# Standard Operating Procedure for Minimizing the Duration of Potentially Hazardous Foods Outside Temperature Control

## 1. Purpose:

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to establish guidelines for minimizing the duration during which potentially hazardous foods are kept out of temperature control. This procedure ensures that potentially hazardous foods are maintained within safe temperature ranges to prevent bacterial growth, maintain food quality, and ensure food safety.

## 2. Scope:

This SOP applies to all personnel involved in handling, transporting, or storing potentially hazardous foods in [*insert your Food Business name or specific location*].

## 3. Definitions:

- Potentially Hazardous Foods: Refers to foods that require temperature control to prevent the growth of pathogenic microorganisms or the formation of toxins that can cause foodborne illness. Examples include dairy products, cooked meats, poultry, seafood, cut fruits, and vegetables.

## 4. Responsibilities:

- Food Handlers: [*identify staff members who have responsibility for Minimizing the Duration of Potentially Hazardous Foods Outside Temperature Control*] Responsible for following the procedures outlined in this SOP to minimize the duration of potentially hazardous foods outside temperature control.

- Quality Assurance/Control: [*identify the Food Safety Supervisor or Supervising member of staff*] Responsible for monitoring and ensuring compliance with the SOP.

- Management: [*Identify manager responsible for authorising expenditure*] Responsible for providing necessary resources and support to maintain food safety during food handling processes.

## 5. Procedure:

### 5.1 Pre-Planning and Organization:

a. Identify and categorize potentially hazardous foods that require temperature control.

b. Determine appropriate time limits for keeping these foods outside of temperature control based on regulatory requirements and food safety guidelines.

### 5.2 Proper Storage and Transportation:

a. Ensure that proper storage facilities, such as refrigerators, walk-in coolers, or insulated containers, are available and maintained at the correct temperatures for storing potentially hazardous foods.

b. Use suitable packaging and storage containers that can effectively maintain the desired temperature during transportation.

c. Pack potentially hazardous foods together, separate from non-hazardous items, to minimize their exposure to fluctuating temperatures.

### 5.3 Time Limitations:

a. Minimize the time between the removal of potentially hazardous foods from temperature control and their return to temperature control.

b. Establish specific time limits based on the characteristics of the food, prevailing environmental conditions, and regulatory requirements (refer to the 2 hour / 4 hour rule).

c. Train employees to be aware of and adhere to these time limits to ensure minimal exposure to temperature abuse.

### 5.4 Monitoring and Recordkeeping:

a. Regularly monitor and record the time when potentially hazardous foods are removed from temperature control and when they are returned.

b. [Insert the maximum times and procedure to ensure the potentially hazardous foods are not outside of temperature control for a length of time which would cause the foods to become dangerous]

### 5.5 Employee Training and Awareness:

a. Provide training to all personnel involved in handling potentially hazardous foods, emphasizing the importance of minimizing the duration of exposure to temperature abuse.

b. Educate employees on the risks associated with temperature abuse and the consequences it can have on food safety and quality.

c. Promote awareness of the proper procedures to follow in order to minimize the time potentially hazardous foods spend outside of temperature control.

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