

The Culture of Food Safety

TIME AND TEMPERATURE CONTROL

Taking temperatures is a vital part of an operation's food safety culture, because the only way to reduce pathogens in food to safe levels is to cook the food to its correct minimum internal cooking temperature. This minimum internal cooking temperature is different for each food item. Once reached, you must hold the food at this temperature for a specific amount of time. Be sure to check out our Week 4 materials to learn more about the specific time & temperature requirements for each food item.



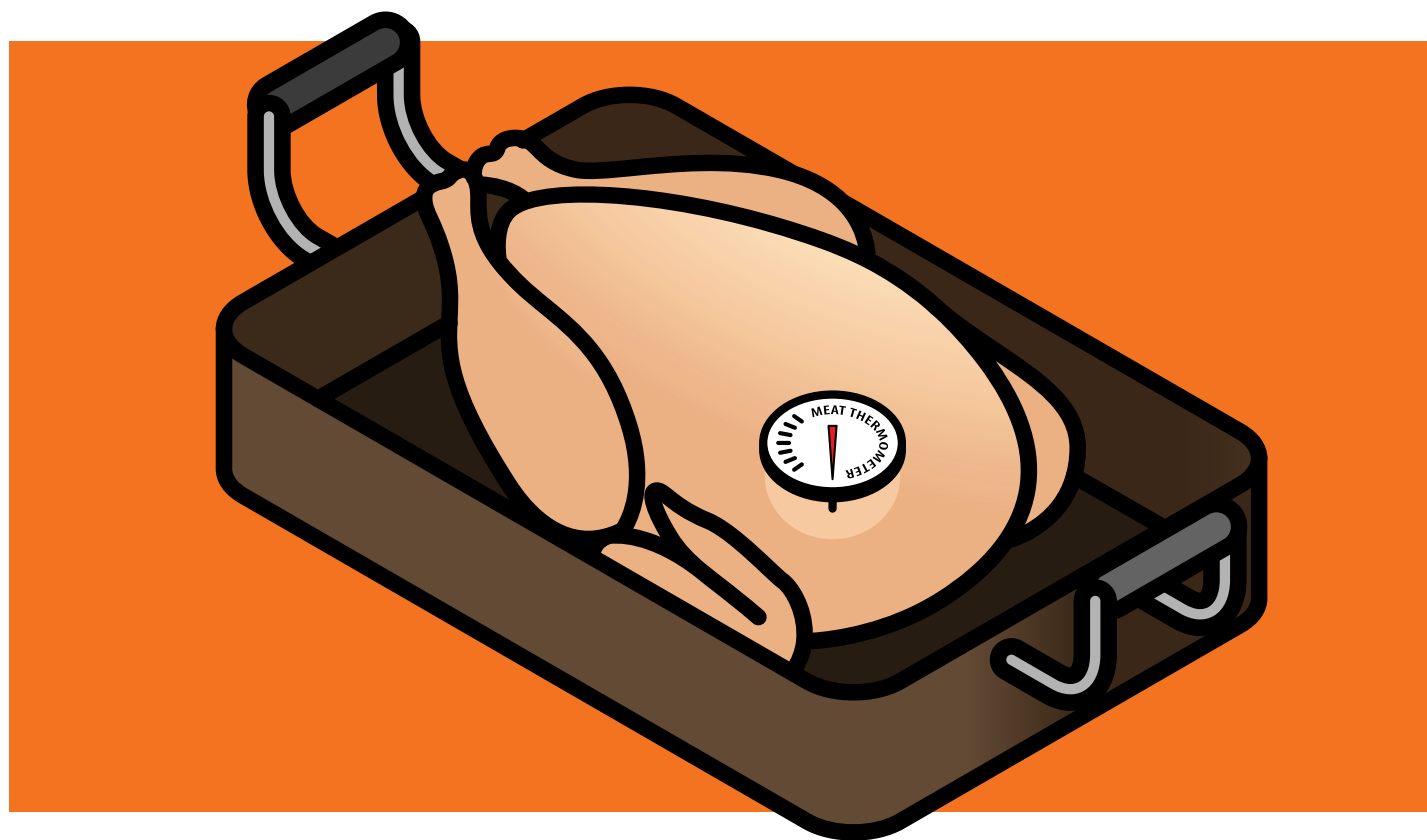
Keep TCS food outside of the danger zone (41°F and 135°F; 5°C and 57°C):

- Pathogens grow within this temperature range.
- Pathogens grow more rapidly between 70°F and 125°F; 21°C and 52°C.
- If food is held in this range for 4+ hours, throw it out.



TCS food could be at risk of temperature abuse if it is:

- Cooked to the incorrect internal temperature.
- Held at the incorrect temperature.
- Cooled or reheated incorrectly.



Avoid time-temperature abuse by practicing the following procedures:

- Ensure food handlers know which food items should be checked and how often.
- Equip each food handler with the correct thermometers.
- Record temperatures regularly and keep a written record of when the temperatures were taken.
- Put the thermometer stem into the thickest part of the food.
- Calibrate, clean, and sanitize thermometers regularly.
- Establish procedures to limit the time food spends in the temperature danger zone (e.g. limit the amount of food that can be removed from a cooler when prepping).
- Set a plan for when time and temperature standards are not met.