ServSafe Manager Cheat Sheet

Key numbers and rules by topic, with the source for each group.

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Manager Cheat Sheet

Personal hygiene

- Handwashing: at least 20 seconds in all
- Scrubbing with soap: at least 10 to 15 seconds
- Handwashing sink water: at least 85°F
- Jewelry on hands and arms while preparing food: a plain ring only
- Single-use gloves: one task, then discard if damaged, soiled or interrupted

Source: FDA Food Code 2022, 2-301.12, 2-303.11, 3-304.15, 5-202.12

Foodborne illness

- 5 symptoms to report: vomiting, diarrhea, jaundice, sore throat with fever, an infected wound that is open or draining
- 6 illnesses to report: norovirus, hepatitis A, Shigella, Shiga toxin-producing E. coli, typhoid fever, nontyphoidal Salmonella
- Back to work after vomiting or diarrhea with no diagnosis: at least 24 hours without symptoms, or a health practitioner's note saying the cause is not infectious
- Temperature danger zone: 41°F to 135°F

Source: FDA Food Code 2022, 2-201.11, 2-201.13, Annex 3 (3-501.16)

Cooking temperatures

- 165°F for under 1 second: poultry and stuffed food
- 155°F for 17 seconds: ground and other non-intact meat
- 145°F for 15 seconds: fish, intact meat, and raw eggs cooked to order
- 145°F for 4 minutes: whole meat roasts
- Microwave: 165°F, then stand covered for 2 minutes

Source: FDA Food Code 2022, 3-401.11, 3-401.12, 3-501.16

Hot and cold holding

- Cold holding: 41°F or below
- Hot holding: 135°F or above
- Roasts cooked to the Food Code roast chart: may hold at 130°F or above
- Time as a control, 4-hour limit: most food starts at 41°F or below, or 135°F or above
- Time as a control, 6-hour limit: food starts at 41°F or below and stays at 70°F or below

Source: FDA Food Code 2022, 3-501.16, 3-501.19, Annex 3 (3-501.16)

Cooling and reheating

- 135°F to 70°F: within 2 hours
- 135°F to 41°F: within 6 hours in total
- Food made from room-temperature ingredients, such as canned tuna: 41°F within 4 hours
- Reheating for hot holding: 165°F for 15 seconds, reached within 2 hours
- Commercially packaged ready-to-eat food, reheated for hot holding: 135°F

Source: FDA Food Code 2022, 3-501.14, 3-403.11

Purchasing and receiving

- Cold TCS food at delivery: 41°F or below, unless another law sets a different temperature
- Hot TCS food at delivery: 135°F or above
- Raw eggs: received in refrigerated equipment at 45°F or below
- Food labeled frozen and shipped frozen: must arrive frozen
- Shellfish tags: keep for 90 calendar days

Source: FDA Food Code 2022, 3-202.11, 3-203.12

Food storage

- Food storage height: at least 6 inches above the floor
- Date mark ready-to-eat TCS food held longer than 24 hours
- Date-marked food at 41°F or below: 7 days at most, and the day you make it is Day 1
- Working containers: label with the common name of the food

Source: FDA Food Code 2022, 3-305.11, 3-501.17, 3-302.12, Annex 4

Food preparation

- Thawing in a refrigerator: food stays at 41°F or below
- Thawing under running water: water at 70°F or below
- Raw animal food thawed under running water: no more than 4 hours above 41°F
- Raw fruits and vegetables: wash before cutting, combining, cooking or serving
- Get a variance before curing food or smoking it to preserve it

Source: FDA Food Code 2022, 3-501.13, 3-302.15, 3-502.11

Contamination and cross-contact

- Keep raw animal food apart from ready-to-eat food in storage, prep, holding and display
- Clean food-contact surfaces each time you change from raw to ready-to-eat food
- Food-contact surfaces used with TCS food: clean at least every 4 hours
- Ready-to-eat food: use utensils or gloves, and no bare hands
- Store chemicals apart from food and not above it

Source: FDA Food Code 2022, 3-302.11, 3-301.11, 4-602.11, 7-201.11

Food allergens

- 9 major food allergens: milk, egg, fish, crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, wheat, peanuts, soybeans, sesame
- Highly refined oil from these foods: not a major food allergen
- Packaged food label: names the food source of each major allergen
- Unpackaged food with a major allergen as an ingredient: the customer gets written notice
- Person in charge: makes sure staff are trained in food allergy awareness

Source: FDA Food Code 2022, 1-201.10, 2-103.11, 3-602.11, 3-602.12

HACCP and food safety management

- HACCP principles: 7
- Person in charge: keeps active managerial control of foodborne illness risk factors
- Written food safety management system: within 4 years of your regulator adopting the code
- HACCP plan: submit for approval when a variance or the law requires one

Source: FDA Food Code 2022, 8-201.13, Annex 4; November 2024 Supplement, 2-103.11, 8-201.15

Cleaning and sanitizing

- Manual wash water: at least 110°F, or the temperature on the cleaner's label
- Hot water sanitizing by hand: 171°F or above for at least 30 seconds
- Chlorine at 50 to 99 mg/L (ppm): 75°F at pH 8 or less, 100°F at pH 10 or less
- Iodine: 12.5 to 25 mg/L (ppm) at 68°F or above
- Quaternary ammonium: 75°F or above, at the strength on the label

Source: FDA Food Code 2022, 4-301.12, 4-501.19, 4-501.111, 4-501.114, 4-603.16, 4-703.11, 4-901.11

Facilities and equipment

- Air gap: at least twice the inlet diameter, and never less than 1 inch
- Handwashing sink water: at least 85°F
- Self-closing faucet: runs at least 15 seconds
- Light: 50 foot-candles where food is prepared, 20 at handwashing and warewashing areas, 10 in walk-ins and dry storage

Source: FDA Food Code 2022, 5-202.12, 5-202.13, 5-205.12, 6-303.11

Pest control

- Openings kept open for ventilation: 16 mesh to 1 inch screens, air curtains or another effective means
- Rodent bait: in a covered, tamper-resistant bait station
- Restricted use pesticides: a certified applicator, or someone under direct supervision
- Insect zappers: never over a food prep area
- Inspect food shipments and the building routinely for pests

Source: FDA Food Code 2022, 6-202.13, 6-202.15, 6-501.111, 7-202.12, 7-206.12

Regulations and inspections

- Routine inspection: at least once every 6 months in most cases
- Priority item: fix at the inspection, or within 72 hours if the regulator agrees
- Priority foundation item: fix at the inspection, or within 10 calendar days if the regulator agrees
- Core item: fix within 90 calendar days, unless the regulator approves a longer written schedule
- Imminent health hazard: stop operations and notify the regulator right away

Source: FDA Food Code 2022, 8-401.10, 8-404.11, 8-405.11, 8-406.11