pre-heat holding units before storing food to maintain a consistent food temperature.
- Keep hot foods hot – maintain temperatures at or above 140°F and reheat food to 165°F before serving.
- Monitor internal food temperatures with a food thermometer, accurate to within 3°F.
- Ensure food is cooked to internal temperatures of at least 160 °F before storing in holding units, such as steam table pans.
- Do not use hot holding units to reheat or cook food.
- Stir food-filled chafing dishes and food pans frequently to prevent burning and to keep temperatures uniform.
- Place utensils in the food during meal service to prevent contamination.
- Transport hot items in food-safe carriers.
- Begin meal service within 30 minutes of putting food on display.
- Use properly installed sneeze guards to protect food display areas from contamination.

The Danger Zone

When potentially hazardous foods are exposed to warm temperatures for more than two hours, they develop bacterial microbes that cause food poisoning.

The Danger Zone ranges between 40°F and 140°F. Avoid harmful bacterial growth and protect customers from illness by closely monitoring the temperature for your refrigerated units.

FOOD STANDARDS

During Storage— *Preventing Cross-Contamination or Food Borne Illnesses*

- Build a system for storing, using and throwing out items to maintain food safety in any commercial kitchen. Properly label, organize and stock ingredients and prep work in order to reduce harmful bacteria and keep food fresh for as long as possible.
- Prepare raw and cooked food in separate work spaces.
- Washing hands and exposed areas of the arms as often as necessary, such as before or after all food handling, or when changing tasks during food prep.
- Proper hand washing calls for 20 seconds in soap and warm water that is 110°F.
- Avoid preparing foods with bare hands; instead, use food safe gloves.
- Prevent bacterial growth by cooking foods until they are finished (never cook them partially).
- Store raw meat items, such as poultry, beef and seafood, below prepared foods to prevent juices from spilling into them.
- Ensure all foods are covered and stored in appropriate containers.
- Abide by “best before” dates and other food packaging guidelines, such as “store in a cool, dry place” or “refrigerate after opening”.
- Establish personal hygiene policies for employees, and post reminders to stress importance.
- Remember the “when in doubt, throw it out” principle: food inside containers that are damaged, improperly sealed, or otherwise questionable, has likely spoiled and should be tossed.

Food Temperature

- Use the appropriate thermometers on your equipment so that food remains outside the temperature danger zone (40°F to 140°F), where bacteria thrives and grows rapidly.
- Utilize kitchen thermometers to verify foods are cooked to minimum internal temperatures checking in at least two places to make certain even temperatures are throughout.
- Check temperatures for prepared foods like soups and stews a minimum of every two hours to ensure food is above 140°F.
- Hold hot foods in food warmers such as chafing dishes, soup warmers, steam tables, warming trays, and slow cookers.
- Store cold foods in cold holding units, such as refrigerated display cases or ice displays.

FOOD STANDARDS

Allergy Prevention

- With food allergies becoming a popular topic in the foodservice industry, establishments need to properly prepare for customers that have an allergy. One of the most important points is to store and prep ingredients separate from others to avoid cross-contact.
- Always keep allergen-free food in air-tight (color coded eg. purple is often the color of choice) storage containers to help your staff easily identify these ingredients.
- Shared workspace and cooking tools should not be used, but if you must, be sure to wash and sanitize all utensils and prep areas thoroughly.
- Label all equipment and supplies that will store allergen-free foods. This includes shelving, refrigerators, mixing bowls and other essentials. Most manufacturers are starting to offer purple color-coded supplies to make it easier to find.

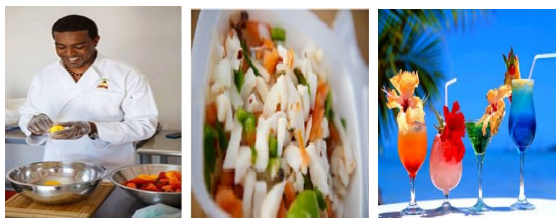
Cleaning And Sanitizing

Maintaining a clean commercial kitchen is a necessity for a foodservice establishment.

- Prevent bacterial growth in storage units by routinely cleaning and sanitizing shelves.
- Keep floors free of dirt and food spills.
- Hold regular internal inspections of all storage areas.
- Wash prep surfaces and tools frequently in hot, soapy water.
- Remove food and other contaminants from surfaces; then clean with an appropriate detergent and water solution of 110°F.
- After rinsing with hot water, use a sanitizing solution based on the manufacturer's directions to reduce the number of bacteria present.
- Keep all food at least 6 inches off the floor.



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What You Need to Know

Safe steps in food handling, cooking and storage are essential in preventing foodborne illness. You can't see, smell or taste harmful bacteria that may cause illness. In every step of food preparation, follow the guidelines to keep food safe.

Steps to Food Safety

CLEAN



SEPARATE



COOK



CHILL



1. CLEAN: Wash hands and surfaces often

Bacteria can be spread throughout the kitchen and get onto hands, cutting boards, utensils, counter tops and food.

To ensure that your hands and surfaces are clean, be sure to:

- Wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food and after using the bathroom, smoking, etc.
- Wash your cutting boards, dishes, utensils and counter tops with hot soapy water after preparing each food item and before you go on to the next food.
- Consider using paper towels to clean up kitchen surfaces. If you use cloth towels wash them often in the hot cycle of your washing machine.
- Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running tap water, including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten.
- Rub firm-skin fruits and vegetables under running tap water or scrub with a clean vegetable brush while rinsing with running tap water.
- With canned goods, remember to clean lids before opening.

2. SEPARATE: Separate raw meats from other foods

Cross-contamination can occur when bacteria are spread from one food product to another.

This is especially common when handling raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs.

The key is to keep these foods—and their juices—away from ready-to-eat foods.

To prevent cross-contamination, remember to:

- Separate raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs from other foods in your grocery shopping cart, grocery bags and in your refrigerator.
- Use one cutting board for fresh produce and a separate one for raw meat, poultry and seafood.
- Never place cooked food on a plate that previously held raw meat, poultry, seafood or eggs.
- Don't reuse marinades used on raw foods unless you bring them to a boil first.

FOOD STANDARDS ■ ■ ■

CLEANING MATERIALS

Know your detergents from your disinfectants:

Detergents include washing liquids. These items dissolve and disperse oil, grease and dirt.

Disinfectants include items such as bleach. These items are designed to kill germs. Use such items with caution as they may contain powerful chemicals.

Anti-bacterial Cleaners are a type of disinfectant. They are also designed to kill germs and often come in a spray bottle.



Surface should be cleaned with a detergent first to remove grease and dirt. Disinfectants and anti-bacterial cleaners can then be used to kill remaining germs.

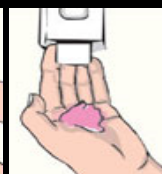
Always use separate cloths or sponges for different cleaning task. If possible use disposable cloths to minimize the risk of cross contamination. If you do use cloths more than once, ensure they are washed in very hot, soapy water and then disinfect thoroughly. Rinse thoroughly and allow to dry fully before use again.



WASH YOUR HANDS!



1. Wet your hands



2. Liquid Soap



3. Lather and scrub - 20 sec



4. Rinse - 10



5. Dry your hands



6. Turn off tap

DON'T FORGET TO WASH:

- Between your fingers
- Under your nails
- The top of your hands

Three Sink Dishwashing

Scrape
Food from utensils and pots

Wash
In clean, hot, soapy water

Rinse
In clean water at greater than 43°C (100°F)

Sanitize

- Use clean warm water greater than or equal to 24°C (75°F)
- Minimum 100 ppm chlorine bleach solution (2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) of household bleach to every 1 liter (4 cups) of water)
- Let soak for at least 45 seconds

Air Dry
On a corrosion resistant draining rack

FOOD STANDARDS ■ ■ ■

Color Coded Cutting Boards

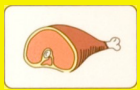
Reduce the risk of cross contamination during food prep



RAW MEAT



RAW FISH



COOKED MEAT



SALAD & FRUIT

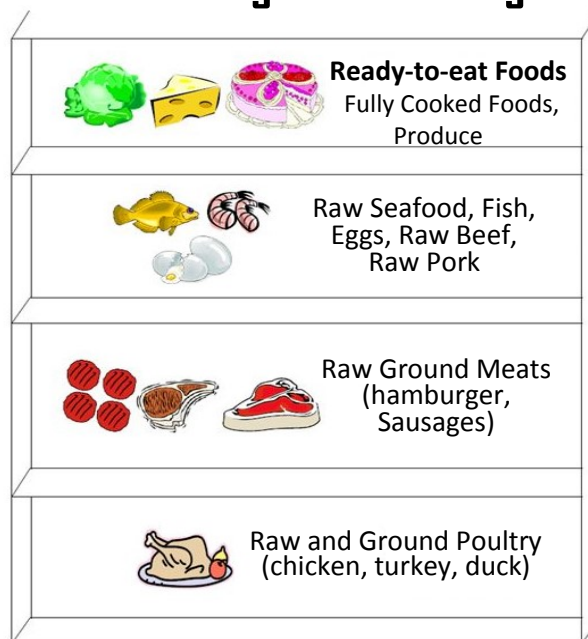


VEGETABLES



BAKERY & DAIRY

Safe Refrigerator Storage



FOOD STANDARDS ■ ■ ■

Steps to Food Safety

CLEAN



SEPARATE



COOK



CHILL



3. COOK: Cook to the right temperatures

Food is safely cooked when it reaches a high enough internal temperature to kill the harmful bacteria that cause illness.

To ensure that your foods are cooked safely, always:

Use a food thermometer to measure the internal temperature of cooked foods. Check the internal temperature in several places to make sure that the meat, poultry, seafood, eggs or dishes containing eggs are cooked to safe minimum internal temperatures.

- Cook ground meat or ground poultry until it reaches a safe internal temperature. Color is not a reliable indicator of doneness.
- Cook eggs until the yolk and white are firm. Only use recipes in which eggs are cooked or heated thoroughly.
- When cooking in a microwave oven, cover food, stir, and rotate for even cooking. If there is no turntable, rotate the dish by hand once or twice during cooking. Always allow standing time, which completes the cooking, before checking the internal temperature with a food thermometer. Food is done when it reaches the safe minimum internal temperature.
- Bring sauces, soups and gravy to a boil when reheating.

4. CHILL: Refrigerate foods promptly

Refrigerate foods quickly because cold temperatures slow the growth of harmful bacteria. Do not over-stuff the refrigerator. Cold air must circulate to help keep food safe.

Keeping a constant refrigerator temperature of 40°F or below is one of the most effective ways to reduce the risk of foodborne illness. Use an appliance thermometer to be sure the temperature is consistently 40°F or below and the freezer temperature is 0°F or below.

To chill foods properly:

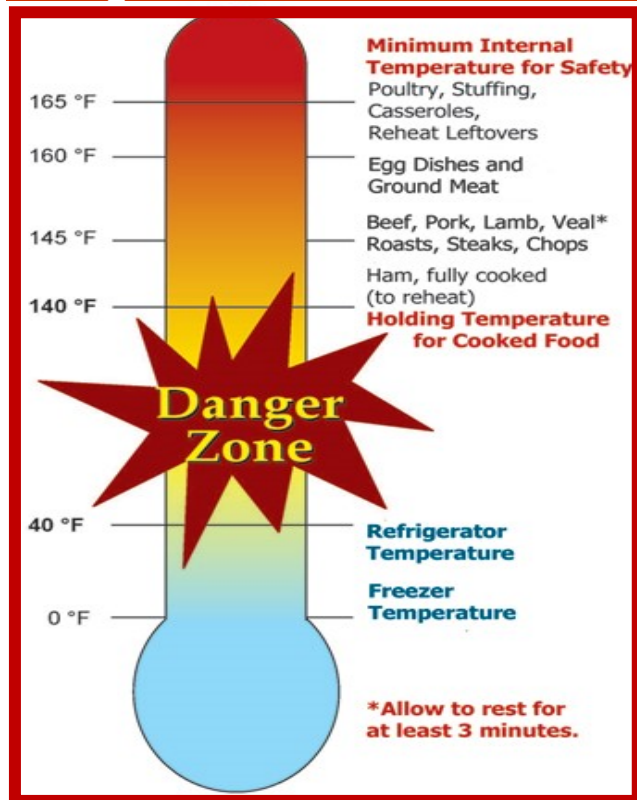
- Refrigerate or freeze meat, poultry, eggs, seafood and other perishables within 2 hours of cooking or purchasing. Refrigerate within 1 hour if the temperature outside is above 90°F.
- Never thaw food at room temperature, such as on the counter top. Food must be kept at a safe temperature during thawing. There are three safe ways to defrost food: in the refrigerator, in cold water, and in the microwave. Food thawed in cold water or in the microwave should be cooked immediately.
- Always marinate food in the refrigerator.
- Divide large amounts of leftovers into shallow containers for quicker cooling in the refrigerator.
- Use or discard refrigerated food on a regular basis.

FOOD STANDARDS ■ ■ ■

Thawing Food

1. In a refrigerator, at 41°F (6°C) or lower.
2. Submerged under running potable water, at a temperature of 70°F (21°C) or lower.
3. In a microwave oven, if the food will be cooked immediately after thawing.
4. As part of the cooking process.

Danger Zone



Is It Done Yet?

SAFE COOKING TEMPERATURES as measured with a food thermometer

GROUND MEAT & MEAT MIXTURES		Internal temperature
Beef, Pork, Veal, Lamb		160°F
Turkey, Chicken		165°F

FRESH BEEF, PORK, VEAL & LAMB	145°F
with a 3 minute rest time	

POULTRY	
Chicken & Turkey, Whole	165°F
Poultry Parts	165°F
Duck & Goose	165°F
Stuffing (cooked alone or in bird)	165°F

HAM	
Fresh (raw)	160°F
Pre-cooked (to reheat)	140°F

EGGS & EGG DISHES	
Eggs	Cook until yolk & white are firm
Egg Dishes	160°F

SEAFOOD	
Fin Fish	145°F
or flesh is opaque and separates easily with fork	
Shrimp, Lobster & Crabs	Flesh pearly & opaque
Clams, Oysters & Mussels	Shells open during cooking
Scallops	Milky white or opaque & firm

LEFTOVERS & CASSEROLES	165°F
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Food Allergens

Most Common Foods That Cause Allergic Reaction:

Peanut	Wheat
Tree Nut	Soy
Milk	Fish
Egg	Shellfish

FOOD STANDARDS ■ ■ ■

Personal Hygiene– do's and don'ts



Wear a clean hat or other hair restraint.

Hair should be properly tucked inside the cap

Dirty/no hat or hair restraint



No dangling earring or necklace/chains

Dangling earrings and necklace/chains



No smoking in food preparation areas

Smoking in food preparation areas



Wear neat and clean clothes daily

Dirty clothes



No wrist watch/rings

Wrist watch/rings



Nails should be short and clean

Long and painted nails



Cover all wounds

Open and bleeding wounds



Remove aprons when leaving food-preparation areas

Wearing apron outside food-preparation areas



Wear appropriate, clean, and closed-toe

Bare foot/ slippers



NOTE:

Cover any cuts with a bandage and wear clean gloves. However, do not wear rubber or latex gloves near open flames or other heat sources. Gloves may melt or catch fire. Change gloves if you touch anything that would normally require you to wash your hands.

FOOD STANDARDS ■ ■ ■

Steps to Food Safety

WASTE DISPOSAL

Ensure all rubbish bins are emptied regularly. Pay particular attention to this task over the summer months as heat causes germs to multiply at a much faster rate.

Use a bin with a lid and always use bin liners. Tie the liners before removing them from the bin to avoid spillage.

Clean bins regularly with hot water and a suitable detergent. Use a disinfectant to kill any remaining germs



PEST MANAGEMENT

Correct cleaning of your kitchen will ensure that it remains a pest free zone. If food should come into contact with animals of any description, ensure that it is disposed of as soon as possible.



To control flying insects, hanging an insecticidal strip or use of an electronic insect trap.

Dispose of/clean these traps on a regular basis.



NEVER USE AEROSOL SPRAYS IN THE KITCHEN

Aerosol sprays can easily transfer dangerous chemicals onto food and work surfaces and are a fire hazard when used around open flames.

If the problem is serious and you have an infestation of cockroaches, rats, ants or other pests seek professional advice immediately.

