



February 2009
Volume 7, Issue 2

The Everclean Report

Potentially Hazardous Foods (PHF)

Special Interest
Articles:

PHFs

Raw Cut Tomatoes

A Potentially Hazardous Food is any food that can support bacterial growth if it is not kept out of the temperature danger zone. The FDA's "danger zone" is (41°F - 135°F). This is the temperature range at which bacteria grow best. Use this temperature range as a guideline and check with your local jurisdiction for specific regulations; because they can set their own hot and cold holding temperatures (Example: The State of Arizona's danger zone: 41°F - 130°F).

Controls are used when foods are received, in cold holding, during thawing, in cooking, hot holding, and during cooling/reheating. There are two types of potentially hazardous foods, those of animal origin such as meat, milk, eggs, and seafood. The other category is foods that are not of animal origin. This includes raw seed sprouts, cut melons, garlic/oil mixtures, and cooked fruits or vegetables. Be aware of what foods in your restaurant are PHF's. If you have questions ask your Everclean Specialist.

***Pending name change: PHFs will now be called TCS (Time/Temperature Control for Safety) we will have more on this subject in a future newsletter*

Raw Cut Tomatoes are (PHF)

In the latest supplement to the 2005 FDA food code, raw cut tomatoes were added to the definition of potentially hazardous food. This change was brought on as a result of raw cut tomatoes being implicated in several foodborne illness outbreaks. These outbreaks involved *Salmonella* and were large multi state outbreaks which resulted in hundreds of confirmed illnesses. The resulting investigations concluded that cold holding the cut tomatoes could have reduced the number of illnesses.

Washing and Storage of Tomatoes:

- Wash whole tomatoes under "potable" running water before use.
- Soaking or storing in standing water is not recommended.
- Maintain the wash water temperature at 10°F warmer than the temperature of the tomatoes being washed.
- Slice tomatoes using a knife and cutting board that has been washed, rinsed, and sanitized
- After being washed and cut, tomatoes are considered PHF and require time/temperature control for food safety and should be refrigerated at 41°F or less to prevent any pathogens that may be present from multiplying.
- Any cut tomatoes that may be held refrigerated longer than 24 hours should be date marked.

Foods which contain cut tomatoes that *are* considered potentially hazardous foods include cut tomatoes used for sandwiches and/or salads and require refrigeration at 41°F or less.

Foods which contain cut tomatoes that *are not* considered PHF include food containing cut tomatoes as an ingredient is acidified and reaches a pH below 4.2 such as commercially prepared salsa, or marinated cut tomatoes with vinegar, acidified salad dressing, etc.

Everclean Services

Phone:

(877) 532-5326
(818) 874-1290

Fax:

(818) 865-0465

E-Mail:

info@evercleanservices.com