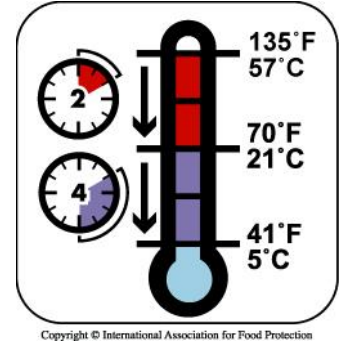


The Food Code requires that all cooked foods not prepared for immediate service or hot held shall be cooled as quickly as possible to eliminate the possibility of bacteria development.

The **two-stage method** reduces the cooked food's internal temperature in two steps. The first step is to reduce the temperature from 135°F to 70°F within two hours of preparation **and** from 70°F to 41°F or colder within an additional four-hour period. Total cooling time should never exceed six hours.

If you are cooling foods that are made from ingredients at ambient temperature, then there is a 4 hour time frame to cool to 41°F.



When deciding how best to cool time/temperature control for safety foods, keep in mind the following factors:

- The size or amount of food being cooled;
- The density of the food – a broth is less dense than a casserole; and
- The container in which the food is being stored – shallow pans cool foods faster than deep pans.



In order to facilitate the rapid cooling of cooked foods, the following methods are recommended:



- Placing the food to be cooled in shallow pans;
- Separating the food to be cooled in smaller or thinner portions;
- Using rapid cooling equipment, such as 'blast chillers or a freeze stick;
- Stirring the food to be cooled in a container placed in an ice bath;
- Using containers that facilitate the transfer of heat;
- Leaving the foods uncovered and not stacking until properly cooled;

- Adding ice as an ingredient to the cooked food; or
- A combination of the above methods.

The most important thing to remember about cooling foods is that the temperature of all cooked foods should be reduced to 41°F or colder as quickly



as possible. In addition, a warm or hot food item placed into a refrigerator may actually raise the temperature inside the unit and jeopardize the safety of other stored foods. **Once the food item has**

been properly cooled, it should be stored properly – covered and labeled with the 7 day use by date, with the day of preparation being day one.