



INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN NO. 42-06-DES

DISTRICT ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DIVISION

TIME AS A CONTROL TO LIMIT BACTERIAL GROWTH

Bacteria under the right conditions will multiply in the food that we eat, and certain bacteria in great enough numbers will cause illness. Controlling time and temperature together are the best way to limit bacteria from growing in our food. Not only do bacteria need a comfortable temperature and a long enough time to contaminate food, they also need the right *kind* of food. Potentially hazardous foods meet the conditions for these bacteria to multiply and produce illness causing chemicals.

California Law allows the use of time only to limit the growth of pathogenic or disease-causing bacteria. This may only be done under strict procedures to maintain food safety principles. Potentially hazardous foods may be held without temperature control, for **up to 4 hours** only, if ALL of the following conditions are met:

- 1) The food (or container) must be **labeled** with the time the four-hour limit expires.
- 2) The food **MUST** be **cooked** (if not ready-to-eat) and **served** within the four-hour period it was removed from temperature control. Any remaining potentially hazardous foods held in this manner will be discarded.
- 3) Any food or containers that are unmarked, or marked with a time exceeding four hours, will be discarded.
- 4) **Written protocols** that indicate these procedures are to be followed must be maintained in the food facility and made available to Environmental Health upon request. The written protocols must also ensure compliance with proper preparation, cooking, and refrigeration requirements outlined in California law.

Again, keeping the temperature of potentially hazardous food below 41°F or above 135°F, and limiting the time it is out of temperature at every opportunity is the most reliable way to prevent food borne illness. **Keep it hot, keep it cold, or don't keep it long!** Incidences of food related illness can be costly to a food facility and reduce the public's confidence in the facility's reputation.

If you would like to use time as a control for a particular menu item for your food facility, then refer to the back of this bulletin. There is a proposal form for you to fill out and submit to your local Environmental Health office. Your proposal will then be evaluated to determine if you can, or cannot, use time as a control. Feel free to contact your local Environmental Health office for answers to any questions that you may have.

*Document available in an alternate format upon request

OFFICES IN: RIVERSIDE, BLYTHE, CORONA, HEMET, INDIO, MURRIETA AND PALM SPRINGS
For more information call (888) 722-4234

Department Web Site – www.rivcoeh.org

Time As A Public Health Control Proposal

Please fill out all fields below and return to your local Environmental Health office.

1) Facility Name:	
2) Facility Address:	
3) Facility Number:	
4) Contact Person:	
5) Telephone Number:	
6) Name of Food Product:	
7) List and number the steps for preparation of this food product:	
8) Describe or attach a sample of the type of signage, stickers, or other control that you will use to designate the expiration time/date when this food product is removed from temperature control:	
9) At the end of the 4 hour time frame, how will this food product be handled?	

I submit this written procedure for the named food product. Upon approval of this proposal, I hereby agree to comply with the California Retail Food Code, as well as the written handling procedures outlined in this document. I understand that the approval can be revoked if I am not following the approved procedures.

Any of the above listed food product possessing improper or inadequate labels or exceeding the 4 hour maximum time limit for holding potentially hazardous foods between 41°F and below 135°F will be discarded immediately.

Submitted by: _____ Date: _____

Approved by: _____ Date: _____

(Office use only – Supervising Environmental Health Specialist)

Please contact your District Specialist if you have further questions.