




SAFE METHOD:

HOT HOLDING



It is very important to keep food hot until serving to prevent harmful bacteria from growing.

SAFETY POINT	WHY?	HOW DO YOU DO THIS?
<p>If you need to keep food hot before serving, you should use suitable equipment.</p>	<p>It is difficult to hold food at a consistent, safe temperature without suitable equipment.</p> <p>Bain-marie</p>  <p>Soup kettle</p> 	<p>Do you hot hold?</p> <p>Yes No</p> <p>What equipment do you use?</p>
<p>Preheat hot holding equipment before you put any food in it.</p>	<p>Putting food into cold equipment means it might not be kept hot enough to stop harmful bacteria growing.</p>	
<p>Food must be cooked thoroughly and steaming hot before hot holding begins.</p>	<p>Hot holding equipment is for hot holding only. It should not be used to cook or reheat food.</p> 	<p>Do you do this?</p> <p>Yes No</p>

THINK TWICE!

Hot food must be kept at 63°C or above, except for certain exceptions.

When you display hot food, e.g. on a buffet, you should use suitable hot holding equipment to keep it above 63°C.

If this is not possible, you can take food out of hot holding to display it for up to two hours, but you can only do this once.

Food that has not been used within two hours, should either be reheated until it is steaming hot and put back in hot holding or chilled down as quickly as possible to 8°C or below. If it has been out for more than two hours throw it away.

Remember to keep the food at a safe temperature until it is used.

If you do take food out of hot holding to display it, remember not to mix new food with the food that is already on display.

This could lead to the older food being left out for too long.



CHECK IT

Make sure food is steaming hot all the way through from the moment it is cooked to the moment it is served.



If you do not do this, what do you do?

WHAT TO DO IF THINGS GO WRONG



If a dish is not hot enough at any point during hot holding:

- reheat it until it is steaming hot and put back into hot holding (you should only do this once)
- or chill down the food safely (see the 'Chilling down hot food' safe method in the Chilling section) and reheat it later before serving.

If you cannot do either of these things, throw the food away.

Remember that some foods need extra care. See the 'Foods that need extra care' safe method.

HOW TO STOP THIS HAPPENING AGAIN

- Check your equipment is working correctly.
- Review your hot holding safe method. Try using a higher temperature setting or smaller quantities of food.
- Train staff again on this safe method.
- Improve staff supervision.

Write down what went wrong and what you did about it in your diary.



PROVE IT

If you would like extra reassurance that food in hot holding is hot enough, you can use a temperature probe as a one-off test to prove that your method keeps food at a safe temperature. (See the 'Prove it' method in the Management section for advice on using probes safely.)