

Overcoming Challenges - Reheating

Food establishment management and staff often encounter many challenges with regards to reheating food for hot holding, and you may be able to relate.

Part 3-403.11 of the 2013 FDA Food Code states that time/temperature control for safety food (TCS) that is cooked, cooled, and reheated for hot holding shall be reheated so that all parts of the food reach a temperature of at least 165°F or greater. For TCS foods that are pre-packaged, the reheating temperature shall be 135°F or greater. In both cases, food shall be heated rapidly and not exceed two hours.

Common Challenges

There are many challenges associated with reheating, but three main root causes can be directly correlated to controlling this hazard:

Staff Behavior

- Availability of properly calibrated thermometers
- Relying on equipment temperature rather than internal food temperatures
- Failure to monitor temperatures and/or report temperature problems
- Rushing tasks and taking shortcuts

Reheating Equipment

- Trusting that the equipment will always work properly
- Using equipment not designed for rapid heating (e.g. steam table, hot well)

Management Behavior

- Staff not being informed of any pertinent information when shift changes occur
- Employees not trained to properly use thermometers
- Management does not make time to monitor employees in kitchen

Overcoming Challenges

There are effective options to consider when overcoming reheating challenges.

Create Policies

Train Staff

Verify Policies are Working