

# Thermometers in your business

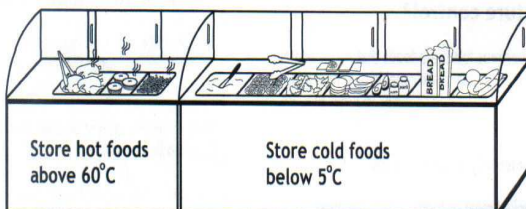
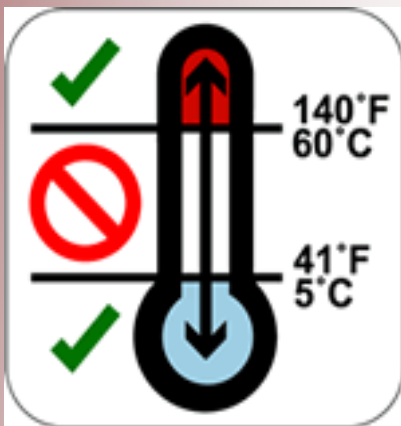
## TEMPERATURE TIPS

- Food must be cooled from 60°C to 21°C in a maximum of two hours and from 21°C to 5°C within a maximum of four hours.
- **Only reheat food ONCE** than it must be eaten or thrown away.
- Always cover & store cooked food **ABOVE** raw foods in the fridge.



## INTERESTING FACTS

- 5.4 million Australians report as having food poisoning.
- 120 Australians die from food poisoning every year.
- Did you know sponges hold more cold water than hot?
- It is said that 23% of consumer's refrigerators are not cold enough.



## Using Thermometers in Your Business

*Every business that sells, stores, transports, prepares or cooks potentially hazardous foods must have a thermometer that is readily accessible and is in good working order.*

*Potentially hazardous food are foods that contain food poisoning bacteria this includes meat, fish, dairy products and eggs. It also includes cooked rice and pasta.*

Your business must have a **probe thermometer** that can be inserted into food to measure its core temperature.

**Infrared thermometers** are used to measure the surface temperature of food.

Some cool rooms, bain-marie units and sandwich display units may have thermometers attached to them. These are called **fixed thermometers** and measure the operating temperature of the unit but **NOT** the actual temperature of the food.

You can buy a probe thermometer from companies that supply electronic testing equipment or catering equipment.

*Glass thermometers are **NOT** permitted in food businesses. There are health concerns due to breakage and potential chemical spills. They also tend to be slower and require added training to properly use and read.*

### How to take the temperature of food

- Rinse the probe under hot running water (80°C) for about 6 sec
- Wash in sanitising solution or use sanitising wipes before placing the probe into food (Alcohol wipes from the chemist can be used)
- Take the core temperature by inserting the probe into the thickest part of the food.
- Take the reading at least 10 seconds after insertion to be sure that reading has stabilised.
- Make sure the probe is washed and sanitised between every reading with particular care taken between raw and cooked foods.
- When using to measure hot & cold food, wait for the thermometer to return to room temperature between measurements.

*Remember:* Liquids (eg. soups, sauces) should be stirred before readings are taken to ensure you get an even temperature. The outside cools down before the middle.

Surface temperatures are taken for packaged, frozen foods and vacuum packaged products. These are measured by inserting the probe between two packets of food.



**Color is NOT a reliable indicator**



For more information on thermometers in your food business contact a Environmental Health Officer at the Environmental Health & Local Laws Unit on 5434 6075



**City of Greater Bendigo**  
Environmental Health & Local Laws Unit  
'Hopetoun Mill'  
15 Hopetoun Street, Bendigo  
PO Box 733  
Bendigo Victoria 3552

**Phone:** (03) 5434 6075  
**TTY:** (03) 5434 6460

**e-mail:** [health@bendigo.vic.gov.au](mailto:health@bendigo.vic.gov.au)



## Maintaining Thermometers

You must make sure that batteries are regularly checked and replaced in your thermometers.

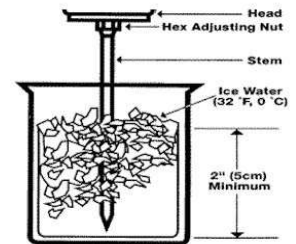
Thermometers are very sensitive and will break, or lose their accuracy if they are dropped or handled roughly. You must make sure that the thermometer is fixed or replaced when broken.

## Calibrating Thermometers

Thermometers must be maintained to an accuracy of at least plus or minus 1°C. An external contractor, manufacturer or distributor will be able to calibrate the thermometer and this should be done at least once a year. You can also calibrate thermometers using the following methods.

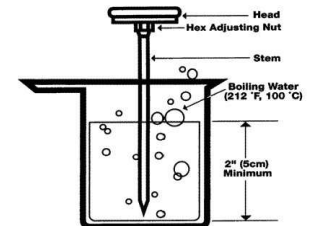
### 1. Ice Water Slurry Method

- Crush several pieces of ice (about 50-100g) and place in a small container such as a drinking glass.
- Add enough cold water to produce a slurry but not so much that the ice floats.
- Stir the ice slurry vigorously and let stand for approx 5 minutes.
- Insert the thermometer into the slurry and wait at least one to two minutes for the reading to stabilise.
- Record the temperature.
- Take three further readings at least one minute apart.
- If consecutive readings are not within 0.5°C replace or service the thermometer.
- If the temperature readings are higher than +1°C or lower than -1°C attach a label to the thermometer showing the date the calibration check was made and the variation from 0°C. Alternatively purchase a new thermometer.



### 2. Boiling Water method

- Bring a container of water to the boil.
- Insert the thermometer probe into the boiling water and wait for the reading to stabilise.
- Record the temperature.
- Take 3 further readings at least 1 minute apart.
- The reading should be 100°C.
- If the temperature reads higher than 101°C or lower than 99°C attach a label to the thermometer showing the date the calibration check was made and the variation from 100°C. Alternatively purchase a new thermometer.



### How to calibrate/check a fixed permanent thermometer

Fixed thermometers (those fixed inside cool rooms, refrigerators and display cabinets) are calibrated against hand held thermometers (which have themselves undergone a recent calibration check).

- Keep a container of water in the fridge or coolroom for the purpose of checking temperatures. (Don't forget to regularly change the water).
- Place a hand held thermometer into the container of water.
- Wait for the reading to stabilise.
- Record the temperature.
- The fixed and hand held thermometers should read to within 0.5°C of each other.
- If the variation is greater than 1°C place a label near the fixed thermometer to indicate its error.

Calibration checks should be conducted and documented as per the instructions of your Food Safety Program.

