



Food Safety Program

TIME AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CONTROL

What is Potentially Hazardous Food?

Potentially hazardous food (PHF) is food that is known to grow bacteria that cause foodborne illness.

To limit the growth of bacteria, PHF must be held at certain temperatures (a process called temperature control).

Some examples of PHF are raw and cooked meat, dairy products, cooked rice and pasta, and cut melons and cut tomatoes.

What is Time as a Public Health Control?

Pursuant to [California Retail Food Code, Section 114000](#), Time as a Public Health Control (TPHC) is an alternative process that uses time control to make sure PHF is safe to eat.

Bacteria grows best at room temperature. If PHF is held at room temperature, it must be thrown away after four hours.

TPHC can be used for:

- Working supply of PHF before cooking (e.g., rice noodles, uncooked eggs)
- Ready-to-eat PHF that is displayed or held for immediate consumption (e.g., pizza, spring rolls, meat-filled croissants, boba, or cut melons)

TPHC is not approved to be used for raw eggs at schools or licensed health care facilities.

Requirements for using Time as a Public Health Control:

1. **Have Written Procedures**—The operator must always have written procedures on-site and available for review. If written procedures are not available and TPHC is used, the food item(s) shall be discarded.
2. **Keep Track of Time**—Maintain a method to keep track of time such as stickers with a time, timer, or time logs. Indicate the “Throw-Away/Expiration” time, which will be four hours from when the food is removed from temperature control.

For example, if a pizza is removed from the oven at 1:00 p.m., then the Throw-Away/Expiration time is four hours later at 5:00 p.m.

3. **Throw Food Away after 4 Hours**—Within four hours, foods on TPHC must either be:
 - Cooked and served, or
 - Served if ready to eat, or
 - Discarded/thrown away.




Food in unmarked containers/packages or marked to exceed a four-hour limit must be thrown away.

Foods placed on TPHC may not be returned to temperature control—regardless of the length of time it was removed from temperature control. This means foods on TPHC may not be returned to the refrigerator, be reheated, or placed in a warmer for later use.



Environmental Health Division – Food Safety Program
1241 E. Dyer Road, Suite 120, Santa Ana, CA 92705

Phone: (714) 433-6000
Fax: (714) 754-1768
Email: ehealth@ochca.com
Web: <https://www.ocfoodinfo.com>

 @ochealth
 @ochealthinfo
 @ochealthinfo

Time as a Public Health Control

Written Procedures

Owner Name: _____

Facility Name: _____

Facility Address: _____

Contact Person (if not Owner): _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Identify how the food will be marked with a Time Indicator:

Sticker with time Timer Time Log

Other(s): _____

List the food product(s) that will be placed on TPHC and describe when the 4-hour period will start:

Check each box to show that you understand the TPHC requirements:

- I will limit the use of TPHC to four (4) hours or less once removed from temperature control and foods will be discarded after four (4) hours when using TPHC.
- Once I begin TPHC, I cannot return the food to temperature control, and I will discard the food after four (4) hours.
- Any food in unmarked or improperly marked containers will be discarded based on the last known point of temperature control.
- I will keep the written procedure at the facility, and make it available for review upon request.
- I will follow the written procedure when using TPHC and will update it when I change my practices.
- I understand that failure to comply with the California Retail Food Code Section 114000 may lead to further action by the Enforcement Agency.

I am providing the following written procedure because I would like to utilize "Time as a Public Health Control" at the above mentioned facility for potentially hazardous foods. This document is a description of the written procedure that will be implemented to operate the facility to protect the health and safety of the public.

Owner/Operator (Print Name)

Owner/Operator Signature

Date