

# 3. HOUSE RULES

## COLD TEMPERATURE CONTROL

### FOR RETAIL BUSINESSES USING RETAILS SAFE AND HANDLING ONLY COLD FOOD

The House Rules Section contains 8 sub-sections, each of which covers a different food safety management subject. Once you have completed the Business Selector you will have selected the House Rules relevant to your type of business.

Every House Rule sub-section begins with guidance and then provides advice on how to write your own House Rules.

A template is then provided for you to use when writing your House Rules. Once completed, this should reflect your current safe working practices.

#### WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

- Read the guidance provided at the beginning of this sub-section
- Draw up your own House Rules describing how you intend to manage cold temperature control in your business
- Once you have completed all your House Rules, remember to update your Action Plan

Think about the cold temperature control practices that you already have in place. It is possible that you will simply have to write these down to produce your COLD Temperature Control House Rules.

**THE COLD TEMPERATURE CONTROL HOUSE RULES ARE AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT OF YOUR HACCP BASED SYSTEM AND MUST BE KEPT UP TO DATE AT ALL TIMES**



**This sub-section will give guidance on Temperature Control and is intended for businesses that handle only COLD food. At the end of the sub-section you will be asked to write your own House Rules to show how you manage COLD temperature control in your business.**

#### HAZARDS (What can go wrong)

- **Microbiological Contamination** – Harmful bacteria are a hazard present in many of the foods handled in retail businesses. If these bacteria are not controlled they may multiply to dangerous levels and cause food poisoning.

#### CONTROLS (How you can prevent the hazard)

Bacteria are invisible to the naked eye and cannot be physically removed from food. All we can do is control their numbers. This can be achieved by keeping certain foods cold.

#### MONITORING (Checking your Control Measures)

When using HACCP based procedures, you are required to check that your Critical Limits are being met. This checking is referred to as **Monitoring**. The most reliable method of monitoring temperatures is by the use of a suitable thermometer – a procedure often referred to as Probing. However, it is not always necessary or appropriate to use a thermometer. In such cases, other methods may be more practical.

At the end of this sub-section, you will be asked to draw up House Rules for COLD Temperature Control. These House Rules should include the Critical Limits for each process step and the Monitoring procedures you will follow.

**For example**, you may decide that you refrigerate high risk foods at a maximum of 5°C. Similarly, you may decide that your freezer should operate at a maximum of -18°C. These temperatures would then be the Critical Limits for **Refrigerated Storage** and **Frozen Storage** respectively.



- Temperature dials built into refrigerators, chills and cold displays indicate the air temperature within the appliance. This can be useful for day-to-day monitoring but should be checked regularly with a hand held digital thermometer as a back-up check.
- Chill sandwich filling ingredients before placing in the display cabinet, for example tuna and jars of mayonnaise.
- Don't switch off the refrigerators and freezers overnight to save electricity costs.
- Don't overstock display cabinets, chills and freezers.

### What are the key COLD temperature controls in a Retail Food Business?

PROCESS STEP	TEMPERATURE CONTROL MEASURE/CRITICAL LIMIT
<b>INCOMING STOCK</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport/accept chilled food at your specified temperature, for example <b>5°C or below</b></li> <li>• Transport/accept frozen food at your specified temperature for example <b>-18°C or below</b></li> </ul> <p>Alternatively it may be appropriate when collecting food to set a time limit for the journey back to the shop. The shorter the journey time, the lower the temperature of the food on arrival.</p>
<b>STORAGE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Store chilled food at your specified temperature, for example <b>5°C or below</b></li> <li>• Store frozen food at your specified temperature, for example <b>-18°C or below</b></li> </ul>
<b>PREPARATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep cooked/ready-to-eat food within the refrigerator or chill until it is required, then prepare/handle without delay</li> <li>• Thoroughly defrost all frozen foods in a refrigerator, chill or cool area</li> </ul>
<b>COLD DISPLAY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chilled foods being displayed cold should be kept under refrigeration at your specified temperature for example <b>5°C or below</b> until sold.</li> </ul>

These key temperatures are referred to as 'Critical Limits'. There may be alternative Critical Limits which are more suitable for you, for example setting a maximum time to transport the food. The Critical Limits that you choose must be sufficient to ensure that the food is safe to sell. For further advice, you should contact your Enforcement Officer.

### THERMOMETERS

In many cases, the temperature of refrigerators, chills and cold display cabinets can be checked using a probe thermometer. Ideally, a hand-held digital thermometer should be used when probing foods and checking air temperatures. This may be supplemented by additional "in-place" thermometers which may be located in refrigerators, chills and cold display cabinets.



- Thermometers should be kept clean at all times - sanitised/disinfected before/after each use.
- It is important that you regularly check that your thermometer is working correctly. This can be done by taking a reading in iced water. When using this method, the temperature reading should be between -1°C and +1°C. Alternatively, you might take a reading in boiling water. In this case, the temperature reading should read between 99°C and 101°C.
- If your thermometer check is outside the temperature ranges noted above, the unit should be replaced or returned to the manufacturer to be recalibrated.
- Under no circumstances should a mercury-in-glass thermometer be used as it would present a contamination risk if it were to break.

## CHECKING COLD TEMPERATURES

### Monitoring Freezers

- **Function** - When checking that a freezer is functioning properly, it may be sufficient to make sure that contents are still obviously frozen and that there is no visible evidence of defrosting. If you choose to check the function of your freezer, it would be good practice to do an occasional check with a hand-held digital thermometer, as backup. You should specify the frequency of these checks in your House Rules.
- **Temperature** - Alternatively you may prefer to check the temperature in the freezer using a hand-held digital thermometer.



#### It is essential that the Critical Limit is achieved on every occasion, regardless of the temperature control method used

- It is advisable to check all refrigerator, chill and cold display cabinet temperatures at the start of the working day and at some other part of the day.
- Avoid checking the temperature of refrigerators, chills and cold displays immediately after the door/lid has been open for any significant period of time or during a defrost cycle.
- Avoid puncturing the packaging of wrapped food when checking temperatures. In this case, temperature readings should be taken from between the packs.

### SUMMARY

- Whatever temperature control method is being used, it is essential that the Critical Limit is achieved on every occasion. However, this does not mean that every item of food which is being held cold needs to be monitored using a thermometer on every occasion.
- Your methods of temperature monitoring will be dependent on the knowledge and understanding of your staff handling food together with the effectiveness and efficiency of your work equipment.
- You are provided with an example form in the **Records** Section that can be used to record COLD temperature monitoring. The form can be adapted to suit your business, remember it is your decision which records are appropriate for you.

**You must determine your methods of temperature Monitoring in your COLD Temperature Control House Rules**

## WHAT YOU NEED TO DO NOW

To effectively manage the **COLD** temperature control part of your HACCP based system, use the information in this sub-section for guidance, go to the next page then write a list of House Rules for you and your staff.

### How to draw up your **COLD** Temperature Control House Rules

- Consider what you do – 'Retail**Safe**' requires that you consider the various Temperature Control procedures that are followed in your business.
- Write these procedures down in the table on the next page – in other words, write down the temperature control measures that are applied at each process step. Remember to include a Critical Limit for each process step.
- Refer back to the key temperature controls table at the start of this sub-section for guidance on suitable Critical Limits. Alternatively, you may wish to specify other temperatures which are more appropriate for your business.
- Write down how you will monitor temperature control – state the monitoring procedure you intend to use to ensure your Critical Limit has been achieved. Remember to state clearly the frequency of monitoring and describe how this monitoring will be recorded.

Here is an example of how you could write your House Rules :

Process Step	Temperature Control Measure and Critical Limits	Monitoring Method, Frequency, Record Used
STORAGE	<i>Fridges operate at maximum of 5°C</i>	<i>Fridges checked daily before opening and in the afternoon Checks made above recorded on the COLD Record</i>

### MONITORING (Checking your Control Measures)

Once you have completed your House Rules for **COLD** Temperature Control, you must then monitor their use.

### RECORDING (Keeping a Record of your Monitoring)

Keep a Record of the Monitoring you carry out. This can be done by using or adapting the **COLD** Record located in the **Records** Section of this manual

**CORRECTIVE ACTION** (What to do if things go wrong)

If you find that your **COLD** Temperature Control House Rules are not being followed you must make a record of the problem you have identified and the action you have taken to correct it (this is known as a Corrective Action). For example, if your Critical Limit for your refrigerator is 5°C and you carry out a check and find that the temperature is 10°C, recheck the temperature a short time later and consider if the food is safe to use. Call a Service Engineer to check/repair equipment.

**This information can be entered in the COLD Record.**

It is required that all Records of Monitoring, at a frequency decided by you, and any other Corrective Action(s) taken be kept for an appropriate period of time to demonstrate that your HACCP based system is working effectively.

**Action Plan**

Once you have completed all your House Rules, remember to update your Action Plan.

## TEMPERATURE CONTROL HOUSE RULES

Enter a statement of your **COLD Temperature Control House Rules** in the table below:

Process Step	Temperature Control Measure and Critical Limits	Monitoring Method, Frequency, Record Used
INCOMING STOCK		
STORAGE		
PREPARATION		
COLD DISPLAY		

Signed ..... Position in the business ..... Date .....

**The Temperature Control House Rules are an essential component of your HACCP based system and must be kept up to date at all times.**