

Thermometers

If you're a food business that handles potentially hazardous food, it's important to use a thermometer to check your food is at the right temperature to be sure it is safe to eat.



SAFE FOOD AUSTRALIA

InfoBite

What are the requirements?

Under Standard 3.2.2 - Food Safety Practices and General Requirements, food businesses that handle potentially hazardous food need to have an accurate and accessible thermometer. This means:

- there is at least one thermometer somewhere easy to get to (e.g. in an unlocked drawer in the kitchen)
- the thermometer is accurate to within 1°C.

Which thermometer is best?

- A digital probe thermometer is usually best for measuring food temperatures. They are inexpensive and are available from catering and kitchen supply shops.
- Infrared 'gun' thermometers are useful for quick checks and for packaged food - but only measure the surface temperature.
- Temperature gauges on equipment like bain maries and refrigerators measure the equipment's temperature - but to be sure of the actual food's temperature you should use a probe thermometer.

Check your food's temperature

- Food that is received, stored, displayed or transported should be 5°C or colder, or 60°C or hotter, unless you can show another temperature is safe.
- Cooling and reheating food need to be done to certain temperatures within time limits (see our InfoBite on Cooling and reheating).

Getting it right

- Clean and sanitise probe thermometers before and after use – use warm soapy water and an alcohol wipe.
- Place the probe into the thickest part of the food and wait until the temperature stabilises before reading it.
- Measure packaged chilled food by placing the thermometer length-wise along or between packages.
- Measure the temperature of different foods in your refrigerator or display unit to check if there are spots where food is not at the right temperature.
- Don't rely only on fixed temperature gauges on equipment – measure the actual food with a probe thermometer to be sure.
- Keep your thermometer in good condition - have it calibrated regularly, replace flat batteries, repair or replace it if it breaks.

Need more information?

Safe Food Australia is a guide to the food safety standards in Chapter 3 of the Food Standards Code. Thermometers are covered under Standard 3.2.2 clause 22. Potentially hazardous foods are explained in Appendix 1.

Copies of the guide, some translated fact sheets and other information is available at www.foodstandards.gov.au/safefood or by emailing information@foodstandards.gov.au.