

## GENERAL THERMOMETER GUIDELINES

**Objective:** *After completing this week's lesson your employees should be able to:*

- Identify general guidelines for using thermometers properly
- Check the temperature of different types of food during receiving

Remind your employees that last week they began to learn why the thermometer is the most important tool an establishment has to prevent time-temperature abuse, especially during receiving. Tell them that in order to get the most from a thermometer, they should follow a few simple guidelines.

**Keep thermometers and their storage cases clean.** Wash, rinse, sanitize, and air dry thermometers before and after each use to prevent cross-contamination. Use an approved food-contact surface sanitizing solution to sanitize them.

**Calibrate thermometers regularly to ensure accuracy.** Do this before each shift or before each day's deliveries. Recalibrate thermometers after they have been dropped or after they have experienced an extreme temperature change.

**Never use glass thermometers filled with mercury or spirits to monitor the temperature of food.** They can break, and pose a serious hazard to customers and employees.

**Wait for the thermometer reading to steady before recording the temperature of a food item.** Wait at least fifteen seconds from the time the thermometer stem or probe is inserted into the food.

### How to Check Temperatures of Deliveries

Tell employees that different food items require different methods for checking temperature. In other words, *where* they place the thermometer is key. Discuss the proper placement of a thermometer for each of the following food items.

**Meat, Poultry, Fish:** Insert the thermometer stem or probe directly into the thickest part of the product (usually the center). It is a good practice to take at least two readings, which should be in different locations since product temperatures may vary across the food portion.

**MAP, Vacuum-packed, and *Sous vide* Food** (fresh cut produce, bacon, some frozen entrees): Insert the thermometer stem or probe between two packages, being careful not to puncture them.

**Liquids or other Packaged Food:** Open the package and insert the thermometer stem or probe into the food until the sensing area is immersed.

**Bagged Items or Bulk Liquids:** Fold the bag or pouch around the thermometer stem or probe.

**Live Shellfish:** Insert the thermometer stem or probe into the middle of the carton or case, between the shellfish for an ambient reading.

End the lesson by answering any questions that employees may have about accepting and rejecting deliveries in your establishment. Next, distribute the activity sheet found on the next page.

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K  
  
F  
O  
U  
R



## The Rest of the Story

**Directions:** Fill in each missing word in the following story. The numbers appearing before each blank correspond to the list below. Choose the word from the list that best finishes the sentence.

John is in charge of receiving deliveries at the *Whistling Pig* Market. First, he receives a shipment of raw pork roasts. He selects one of the roasts and inserts the thermometer into the 1. \_\_\_\_\_ of the roast. He accepts the roast because it is at 41°F (5°C).

Next, John receives several cases of fresh-cut salad. He pulls two bags from a case and places the thermometer stem 2. \_\_\_\_\_ them to check their temperature. He is careful not to 3. \_\_\_\_\_ the bags.

John must also inspect a case of potato salad, which has been shipped in cartons. He opens a carton and inserts the thermometer into the potato salad until the 4. \_\_\_\_\_ area of the thermometer is completely immersed. The potato salad is the proper temperature.

Finally, John inspects a carton of fresh lobsters. He places the thermometer in the 6. \_\_\_\_\_ of the carton to take an 7. \_\_\_\_\_ temperature reading.

1. center  
thinnest portion  
side

2. inside  
between  
beside

3. open  
warm  
puncture

4. sensing  
calibration  
adjusting

5. opens  
closes  
folds

6. back  
middle  
front

7. ambient  
external  
internal