

KITCHEN BANDITS

DAY DOT KEY

Sheet 01 / 07
kitchenbandits.com/tools/labelling-kit · v2026-09

DATE MARKING · ONE COLOR PER DAY

THE COLOR SAYS WHICH DAY. THE DATE SAYS WHICH WEEK.

Seven band colors cover the week. Purple stays off the rota and marks allergen work. Match the color to the day the item was made, then write the date beside it.

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
BLUE 299C	YELLOW 143C	RED 485C	BROWN 732C	GREEN 7738C	WHITE 9064C	BLACK BLACK 6C

ALLERGEN

Purple is never a day. It marks allergen-safe or allergen-marked items, so the nut-free pesto and the sesame dressing both stand out on a busy shelf. Write the item and the allergen on the band.

Purple · 2077C · never used for a weekday

THE RULE

WRITE THE DATE, NOT JUST THE DAY.

A blue band on its own could be this Monday or last Monday. Day plus date settles it in one look. Month, day, then the item.

TUE 09/08 · RANCH

ON THE BAND DAY _____ DATE _____ ITEM _____
USE BY _____

HOW THE CREW READS IT

- 01 Color first.** Today is Tuesday, so yellow was made today and blue is from Monday. Every color has a place on the shelf, so a wrong one stands out before anyone reads a word.
- 02 Then the date.** Same color, older date: it is from last week. It goes.
- 03 Use-by comes from the shelf-life chart.** Day made is day 1. Seven days is the ceiling for ready-to-eat TCS food held at 41°F (5°C) or below. Many houses run 3 to 4 days on cooked proteins.
- 04 Purple means allergen.** No purple band ever carries a day. It carries the item and the allergen it is free of, or the one it contains.
- 05 Unmarked means unknown.** Unknown goes in the bin, not on the line.
- 06 Wipe and rewrite.** At the end of the item's life, isopropyl alcohol takes the marker off. Light ghosting is normal. Write the next one.

DATE MARKING · FDA FOOD CODE 2022 §3-501.17

SEVEN DAYS IS THE CEILING. DAY MADE IS DAY 1.

Ready-to-eat TCS food held at 41°F (5°C) or below is date-marked and used or discarded within 7 days, counting the day it was made or opened as day 1. Freezing stops the clock. Days used before freezing still count after thawing.

READY-TO-EAT TCS FOOD · HELD AT 41°F (5°C) OR BELOW

ITEM	FOOD CODE MAX	TIGHTER HOUSE PRACTICE	NOTE
Cooked proteins: roasted, braised, poached, grilled	7 days	3 to 4 days	Day made is day 1
Stocks, soups, sauces, gravies	7 days	3 to 4 days	Cool first. See the cooling log
Cooked rice, pasta, grains, beans	7 days	3 to 4 days	Cool first
House dressings, aioli, dips	7 days	3 to 4 days	
Cut leafy greens, cut tomatoes, cut melon	7 days	2 to 3 days	TCS once cut
Commercial ready-to-eat, opened: deli meat, cooked sausage, tofu	7 days, or the maker's use-by if sooner	3 to 5 days	Day opened is day 1
Frozen ready-to-eat TCS food	Clock stops	Two dates	Frozen on, thawed on. Days before freezing still count

RAW STORAGE · FDA/USDA COLD FOOD STORAGE CHART

ITEM	IN THE FRIDGE	NOTE
Raw poultry, whole or pieces	1 to 2 days	Bottom shelf, under everything
Raw ground meat, ground poultry	1 to 2 days	
Raw whole cuts: steaks, chops, roasts	3 to 5 days	
Raw fish	1 to 2 days	On ice, drained
Eggs in shell	3 to 5 weeks	Keep them in the carton
Thawed in the fridge	Cook within the raw window above	Count from the day it thawed. Thaw in the fridge, never on the bench

The chart assumes a fridge at 40°F (4°C) or below. Date raw product on receipt and again when it moves.

CRITICAL TEMPERATURES · FDA FOOD CODE 2022

COLD HOLD

41°F (5°C)

or below · §3-501.16

HOT HOLD

135°F (57°C)

or above · §3-501.16

COOLING · TWO STAGES

135°F to 70°F (57°C to 21°C) in 2 h

then to 41°F (5°C) or below within 4 more hours · §3-501.14

REHEAT FOR HOT HOLDING

165°F (74°C)

within 2 hours · §3-403.11

Cook to: poultry 165°F (74°C) · ground meat 155°F (68°C) · whole cuts, fish, eggs for immediate service 145°F (63°C) · §3-401.11

COLD HOLDING · FDA FOOD CODE 2022 §3-501.16

Log at open, mid-shift and close. Reading above 41°F (5°C): find the cause, move product to a unit that is holding, and write down what you did.

UNIT NAME / LOCATION _____ MONTH _____

TARGET

41°F (5°C) or below

cold holding, all TCS food

DATE	TIME	READING °F	IN RANGE	INITIALS	CORRECTIVE ACTION
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		

FREEZER TEMP LOG

FROZEN STORAGE · FDA/USDA COLD FOOD STORAGE CHART

Log at open and close. Reading above 0°F (−18°C): check the door seal and the defrost cycle, keep it shut, and write down what you did. Anything that has softened moves to the fridge and gets dated.

UNIT NAME / LOCATION _____ MONTH _____

TARGET
0°F (−18°C) or below
frozen storage

DATE	TIME	READING °F	IN RANGE	INITIALS	CORRECTIVE ACTION
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		

HOT-HOLD TEMP LOG

HOT HOLDING · FDA FOOD CODE 2022 §3-501.16

Log every 2 hours through service, each well or pan on its own line. Reading below 135°F (57°C):
reheat to 165°F (74°C) or discard. The manager makes the call. Write it down.

UNIT NAME / LOCATION _____ MONTH _____

TARGET

135°F (57°C) or above

hot holding, all TCS food

DATE	TIME	READING °F	IN RANGE	INITIALS	CORRECTIVE ACTION
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
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			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		
			Y / N		

KITCHEN BANDITS

COOLING LOG

Sheet 06 / 07
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COOLING COOKED TCS FOOD · FDA FOOD CODE 2022 §3-501.14

Two stages. From 135°F to 70°F (57°C to 21°C) within 2 hours, then to 41°F (5°C) or below within 4 more hours. Six hours total from 135°F. Miss the 2-hour mark: reheat to 165°F (74°C) and start again, or discard.

Cool fast: shallow pans, ice bath, ice paddle, blast chiller, portion it down. Loosely covered until it is cold (§3-501.15). One line per batch.

DATE _____ KITCHEN / STATION _____

TARGETS

2 h · 70°F (21°C)

6 h · 41°F (5°C)

or below, at each check

ITEM	START TIME	START TEMP °F	2 H CHECK · 70°F (21°C) OR BELOW		6 H CHECK · 41°F (5°C) OR BELOW		INITIALS	CORRECTIVE ACTION
			TIME	TEMP °F	TIME	TEMP °F		

ALLERGEN MATRIX

THE BIG 9 · FASTER ACT OF 2021 · SESAME SINCE JANUARY 1, 2023

One row per menu item. Mark every allergen it contains, and every one it can pick up from shared equipment or prep. Blank means free of it. Redo the row when the recipe or the supplier changes.

KITCHEN / MENU _____

REVIEWED ON _____ BY _____

KEY

☐ C

 contains

☐ M

 may contain: shared equipment or prep

☐

 blank: free of it

MENU ITEM	MILK	EGGS	FISH	CRUSTACEAN SHELLFISH	TREE NUTS	PEANUTS	WHEAT	SOYBEANS	SESAME

A working template, not a legal allergen statement. Confirm every row against your recipes and your suppliers' labels. On the line, the purple band marks allergen-safe or allergen-marked items (see the day dot key).