

Subject: Time in Lieu of Temperature Procedure

During school inspections, inspectors have noticed there is an issue with maintaining a receiving food temperature log. Schools were told in previous years that a log should be kept stating the receiving temperatures. However, it has been brought to our attention that most sending schools use time in lieu of temperature to meet Chapter 24 Retail Food Code requirements, but are not supplying the receiving school with a copy of the log so that they may log receiving temperatures and times. Following this paragraph is a sample procedure you can follow to make sure you are satisfying the requirements and most of all increasing the overall food safety for the children who are eating the lunches.

Time in Lieu of Temperature Standards

Food product delivered must leave the Sending School at the proper temperatures: 135° F and above for hot foods and 41°F and below for cold foods.

When the internal temperature of the food drops below 135°F or rises above 41° upon delivery, it must be served in 4 hours or less or it must be discarded. After four (4) hours the food is considered to be unsafe for human consumption and cannot be served to the children.

School Log Example

1. **Sending School** supplies a food log showing the time and temperature of food as it leaves their facility.
2. Upon delivery, **Receiving School** must take the temperatures of each type of product and record it, along with the receiving time on the copy of the log sheet that the Sending School provides (**both schools must have a copy of the sheet after both #1 and #2 have been completed**).
3. **Receiving School** can use the same form or a copy of the original, to record the serving time and temperature of the hot and cold foods at each lunch period.
4. **Receiving School** must assure that the food is served within 4 hours of the time recorded by the **Sending School** in the "Shipping Time" column. (There is not a public health concern if food is served within 4 hours after dropping to 135° F for hot foods or above 41° F for cold foods.)

Please keep your forms organized and maintained daily. Each school must maintain a completed copy at their school.

State of NJ Regulations

Chapter 24: 8:24-3.5g

(g) If time only, rather than time in conjunction with temperature, is used as the public health control for a working supply of potentially hazardous food before cooking, or for ready-to-eat potentially hazardous food that is displayed or held for service for immediate consumption:

1. The food shall be marked or otherwise identified to indicate the time that is four hours past the point in time when the food is removed from temperature control;

2. The food shall be cooked and served, served if ready-to-eat, or discarded, within four hours from the point in time when the food is removed from temperature control;

3. The food in unmarked containers or packages or marked to exceed a four hour limit shall be discarded; and

4. Written procedures shall be submitted to the health authority for approval prior to using time as a public health control and shall be maintained in the retail food establishment to ensure compliance with:

- i. Paragraphs (g)1 through 3 above; and

- ii. Subsection (d) above, for food that is prepared, cooked, and refrigerated before time is used as the public health control.