



Cochise County Environmental Health

Cooling Time/Temperature Control for Safety Food (TCS)

Safe Cooling

Times & Temperatures

- TCS food must be cooled from 135°F to 70°F within 2 hours and completely cooled to 41°F or below within 6 hours.
- TCS food prepared from ingredients at room temperature must be cooled to 41°F or below within 4 hours.

Examples of Safe Cooling

Properly cooked chili is cooled from 135°F to 70°F in 2 hours. Four hours remain to completely cool the chili to 41°F.

Tuna salad prepared from room temperature ingredients is cooled from 68°F to 41°F in 4 hours or less.

Examples of Unsafe Cooling

Properly cooked chili is cooled from 135°F to 41°F in 6 hours, but the initial cooling to 70°F took 3 hours. The chili must be discarded.

Tuna salad prepared from room temperature ingredients is cooled from 68°F to 50°F in 4 hours. The tuna salad must be discarded.

Use a cooling log to keep track of Time & Temperature Requirements.

Temperature Danger Zone

The temperature range in which disease causing bacteria grow best in TCS food is called the temperature danger zone.

- The temperature danger zone is between 41°F and 135°F.
- TCS food must pass through the temperature danger zone as quickly as possible.
- Keep hot food hot and cold food cold. Always use a thermometer to check internal food temperatures.

Cooling Methods

Cool food rapidly using one or more of the following cooling methods:

- Place food in shallow pans.
- Separate food into smaller portions.
- Place containers in an ice water bath and stir frequently.
- Use metal containers.
- Add ice as an ingredient.
- Use cleaned & sanitized ice wands.

When using cold holding equipment to cool food, provide space for air flow between and around containers.

Always protect food from contamination.