

# Food Safety Fact Sheet

## Complex Process

### INTRODUCTION

The Process Approach simplifies developing a food safety program by placing menu items into three broad preparation processes based on the number of times the food passes through the temperature danger zone. These processes are no cook, same day service, and complex. School nutrition employees must monitor foods at various steps in the foodservice process and must control temperatures to ensure food safety.

### HERE ARE THE FACTS

Menu items in the complex process go through the temperature danger zone, during cooking, cooling, and when foods are reheated. Examples of these items will vary in different schools, but may include turkey roasts, taco meat, chili, and leftovers. It is important to note that the same menu items may be grouped into different processes depending on how the item is prepared and the available equipment. For example, chili could be a complex item in one school nutrition program and a same day service process item in another program.

The complex food preparation process include foods that require time and temperature control and have been cooled. The complex menu item flow chart shows points at which temperature control is very important and points at which monitoring and recordkeeping are needed.

### APPLICATION

**Follow Standard Operating Procedures to control hazards for complex menu items.**

- Purchase foods from approved sources.
- Receive foods properly.
- Store foods properly, including separating food from chemicals.
- Use good personal hygiene.
- Follow proper handwashing practices.
- Prevent cross contamination.
- Limit time food is held in the temperature danger zone.
- Use sanitized, calibrated thermometer to take food temperatures.
- Verify food temperatures during cooking, cooling, reheating, and hot holding.
- Serve food so that there is no bare hand contact. Use appropriate utensils, deli paper, or single-use gloves.
- Restrict ill employees from working with food.





## Complex Process cont.

### Monitor and record time and temperatures of complex menu items throughout the foodservice process.

- Check and record food temperature when food is received.
- Check and record time and temperature of food in storage.
- Check and record time and internal cooking temperatures.
- Check and record time and temperature of food during cooling.
- Check and record time and temperature of food during reheating.
- Check and record time and temperature of food during hot holding.

### Control time and temperature of complex menu items during cooking, cooling, reheating, and hot holding.

- Cook complex service menu items to the appropriate internal cooking temperatures. For example, chicken should be cooked to 165 °F for 15 seconds and hamburger patties should be cooked to 155 °F for 15 seconds.
- Cool food properly.
  - ◊ Cool food from 135 °F–70 °F in 2 hours.
  - ◊ Cool food from 70 °F–41 °F in an additional 4 hours.
  - ◊ Use immediate and appropriate corrective actions when cooling guidelines are not met.
- Reheat food to 165 °F for 15 seconds within 2 hours.
- Hold complex menu items at 135 °F or above.
- Limit the time that complex menu items are in the temperature danger zone.

### Take corrective action to make sure that cleaning and sanitizing is done properly.

- Wash, rinse, and sanitize dirty food contact surfaces.
- Sanitize food contact surfaces if it cannot be determined if they have been sanitized properly.
- Discard food that comes in contact with food contact surfaces that have not been sanitized properly.

### Remember, follow state or local health department requirements.

#### References

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