

## Time as a control (TAAC)

The Food Code allows the use of time only, rather than time in conjunction with temperature, as the public health control for certain foods. (Reference WAC [246-215-03530](#))

### Criteria for using TAAC

If time is used as the public health control, the following criteria *must be* met:

- The food must be marked or otherwise identified to indicate the time that is four hours past the time when food is removed from temperature control;
- The food must be cooked, served, served if RTE, or discarded within four hours; and
- Food that is unmarked, or marked to exceed a four hour limit, must be discarded.

**Written procedures** that ensure compliance with the TAAC provision must be prepared in advance and maintained in the food establishment. The written procedures must be available to the Regulatory Authority upon request and include cooling methods for food that is cooked and cooled prior to using time as a public health control.

### Acceptable TAAC Foods

- **Working supplies of PHF before cooking**, such as raw hamburger patties or pizza ingredients.
- **RTE PHF displayed or held for immediate consumption**, such as catered service, food served from quick service establishments, individual samples, or food individually portioned and packaged for immediate consumption.

**Note:** Facilities that service a highly susceptible population *may not* use TAAC for raw eggs.

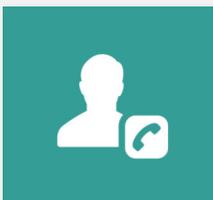
### Additional Information

**What is “temperature control”?** Food that is properly held at or below 41°F or at or above 135°F.

**Do written procedures need to be pre-approved by the regulatory authority?** Pre-approval of written procedures is not required by the Washington State Retail Food Code, although food establishments are encouraged to work with their regulatory authority to develop procedures that will meet the TAAC requirements.

**What are acceptable means for identifying food for which TAAC is being used?** The key is to make sure food employees and regulators can easily and accurately identify the time that food has been out of temperature control. Acceptable methods include stickers, tape, and writing on paper liners. If food is not marked or labeled, the food must be discarded.

**If a temperature holding unit malfunctions and food cannot be temperature controlled, can TAAC be used?** TAAC is designed to be used under carefully controlled circumstances and with close monitoring. It is not meant as an emergency backup in case of equipment failures, improper design, or lack of maintenance.



Food Safety Program, Washington State Department of Health  
[food.safety@doh.wa.gov](mailto:food.safety@doh.wa.gov) | 360-236-3330

DOH 332-020 August 2020

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email [civil.rights@doh.wa.gov](mailto:civil.rights@doh.wa.gov).