

# HACCP-Based SOPs

---

## Date Marking Ready-to-Eat, Potentially Hazardous Food

**PURPOSE:** To ensure appropriate rotation of ready-to-eat food to prevent or reduce foodborne illness from *Listeria monocytogenes*.

**SCOPE:** This procedure applies to foodservice employees who prepare, store, or serve food.

**KEY WORDS:** Ready-to-Eat Food, Potentially Hazardous Food, Date Marking, Cross-Contamination

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Train foodservice employees on using the procedures in this SOP. The best practice for a date marking system would be to include a label with the product name, the day or date, and time it is prepared or opened. Examples of how to indicate when the food is prepared or opened include:
  - Labeling food with a calendar date, such as “cut cantaloupe, 5/26/05, 8:00 a.m.”
  - Identifying the day of the week, such as “cut cantaloupe, Monday, 8:00 a.m.,” or
  - Using color-coded marks or tags, such as cut cantaloupe, blue dot, 8:00 a.m. means “cut on Monday at 8:00 a.m.”
2. Follow State or local health department requirements.
3. Label ready-to-eat, potentially hazardous foods that are prepared on-site and held for more than 24 hours.
4. Label any processed, ready-to-eat, potentially hazardous foods when opened, if they are to be held for more than 24 hours.
5. Refrigerate all ready-to-eat, potentially hazardous foods at 5 °C or below.
6. Serve or discard refrigerated, ready-to-eat, potentially hazardous foods within 7 days.
7. Indicate with a separate label the date prepared, the date frozen, and the date thawed of any refrigerated, ready-to-eat, potentially hazardous foods.
8. Calculate the 7-day time period by counting only the days that the food is under refrigeration. For example:
  - On Monday, 1/8/05, lasagna is cooked, properly cooled, and refrigerated with a label that reads, “Lasagna, Cooked, 1/8/05.”

## HACCP-Based SOPs

---

- On Tuesday, 2/8/05, the lasagna is frozen with a second label that reads, “Frozen, 2/8/05.” Two labels now appear on the lasagna. Since the lasagna was held under refrigeration from Monday, 1/8/05 – Tuesday, 2/8/05, only 1 day is counted towards the 7-day time period.
- On Tuesday 16/8/05 the lasagna is pulled out of the freezer. A third label is placed on the lasagna that reads, “Thawed, 16/8/05.” All three labels now appear on the lasagna. The lasagna must be served or discarded within 6 days.

### **MONITORING:**

A designated employee will check refrigerators daily to verify that foods are date marked and that foods exceeding the 7-day time period are not being used or stored.

### **CORRECTIVE ACTION:**

1. Retrain any foodservice employee found not following the procedures in this SOP.
2. Foods that are not date marked or that exceed the 7-day time period will be discarded.