

SOP Template: Hot Holding Temperature Control and Monitoring

This SOP details the procedures for **hot holding temperature control and monitoring**, ensuring that food is maintained at safe temperatures to prevent bacterial growth and foodborne illnesses. It covers the temperature standards for hot holding, methods for regular temperature monitoring, documentation requirements, corrective actions when temperatures fall outside safe ranges, and the use of calibrated thermometers. The goal is to maintain food safety and quality by adhering to strict temperature control protocols during hot holding.

Scope

This SOP applies to all staff involved in food preparation, handling, and storage where hot holding of food is required.

Responsible Personnel

- Kitchen staff
- Supervisors/Managers
- Food safety personnel

Hot Holding Temperature Standards

- Maintain hot food at or above **135°F (57°C)** at all times.
- Discard any food held below 135°F (57°C) for more than 2 hours.

Procedure for Hot Holding and Monitoring

1. Preheat hot holding equipment (steam tables, warmers) before placing food inside.
2. Verify and record the temperature of the hot holding unit before use.
3. Place cooked food items into hot holding unit within 15 minutes of preparation.
4. Use a **calibrated, food-grade thermometer** to monitor the internal temperature of hot-held food.
5. Check and record the temperature **every 2 hours** using the Hot Holding Temperature Log.
6. For each check, insert the thermometer into the thickest part of the food, avoiding bone and contact with the container.
7. Clean and sanitize thermometers before and after each use.

Monitoring and Documentation

- Complete and maintain the **Hot Holding Temperature Log** for each food item.
- Document time, temperature, food item, and initials of responsible staff.

Time	Food Item	Temperature (°F/°C)	Staff Initials	Corrective Action (if needed)
10:00 AM	Chicken Curry	145°F / 63°C	JS	
12:00 PM	Chicken Curry	133°F / 56°C	JS	Reheated to 165°F, returned to hot holding

Corrective Action

- If food temperature falls below 135°F (57°C) for less than 2 hours, reheat the food rapidly to 165°F (74°C) and return to hot holding.
- If food temperature falls below 135°F (57°C) for more than 2 hours, **discard** the food.
- Document all corrective actions on the Hot Holding Temperature Log.
- Report equipment malfunction to the supervisor or maintenance staff immediately.

Calibration of Thermometers

- Calibrate thermometers **daily** or before each use and after dropping or extreme temperature changes.
- Follow manufacturer instructions for calibration.
- Document calibration in the Thermometer Calibration Log.

Training

- All relevant staff must be trained on this SOP and hot holding procedures.
- Training records should be maintained by the supervisor/manager.

References

- FDA Food Code, Current Edition
- Local Health Department Guidelines
- Manufacturer instructions for equipment and thermometers