

**FOOD AND NUTRITION  
PROCEDURES**  
Miami-Dade County Public Schools



---

Subject: **HOLDING HOT AND COLD FOOD AT PROPER TEMPERATURE**

---

**PURPOSE:** To prevent food borne illness by ensuring that all foods are held under the proper temperatures.

**SCOPE:** This procedure applies to food service employees who prepare or serve food.

**KEY WORDS:** Cross-Contamination, Temperatures, Holding, Hot Holding, Cold Holding, Storage

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Train food service employees on using the following procedures. Refer to the [Food and Nutrition Procedure H-6](#).

1. Hold hot foods at 135°F or above.
2. Hold cold foods at 41°F or below.
3. Preheat steam tables and heated cabinets.

**MONITORING**

1. Use a clean, sanitized, and calibrated probe thermometer to measure the temperature of the food.
2. Take temperature of food by inserting the thermometer near the surface of the product, at the thickest part, and at other various locations.
3. Take temperature of heated cabinets by placing a calibrated thermometer in the coolest part of a heated unit or warmest part of a refrigerated unit.
4. For hot foods held for service:
  - a. Verify that the air/water temperature of any unit is at 135°F or above before use.
  - b. Reheat food in accordance with the [Food and Nutrition Procedure H-11](#).



---

Subject: **HOLDING HOT AND COLD FOOD AT PROPER TEMPERATURE**

---

- c. All hot food should be 135°F or above before placing the food out for display or service.
  - d. Take the internal temperature of food before placing it on a steam table or in a heated cabinet and at one other periodic interval during meal service.
5. For cold foods held for service:
- a. Verify that the air/water temperature of any unit is at 41°F or below before use.
  - b. Chill food, if applicable, in accordance with the [Food and Nutrition Procedure H-8](#).
  - c. All cold food should be 41°F or below before placing the food out for display or service.
  - d. Take the internal temperature of potentially hazardous foods before placing it onto any salad bar, display cooler or cold serving line and at one other periodic interval during meal service.

### **CORRECTIVE ACTION**

- 1. Retrain any food service employee found not following the procedures.
- 2. For hot foods:
  - a. If the temperature is found to be below 135°F, reheat and hold the food for 15 seconds at 165°F. Record corrective action on [Meal Service Temperature Record](#).
  - b. If applicable, repair or reset holding equipment before returning the food to the unit.
  - c. Discard food held in the temperature danger zone for more than four (4) hours.
- 3. For cold foods:
  - a. If the temperature is found to be above 41°F, rapidly chill the food using the One-Stage (4 hour) Method. Refer to [Food and Nutrition Procedure H-8](#). Record corrective action on [Meal Service Temperature Record](#).
  - b. If applicable, repair or reset holding equipment before returning the food to the unit.
  - c. Discard food held in the temperature danger zone for more than four (4) hours.

**FOOD AND NUTRITION  
PROCEDURES**  
Miami-Dade County Public Schools



---

Subject: **HOLDING HOT AND COLD FOOD AT PROPER TEMPERATURE**

---

**VERIFICATION AND RECORD KEEPING**

Food service employees will record temperatures of food items and document corrective actions taken on the [Meal Service Temperature Record](#). A designated food service employee will record temperatures of all refrigerated units on the [Daily Cold/Dry Storage/Hot Water Temperature Record](#). The food service manager will visually monitor that food service employees have taken the required holding temperatures throughout the day and reviewing the temperature records at the close of each day. The food service supervisor will review the temperature logs during their visits. The temperature records are to be kept on file for a minimum of five (5) years.

*For Action By: Principals, Food Service Managers, Satellite Assistants and All Food Service Employees*

*Refer Questions to: Department of Food and Nutrition*

*Created: July 2006  
Revised: July 2021  
Reviewed: July 2024*