**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.
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.