



DEMONSTRATING THE 2 HOUR - 4 HOUR RULE

Food businesses must, when storing, processing and displaying potentially hazardous food*, store it under temperature control.

Temperature control means maintaining food at a temperature of:

- 5°C or below
- 60°C or above
- Another temperature – if the food business demonstrates that food can be kept safely at this temperature for a specified period of time.

It has been established that potentially hazardous foods* can be safely consumed if they have been out of temperature control for up to four hours. This is commonly referred to as the 2 Hour – 4 Hour rule and is explained in the accompanying fact sheet. It is acceptable to follow the 2 Hour – 4 Hour rule as long as the food business can demonstrate how they are monitoring the length of time the food is out of temperature control.

Below are some examples of how the 2 Hour – 4 Hour rule can be demonstrated:

- Label the food packaging with the time it was prepared or removed from temperature control, e.g. the day dot system where each day has a colour coded sticker and the time can be recorded on them
- Service time is four hours or less and the food is discarded at the end of service, e.g. food is taken out of the fridge at 5pm when service begins and is either sold or thrown away no later than 9pm when service is completed
- Food can be separated with plastic dividers, or put into separate trays that can be labelled with the time the food was prepared, e.g. or sushi or pre-made rolls/sandwiches

*Potentially hazardous food means food that has to be kept under temperature control to minimise the growth of any bacteria that may be present in the food or to prevent the formation of toxins in the food.

- For food displayed above 5°C and the service time is longer than four hours, keep small quantities of food in the ingredient bar and store back up containers of food in a fridge or cool room that is operating at 5°C or below. For this method to be acceptable as a form of demonstration, back up containers of prepared foods must be observed under temperature control
- Keeping records of specific products (Example 1)
- Colour coded sticker system with supporting records (Example 2).

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- The total time out of temperature control must be taken into account all of the times that the food has been between 5°C and 60°C, including delivery,

preparation and display

- If multiple ingredients are combined, e.g. in sushi or a sandwich, the food must be discarded when the first potentially hazardous* ingredient has been out of temperature control for four hours
- Temperature displays on refrigeration equipment show the temperature the unit is operating at, not what the food temperature is. To accurately measure the temperature of the food, use a probe thermometer that is accurate to $\pm 1^{\circ}\text{C}$
- It is not acceptable to use the 2 Hour – 4 Hour rule for equipment designed to store potentially hazardous food for longer periods such as cool rooms, refrigerators and freezers.

EXAMPLE 1

Date	Product	Time prepared/ time removed from temperature control	Time to be discarded if not sold	Initialled (sign when discarded/sold)
11/2/16	Chicken sandwiches	10am	2pm	xx
11/2/16	Ham wraps	10.30am	2.30pm	xx

EXAMPLE 2

Date	Sticker colour	Time in	Time to be discarded if not sold	Initialled (sign when discarded/sold)
11/2/16	Red	9am	1pm	xx
11/2/16	Blue	10am	2pm	xx

Your business is required to develop a system of monitoring the time potentially hazardous foods are out of temperature control to Council's satisfaction.

If a food business cannot demonstrate or provide documented evidence of the 2 Hour – 4 Hour rule being applied it will be deemed as non-compliant in regard to temperature control of potentially hazardous foods.

Note: This information is designed to accompany fact sheets from SA Health and Food Standards Australia and New Zealand.