

Food Safety Newsletter

Cut Leafy Greens Added

Other changes to the Ohio Uniform Food Safety Code effective January 1, 2013 include:

- The addition of the definition of “mechanically tenderized” and the requirement to cook those products in that category to 155°F or more.
- Added the definition of “micro markets” which is a new classification for licensing. This category was made to allow for a new type of facility that is a self-serve retail food establishment with no person-in-charge on site.
- Gloves are not required when handling ready-to-eat foods if the food will be used as in ingredient in a cooked product.
- Raw, commercially processed, and packaged frozen food may be stored over ready-to-eat frozen food.

This is not a comprehensive list of the changes, however most of the changes were grammatical or language changes.

Effective January 1, 2013 there were updates and changes to the Ohio Uniform Food Safety Code. The most significant change was the addition of “cut leafy greens” to the list of foods that must be time/temperature controlled for safety (TCS). The definition of “cut leafy greens” is: **“fresh leafy greens whose leaves have been cut, shredded, sliced, chopped, or torn. The term “leafy greens” includes iceberg lettuce, romaine lettuce, leaf lettuce, butter lettuce, baby leaf lettuce, escarole, endive, spring mix, spinach, cabbage, kale, arugula, and chard. The term “leafy greens” does not include herbs such as cilantro or parsley.”** The change occurred due to studies showing that once cut or torn, the cut leafy green may provide a medium

that readily supports the growth of pathogens if not held at proper temperature control. A whole head of lettuce or cabbage is not included in the requirements, however any leaves torn from that head are included as a TCS food. If the core of the lettuce or cabbage is removed then the remaining portion is included. Commercially bagged salad mixes and cut leafy greens are also considered a cut leafy green.

A TCS food is defined as “a food that requires time/temperature control for safety to limit pathogenic microorganism growth or

toxin formation.

TCS foods must be held at 41°F or below unless time in lieu of temperature is used as a control. When time in lieu of temperature is used to control pathogen growth, the time the lettuce is cut or removed from proper temperature control must be monitored to ensure that the cut leafy greens are used or discarded within 4 hours. As a TCS food, cut lettuce is also subject to date marking requirements.



Glove Use

Gloves are required when handling ready-to-eat foods that will not be cooked prior to serving. Situations where gloves are required including handling sandwich toppings such as lettuce and tomatoes. Other common situations

where gloves are required, but many times do not get used include: buttering toast and putting chips on a plate. Employees are much more likely to wear gloves if they fit well and are readily accessible. Ensure that gloves are available for the kitchen staff and that they are the correct size. The large,

thin plastic gloves that are not fitted do not work well for food preparation. Using gloves can help prevent foodborne illness from pathogens that are transmitted via bare hand contact. Proper glove use includes washing your hands prior to putting on gloves and changing gloves when changing tasks.

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Cross contamination can be a source of foodborne illness that occurs when pathogens are transferred from one surface to another or from one food to another. Examples of cross contamination are:

- Cutting raw chicken and then tomatoes on the same surface without properly washing, rinsing, and sanitizing the surface between foods.
- Storing raw ground beef above butter in the cooler.
- Handling utensils by the part used for eating or serving, instead of by the handle.

Prevent cross contamination by storing raw meats below ready-to-eat foods, covering and labeling foods, storing and handling equipment and utensils properly, and cleaning and sanitizing equipment and surfaces when necessary.

For updates on the latest information and occurrences at the health department check out the Van Wert County Health Department on Facebook.



Required Cooking and Holding Temperatures

- 41°F- Cold holding temperature for all refrigerators. Foods held cold must be at or below this temperature
- 135°F- Hot holding temperature for steam tables and other items being held hot.
- 135°F- Commercially processed foods must be heated to this temperature prior to being served; raw plant foods cooked for hot holding
- 145°F- Raw eggs for immediate service; fish and other whole cuts of meat
- 155°F- Ratites; mechanically tenderized; injected meats; ground meats (comminuted); raw eggs for holding
- 165°F- Poultry (chicken, turkey); any stuffed meat, fish, poultry, pasta or stuffing containing fish, meat, or poultry

Time in Lieu of Temperature

In light of the recent addition of lettuce as a TCS food, many facilities may be using time in lieu of temperature as a public health control. Using time in lieu of temperature is an acceptable practice as long as the requirements are met as listed in the Ohio Uniform Food Safety Code Chapter 3717-1-03.4 (I). First, ALL food service operations using time in lieu of temperature must be a risk level 4 facility. This classification is found on your license.

Next, the facility must have a written procedure on how employees will comply with the requirements for using time in lieu of temperature. The procedure may describe how the foods will be

monitored before, and/or during the time out of temperature control. It also might state how the food will be marked to ensure it is used in the proper amount of time.

There are two options. The first involves discarding the food after four hours. The food must have an initial temperature of 41°F or below or 135°F or above when removed from temperature control. The food must be marked or otherwise identified with the time that is four hours from when the food is removed from temperature control. For example, sliced tomatoes are removed from the cooler and placed on the table at 10:30 am, to be used for making sandwiches. They

are marked with the time of 2:30 pm for the discard time. When the four hour time limit is reached, the remaining food MUST be discarded. It cannot be placed back into temperature control.

The second option is for cold food held at 41°F or below. The food may be removed from temperature control (at 41°F or below) and held without temperature control for up to six hours if the warmest part of the food does not reach 70°F or more. The food must be monitored to ensure it does not exceed 70°F and if it does, it must be discarded.