

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