**Chapter 7**

Guidelines for holding food

* Food covers and sneeze guards
* Temperature
  + Hold hot foods at 135 F or higher
  + Hold cold foods at 41 F or lower
* Use a thermometer to check a food’s internal temperature. NEVER use the temperature gauge on a holding unit to check the food’s temperature because it does not verify internal temp
* Check food temps every 4 hours
  + Throw out food that is not 41 F or lower or 135 F or higher
  + You can also check food temps every 2 hours to leave time for corrective action
* Never use hot holding equipment to reheat food unless it is built to do so. Most equipment does not pass food through the temp danger zone quickly enough. Reheat food correctly AND THEN move it to the hold holding unit

Holding food without temp control

* If you primarily serve a high risk population, you cannot hold TCS foods without temp control
* Example of when TCS food might be held without temp control
  + When displaying food for a short time, such as an offsite catered event
  + When electricity is not available to power holding equipment
* You can hold cold food without temp control for up to 6 hours if you:
  + Held the food at 41 F or below before removing it from refrigeration
  + Label the food with the time you removed it from the fridge and the time it must be thrown out. The discard time must be 6 hours from the time you removed the food from the fridge
  + Food temp cannot exceed 70 F while it is being served. Any food that exceeds this must be thrown out.
  + Sell, serve, or throw out the food within 6 hours
* You can hold hot food without temp control for up to 4 hours IF you:
  + Hold the food at 135 F of higher before removing it from temp control
  + Label the food with the time it must be discarded (4 hours)
  + Sell, serve, or throw out the food within 4 hours

The biggest threat to ready to eat foods is contamination

* Bare hand contact with food
  + Must wear single use gloves whenever handling ready to eat food
  + Food can also be handled with tongs, a spatula, or other utensils as an alternative to wearing gloves
* Clean and sanitize utensils
  + Use separate utensils for each food item
  + Clean and sanitize after each serving task
  + If using utensils continuously, clean and sanitize every 4 hours
* Serving utensils
  + Store with the handle extended above the rim of the container
  + If serving a non TSC food item, you can place them on a clean and sanitized food contact surface
  + Spoons or scoops used to serve foods such as ice cream or mashed potatoes can be stored under running water or a container of water that is at least 135 F
* Refilling take home containers
  + Can be refilled if they were designed to be reused, they were previously provided to a guest by the operation, and/or they were cleaned and sanitized correctly
  + Take home beverage containers can also be refilled as long as the beverage is not a TCS food and the container will be refilled for the same guest

Service staff guidelines

* Hold dishes by the bottom or the edge
* Hold glasses by the middle, bottom, or stem
* Do not touch the food contact areas of dishes or glassware
* Carry glasses in a rack or tray to avoid touching the food contact surfaces
* Do not stack glasses when carrying them
* Hold flatware by the handle
* Do not hold flatware by food contact surfaces
* Store flatware so that the servers grasp handles, not food contact surfaces
* Avoid bare hand contact with food that is ready to eat
* Use ice scoops or tongs to get ice
* Never scoop ice with your bare hands or a glass

Re-serving food

* Do not re-serve food returned by one guest to another guest
* You must protect condiments from contamination. Serve them in their original containers or in containers designed to prevent contamination. Consider offering individual packets
* Do not re-serve uneaten bread and change linens in bread baskets after each guest
* Never re-serve garnishes
* You may re-serve packaged food in good condition. For example, a packet of crackers.

Self-Service Areas

* Protection such as sneeze guards, display cases, packaging
* Label all food
* Keep hot food at 135 F or warmer and cold food at 41 F or below
* Do not let guests refill dirt plates or use dirty utensils. Pathogens (such as norovirus) can be transferred this way
* Ice should never be used as an ingredient to keep food cold

Off-site service

* Pack food in insulated food grade containers
* Label food with a use by date and time
* Clean the inside of delivery vehicles regularly
* Check internal food temps
* Make sure all service sites have the correct utilities such as safe water and garbage containers stored away from the food prep/storage/serving areas
* Store raw meat away from ready to eat items

Vending machines

* Check product shelf life daily
* Keep TCS foods at correct temp
* Dispense TCS foods in original container
* Wash and wrap fresh fruit with edible peels before putting in machine