

Time as a Public Health Control

Always follow the **four hour rule** when using time as a public health control.

You must have **written procedures** in place.



After taking food out of hot or cold holding...

Have a system in place to keep track of time.

IN: 12 pm
OUT: 4 pm

Sticky notes



Labels



Timer



Log

IN: 12 pm
OUT: 4 pm



Record the time when food must be discarded.

Serve food within **four hours**.



Discard food after four hours.

Time as a Public Health Control

April 2025

In addition to keeping food in cold or hot holding to limit bacteria growth, you can use Time as a Public Health Control (TPHC) to keep food safe. This process uses time to keep food safe instead of temperature control. Use TPHC for a working supply of food, like rice noodles or raw eggs before cooking, or for ready-to-eat food you display or hold for sale, like pizza slices.

If you need help accessing or understanding this information, contact FoodLodging@vermont.gov.

Requirements

You must do the following to use TPHC:



- Have written procedures in place at your establishment.
- Make sure food is 41°F or below or 135°F or above when removed from cold or hot holding.
- Mark or identify food with the time it will be four hours after it was removed from temperature control. For example, if the food was removed at 12:00 p.m., the time marking should read 4:00 p.m.
- Cook or serve food within the four-hour window.
- Discard food at the four-hour mark. It may be helpful to record the time the food is discarded.
- Make sure all managers and employees working with TPHC food know the food safety risks, understand the procedure, and are properly trained to log times and when to discard the food.

Written Procedures



You don't have to submit your written procedures to the Health Department for approval before using TPHC. However, you must maintain the written procedures at your establishment and have them available if the Health Department or your health inspector requests them.

Written procedures must include:

- A list of foods using TPHC.
- How the food will be marked or identified with the time it must be discarded (for example, logs, labels, sticky notes, timer, dry-erase board, duration of service is less than four hours, etc.).
- Who is responsible for monitoring and discarding food.

Time as a Public Health Control Written Procedure

Establishment Name:

1. List all foods using Time as a Public Health Control (TPHC):
2. How will the food be marked or identified with the time it must be discarded (for example, logs, labels, sticky notes, timer, dry-erase board, duration of service is less than four hours, etc.)?
3. Who is responsible for monitoring the discard time and discarding the food?

Keep a copy of this procedure at your establishment.

You do not need to submit a copy of this procedure to the Health Department, but you must have it available if the Health Department or your health inspector requests it.

Person in Charge (print):

Title:

Signature:

Date:

Time as a Public Health Control Log Sheet

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