

FOODS PREPARED AND PACKAGED IN A LICENSED AND INSPECTED FOOD PROCESSING PLANT ARE EXEMPT FROM DATE MARKING. INCLUDED ARE:

- ⇒ Deli salads such as ham salad, potato salad and macaroni salad .
- ⇒ Hard cheeses such as cheddar, gruyere and parmesan.
- ⇒ Semi-soft cheeses such as blue, gouda and monterey jack.
- ⇒ Cultured dairy products such as yogurt, sour cream and buttermilk.
- ⇒ Preserved fish products such as pickled herring and salt cod.
- ⇒ Shelf stable, dry sausages, such as pepperoni and salami that are not labeled "Keep Refrigerated".
- ⇒ Shelf stable salt-cured such as prosciutto and Parma (ham) that are not labeled as "Keep Refrigerated".
- ⇒ Raw, live in-shell shell stock

If you have additional questions please contact the Health Inspection Program

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Paul R. LePage, Governor

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DATE MARKING OF POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS FOODS

The 2013 State of Maine Food Code requires that many ready-to eat, (RTE) potentially hazardous foods be date marked. This handout has been designed to help eating establishment operators determine what foods will need to be date marked and to answer common questions that operators and managers may encounter while creating and implementing a date marking system.

DATE MARKING OF POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS FOODS

State of Maine Food Code Section 3-501.17

WHY?

To prevent the growth of pathogenic bacteria to dangerous levels.

WHAT?

Foods that are:

- ◆ Potentially Hazardous Foods (PHF)/Time-Temperature Controlled for Safety (TCS)
- ◆ Ready-to-eat (RTE) opened or prepared foods
- ◆ Held under refrigeration for more than 24 hours before sale or service.



HOW?

These foods must be marked with a discard date that is no greater than 7 days from preparation - starting with the first day of preparation as day 1

Example:

Potato salad prepared on June 1, 2013 must be marked to be discarded no later than June 7, 2013

QUESTIONS:

What happens if I freeze the food?

Frozen foods still have date marking requirements. If a food is stored for one day at 41°F and then frozen at 0° for four days, it can still be stored at 41°F for six more days after being removed from the freezer. The freezing date and the thawing date must both be on the container along with the date of preparation. This indicates how many of the original seven days have been used. If any of these dates are missing, it must be discarded.

Can I combine foods with different dates?

Yes. Section 3-501.17 (C)

of the Food Code allows for this.



How do I date combined foods?

The food that has the oldest date becomes the date for the combined food. For instance, a bean salad is prepared on Monday and then again on Wednesday. Monday's salad is combined with Wednesday's to consolidate space. The discard date for the combined salad is based on the day the first bean salad was prepared, in this case Monday.