

# SOP: Cooling Procedures and Time/Temperature Tracking

This SOP details **cooling procedures and time/temperature tracking** to ensure food safety and quality. It covers proper methods for rapidly cooling food to safe temperatures, monitoring cooling times and temperatures, recording data accurately, and maintaining compliance with food safety regulations. The goal is to prevent bacterial growth and ensure safe storage of perishable items through consistent temperature control and documentation practices.

## 1. Scope

This procedure applies to all employees involved in cooling, storing, and monitoring potentially hazardous foods.

## 2. Responsibilities

- **Kitchen Staff:** Follow cooling methods, record temperatures and times.
- **Supervisors/Managers:** Review records and ensure compliance with SOP.
- **Food Safety Officer:** Audit records and train staff periodically.

## 3. Cooling Procedures

1. Transfer hot food to shallow pans (no more than 2 inches deep) immediately after cooking.
2. Place pans in an ice bath, blast chiller, or refrigerator promptly.
3. Stir foods regularly to encourage even cooling if appropriate.
4. Vent containers loosely to allow heat to escape while preventing contamination.
5. Do not stack pans during cooling.

## 4. Time and Temperature Requirements

- **Within 2 hours:** Cool food from 135°F (57°C) to 70°F (21°C).
- **Within 4 additional hours:** Cool food from 70°F (21°C) to 41°F (5°C) or lower.

**If food does not reach targets, it must be reheated and the cooling process restarted or discarded.**

## 5. Time/Temperature Monitoring and Recording

1. Use a calibrated food thermometer and clean between uses.
2. Record temperatures and times at the following intervals:
  - At the start of cooling
  - After 2 hours
  - At completion (within 6 hours total)
3. Document corrective actions if cooling targets are not met.
4. Store completed logs for at least 90 days.

## 6. Cooling Log Template

Date	Food Item	Batch #	Start Temp (°F/°C)	Time	2 Hr Temp (°F/°C)	Time	6 Hr Final Temp (°F/°C)	Time	Initials	Comments/Corrective Action

## 7. Corrective Actions

- Reheat and recool food if temperature targets are not reached within required time frames.
- Discard food if time/temperature requirements cannot be achieved upon reheating.
- Document all actions taken, including reasons for discard, if applicable.

## 8. Review and Verification

- Supervisors review logs daily for completeness and accuracy.
- Food Safety Officer audits records weekly and provides feedback/training as needed.

## 9. References

- FDA Food Code (latest edition)
- Local health department regulations
- Company food safety policies