

Food Temperature Log Template

Checklist · US · Updated 2026-08-09 · Square brackets are placeholders to replace with your own details.

A food temperature log is the written record of the temperature checks that keep food out of the danger zone — at receiving, in cold and hot holding, and at cooking and reheating — with the reading, the time, the initials of the person who took it, and the corrective action when a check fails. It is the document a health inspector asks for by name.

Temperature control is the single biggest lever in food safety: most foodborne illness traces back to food held too long at the wrong temperature. The log does two jobs at once — it forces the checks to happen on schedule, and it proves they happened when the inspector, the insurer, or a complaint investigation asks.

This template gives you the standards to log against, the four logs themselves (receiving, cold holding, hot holding, cooking and reheating), and the corrective actions that turn a bad reading into a decision instead of a shrug.

Purpose and scope

This log records the temperature checks [Your company] performs at [location] for receiving, cold holding, hot holding, and cooking and reheating. It applies to everyone who receives, prepares, holds, or serves food; the [person in charge] verifies the logs each shift.

Every entry needs four things: the food or unit checked, the reading, the time, and the initials of the person who took it. A failed check additionally needs the corrective action taken.

Food temperature chart — the standards to log against

- Cold holding: 41°F or below, per the FDA Food Code.
- Hot holding: 135°F or above, per the FDA Food Code.
- Reheating for hot holding: to 165°F, per the FDA Food Code.
- Cooking: to the internal temperature the FDA Food Code (or your local code) specifies for each food — post the figures for your menu at the line: [food: temperature].
- The danger zone is the range between cold and hot holding — food sitting in it is on a clock, and the log is how you know when the clock started.
- Use a calibrated probe thermometer; sanitize the probe between foods, and calibrate [frequency, e.g. weekly] by [ice-point method/manufacturer method] and record it.

Receiving log

1. Check refrigerated deliveries on arrival: probe [between packages / a representative item] and record the reading — refuse cold food warmer than 41°F unless your local code and the supplier's process say otherwise.
2. Check frozen deliveries: frozen solid, no signs of thawing and refreezing (ice crystals, misshapen packaging).

3. Check packaging and condition: intact, clean, in-date, no pest signs — reject and record anything that fails.
4. Record supplier, item, reading, time, initials, and accepted/rejected for each delivery.
5. Move cold and frozen goods to storage immediately after checking — the log time and the put-away time should be minutes apart.

Cold-holding log

1. Check and record every cooler, walk-in, and freezer at open, at [mid-shift], and at close — unit, reading, time, initials.
2. Probe [number] high-risk foods per cold check ([examples from your menu]) rather than relying only on the unit display — air temperature and food temperature are not the same thing.
3. Record display units and cold wells separately during service at [frequency].
4. Flag any reading above 41°F to the [person in charge] immediately and start the corrective actions below — note the time; how long the food has been warm decides what happens to it.
5. Log door gaskets, condensation, or icing problems in the maintenance log — drifting units announce themselves before they fail.

Hot-holding log

1. Probe and record each hot-held item at the start of service and every [interval, e.g. per your local code or house rule] after — item, reading, time, initials.
2. Stir before probing where the food allows it, and probe the coldest part — the center, or the top of a steam-table pan.
3. Confirm hot-holding equipment is preheated before food goes in; holding equipment reheats nothing.
4. Flag any reading below 135°F to the [person in charge] and take the corrective actions below.

Cooking and reheating log

1. Probe each cooked batch of [the menu items on your critical list] at the thickest part and record the reading against the required figure for that food.
2. Do not serve or hot-hold a batch until it reaches its required temperature — keep cooking and re-probe.
3. Reheat previously cooked food to 165°F per the FDA Food Code before it goes into hot holding, and record it.
4. Record cooling of hot food destined for the cooler per your local code's cooling steps: [method and checkpoints].
5. Sanitize the probe between raw and ready-to-eat foods, every time.

Corrective actions

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Cold food above 41°F: check how long it has been out of range; if within your local code's window, chill it fast and recheck — if unknown or over, discard it. When in doubt, throw it out, and record either way.

- Hot food below 135°F: reheat to 165°F per the FDA Food Code if within the safe window, or discard — and fix why the unit dropped.
- Failed unit: move stock to a working unit, tag the failed one out of use, call [maintenance contact], and log it.
- Rejected delivery: record what and why, photograph it, and notify [name/role] and the supplier the same day.
- Every corrective action gets a log line: what failed, what you did, what happened to the food, initials.

Records and review

Completed logs are verified each shift by the [person in charge] and filed at [system/location] for [period]. They are the first document a health inspector asks for and your evidence in any illness complaint — a gap in the log reads as a gap in the checks.

This log format is reviewed [frequency], after any inspection finding or failed unit, and whenever the menu changes what needs probing. Owner: [name/role]. Next review due: [date].

How to use this template

1. Build your critical list first: which menu items get probed at cooking, which foods get probed in cold and hot holding, and post the required temperature next to each.
2. Check your state and local food code for check frequencies, cooling steps, and any figures stricter than the FDA Food Code baseline, and adjust the log to match.
3. Put a working, calibrated probe thermometer at every station that needs one — a log without a thermometer within reach is fiction waiting to happen.
4. Train the corrective actions as hard as the checks; the log's value is what happens after a bad reading.
5. Have the person in charge verify and initial the logs every shift — unverified logs drift into pencil-whipping within weeks.

Official guidance

- › [FDA — Food Code](#)
- › [FDA — Retail food protection](#)
- › [USDA FSIS — Food safety](#)

This template is provided in good faith and for general information — it is not legal advice. Adapt it to your organisation and, where your sector carries specific legal requirements, have the finished document reviewed by a qualified adviser. The live version at <https://trainedteam.com/templates/food-temperature-log-template> is kept current; this file is a snapshot.