Overcoming Challenges - Cold Holding

Food establishment management and staff often encounter many challenges with regards to maintaining food at proper cold holding temperatures and you may be able to relate.

3-501.16(A)(2) of the 2013 FDA Food Code states that time/temperature control for safety food shall be maintained at 41°F or less.

Common Challenges

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

Staff Behavior
- Availability of properly calibrated thermometers
- Failure to monitor temperatures and report problems
- Relying on refrigerator air temperature rather than internal food temperatures

Refrigeration Equipment
- Trusting that the equipment will always work properly
- Lack of regular maintenance
- Overfilling unit so as to not allow for adequate air flow
- Placing recently prepared (warmer) product into smaller refrigeration equipment

Management Behavior
- Staff not being informed of any pertinent information when shift changes occur
- Lack of accountability by staff to follow up on tasks
- 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 cold holding challenges.

Create Policies
Train Staff
Verify Policies are Working