

# SOP Template: Cooking, Cooling, and Reheating Guidelines

This SOP provides comprehensive **cooking, cooling, and reheating guidelines** to ensure food safety and quality. It covers proper cooking temperatures to eliminate harmful bacteria, safe methods for cooling cooked foods to prevent microbial growth, and recommended reheating procedures to maintain food integrity while avoiding contamination. Adhering to these guidelines helps minimize foodborne illness risks and supports compliance with health regulations in food preparation environments.

## 1. Purpose

To establish procedures that ensure food is cooked, cooled, and reheated safely to prevent foodborne illness and comply with health regulations.

## 2. Scope

This SOP applies to all food handlers and kitchen staff involved in preparing, cooling, and reheating food items.

## 3. Responsibilities

- All food handlers must follow these guidelines and monitor food temperatures regularly.
- Supervisors are responsible for staff training and SOP compliance.

## 4. Cooking Guidelines

| Food Item                                      | Minimum Internal Temperature | Holding Time       |
|--|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Poultry (whole/ground)                         | 74°C (165°F)                 | 15 seconds         |
| Ground meats (beef, pork, lamb)                | 71°C (160°F)                 | 15 seconds         |
| Fish and seafood                               | 63°C (145°F)                 | 15 seconds         |
| Pork, beef, veal, lamb (steaks, chops, roasts) | 63°C (145°F)                 | 3 minutes (roasts) |
| Eggs cooked to order                           | 63°C (145°F)                 | 15 seconds         |
| Hot held food                                  | 60°C (140°F)                 | -                  |

- Use a calibrated probe thermometer to verify temperatures.
- Record product and temperature after cooking.
- Discard any food not reaching required temperatures.

## 5. Cooling Guidelines

- Cool food from **60°C (140°F)** to **21°C (70°F)** within **2 hours**.
- Continue cooling from **21°C (70°F)** to **5°C (41°F)** or lower within the next **4 hours** (total cooling time: 6 hours).
- Divide large portions into smaller containers, use shallow pans, and ensure containers are uncovered or loosely covered while cooling.
- Use blast chillers or ice baths as needed to expedite cooling.
- Monitor and record temperatures at key intervals.
- Label cooled items with date and time.

## 6. Reheating Guidelines

- Reheat all potentially hazardous foods to at least **74°C (165°F)** within **2 hours** before hot holding or service.
- Microwave: Cover, rotate/stir food and allow standing time; measure temperature in several locations.
- Do not use hot holding equipment to reheat food unless designed for rapid reheating.
- Discard food not reaching required temperature within specified time.
- Monitor and document reheating temperatures.

## **7. Monitoring and Record Keeping**

- Use temperature logs for cooking, cooling, and reheating processes.
- Review records weekly to ensure compliance and identify trends.
- Calibrate thermometers regularly and document calibration results.

## **8. Corrective Actions**

- Do not serve or use foods that have not met temperature or time guidelines.
- Re-train staff as needed when procedures are not followed.
- Document all corrective actions on temperature logs.

## **9. References**

- Food Code (FDA, current edition)
- Local and state health department regulations