Fridge/Freezer Temperature Records

Why take temperature readings?

There are a number of reasons why taking temperature readings are important

1. They show food is being stored at temperatures which limit the growth of bacteria capable of causing food spoilage and/or food poisoning.

2. They provide a check that refrigerated equipment is working correctly.

3. The **Food Safety (Temperature Control) Regulations 1995** require that certain foods are kept at or below 8°C. It is recommended that they operate at between 2°C and 5°C. In order for you to know whether you are complying with this requirement checks must be made. There are no defined temperatures for freezers although we would recommend they operate at -18°C or below.

4. The **Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) Regulations 1995** require proprietors of food businesses to identify potential food hazards, decide which of these hazards need to be controlled to ensure food safety and then put into place effective control and monitoring procedures to prevent the hazards causing harm to consumers. Proper temperature control is the single most important measure in preventing food poisoning and therefore must be strictly controlled.

Why record temperature readings?

1. It is an offence to sell food which is unfit, substandard or which may cause harm to the person consuming it. The principal defence available to a person accused of selling such food is one of **due diligence.** This requires them to prove they **"took all reasonable precautions and exercised all due diligence to avoid committing the offence"**. Written records are considered essential when trying to establish a defence in cases where temperature control is an issue.

2. It clearly demonstrates that measures are in place to control a major food safety hazard (see 4 above) even though written records are not necessarily a legal requirement.

What type of thermometer should I use?

You must be able to rely on the readings it gives and therefore accuracy is most important. Digital thermometers are recommended. Not only are they very accurate but different probes can be used which enable hot and cold food as well as air temperatures to be tested.

Alternatively, relatively cheap fridge/freezer thermometers can be used but it is important their accuracy is established.

Fridge/Freezer Temperature Record

How to complete temperature records

Please read below and follow the easy to use step by step guide

Step 1

Number all your fridges and freezers. In order to avoid any confusion it may be best to put a label on the door of each.
Now complete the **Fridge/Freezer Checklist** (below) as follows:

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Step 2

For each piece of equipment fill in columns 2 & 3.

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Step 3

Decide for each fridge/freezer what is an acceptable operating temperature (column 4). This should be a temperature which will control the growth of bacteria and ensure compliance with the law.

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Step 4

Next decide at what temperature action is required (column 5). Action may range from taking additional readings, checking the initial reading has been taken correctly or to calling out an engineer to remedy faulty equipment.

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Step 5

Decide how often you want the readings taken and at approximately what times of the day. (A minimum of 2 daily readings is recommended).

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Step 6

Nominate a person whose job it will be to take the readings. It is suggested the job title is entered to allow for changes in personnel.

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Step 7

Identify the person who will be responsible for:

- checking the record has been completed correctly;
- deciding what action to take when readings are too high;
- ensuring action is taken;
- ensuring staff taking readings are adequately trained;
- maintaining temperature recording equipment.

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Step 8

Identify the warmest part of the cabinet by taking several readings. This will usually be the top shelf. All readings from now on should now be taken at this point.

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Step 9

Make it clear where the readings are to be taken by either marking the warmest point or by placing a permanent thermometer in the required position.

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Step 10

The person taking the readings should note on the **Fridge/Freezer Temperature Record** sheet (below), the date and time the reading was taken and the temperature measured.

Note. When using a thermometer not normally sited in the cabinet, time must be allowed for the temperature to stabilise before reading.

If the reading is satisfactory go straight to 12.

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Step 11

Where further action is required (i.e. the reading is unsatisfactory) it should be reported immediately to the proprietor/supervisor. Action may range from adjusting the fridge or freezer's thermostat to calling out an engineer. The nature of the action needed should be recorded. Only when satisfied that the unit is working correctly and maintaining a safe temperature should the **action completed** box be signed.

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Step 12

At regular intervals the person with overall responsibility (proprietor/supervisor) should check the record and when satisfied with the results, initial the final column on the record.

Fridge/Freezer Checklist

Cabinet number	Fridge/ Freezer	Location	Critical temperatures	
			Normal operation	Action required
1	fridge	Main Kitchen	Below_5__°C	Above__8__°C
2	freezer	Main Kitchen	Below_-18_°C	Above_-15__°C
3	fridge	Preparation Room	Below__5_°C	Above__8__°C
4	fridge	Store Room	Below__5_°C	Above__8__°C
5			Below_____°C	Above_____°C
6			Below_____°C	Above_____°C
7			Below_____°C	Above_____°C
8			Below_____°C	Above_____°C
column 1	column 2	column 3	column 4	column 5

Times at which checks to be carried out: 9.00 a.m. 4.30 p.m.

Person responsible for carrying out checks: 2nd Chef

Supervisor or person to whom faults should be reported : Mr J. Frost