

Food Safety Fact Sheet

Transporting Foods

INTRODUCTION

Many school nutrition programs prepare food at one site and transport it to another site for service. The transporting process adds to the complexity of a school nutrition program and provides another step in the foodservice process that must be performed correctly to ensure temperature maintenance and to minimize cross contamination.

HERE ARE THE FACTS

Transporting adds time to holding food. The FDA *Food Code* requires that all hot foods be maintained at 135 °F or above and that all cold foods are maintained at 41 °F to minimize opportunities for bacterial growth. Proper equipment and processes must be in place so that proper temperatures are maintained and there is no cross contamination.

APPLICATION

Transport foods using appropriate equipment and processes.

- Maintain temperatures of products.
 - ◊ Keep frozen foods frozen.
 - ◊ Keep cold foods at 41 °F or below.
 - ◊ Keep hot foods at 135 °F or above.
- Transport food in containers and carriers that have been approved by the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF)® or by the state or local health department.
- Prepare food carriers before use.
 - ◊ Clean all exterior surfaces.
 - ◊ Wash, rinse, and sanitize all interior surfaces.
 - ◊ Preheat or pre-chill according to manufacturer's recommendations.
- Store food in containers suitable for transportation. Containers should be:
 - ◊ Rigid and sectioned so that foods do not mix.
 - ◊ Tightly closed to minimize spillage and to retain temperature.
 - ◊ Nonporous to avoid leakage.
 - ◊ Easy-to-clean or disposable.
 - ◊ Approved for food use.
- Schedule food transportation to minimize the time between cooking and serving at the satellite site.





Transporting Foods cont.

Monitor transporting process.

- Check the temperature of all food carriers with a calibrated thermometer before loading with food.
 - ◊ Check cold carriers in the warmest part.
 - ◊ Check hot carriers in the coolest part.
- Check food temperatures with a clean, sanitized, and calibrated thermometer before placing it in the food carrier.
- Check food temperatures with a clean, sanitized, and calibrated thermometer when it arrives at the satellite site.
- Record the temperatures and the times temperatures were checked.

Take corrective action if appropriate holding temperature of the food is not met during transporting.

- Continue heating or chilling food carrier if it is not at the appropriate temperature.
- Reheat food to 165 °F for 15 seconds if the temperature is found to be below 135 °F and the last temperature measurement was 135 °F or higher and taken within the last 2 hours.
- Cool food to 41 °F or below using a proper cooling procedures if internal temperature of cold food is greater than 41 °F, and the last temperature measured was 41 °F or below and taken within the last two hours.
- Repair or reset equipment before returning the food to the unit if temperatures are not maintained.
- Discard food that has been held in the temperature danger zone of 41 °F–135 °F for more than 4 hours.
- Record corrective actions taken.

Remember, follow state or local health department requirements.

References

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This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service through an agreement with Institute of Child Nutrition at The University of Mississippi. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. government.

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Suggested Reference Citation:
Institute of Child Nutrition. (2016). *Transporting foods*. University, MS: Author.

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