

CHAPTER 7 | STUDY GUIDE

Storage Locations and Covering

Choose the storage location before filling it. A sealed or covered container does not make a prohibited room, wet floor, or dripping overhead line suitable. These are model-Code requirements; use the locally adopted requirements in your operation. Covering during active cooling has a specific exception, not a general waiver of protection.

Recognize	Understand and apply
Location	Use a clean, dry area protected from splash, dust and other contamination. Ordinary food storage is at least 6 inches above the floor. Keep racks and containers arranged so that the protection remains effective when staff remove or restock food.
Floor exceptions	Qualifying movable case-lot handling equipment may hold packaged food below 6 inches. Pressurized beverage containers, cased food in waterproof bottles or cans, and milk containers in plastic crates may be on a clean floor not exposed to moisture. A bag of rice does not qualify merely because it is sealed.
Overhead and rooms	No food in locker, toilet, dressing, garbage or mechanical rooms, under open stairwells, or under unshielded sewer lines. The supplement prohibits storage under leaks or condensation on pipes, tubes or hoses, including plumbing, heating, air-conditioning and water-based fire-protection systems.
Covering	Ordinary food needs packaging, a covered container or wrapping. During cooling, use loose covers, or leave uncovered when protected from overhead contamination. Arrange cooling containers for maximum heat transfer. Restore ordinary protection after cooling.
Other cover exceptions	Specified exceptions include shellstock; whole, uncut raw produce and nuts needing peeling or hulling; certain large raw-meat forms on clean, sanitized hooks or racks; and whole, uncut processed meats on clean, sanitized racks. Do not generalize these to all food.

Soup Beneath a Hose

A pan needs to cool, but the proposed shelf is beneath a condensing hose. Move it to a protected cooling location and arrange repair. The cooling cover exception never authorizes overhead contamination.

Remember: Check the floor, the room, the space above, and the food's current process before choosing the location.

Memory cues and recall practice: page 8.

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Separation in a Shared Cooler

Ready-to-eat means the food is intended to be eaten without a further safety cooking step. Cooked food, washed produce and fish prepared for raw service all need protection from raw animal food intended for cooking. A shelf diagram is a practical way to implement separation, not permission to ignore package integrity or the food's actual intended use.

Recognize	Understand and apply
Ready-to-eat protection	Keep raw animal foods for cooking separate from raw and cooked ready-to-eat foods, and from unwashed fruits and vegetables. Use effective placement and containers. A box of unwashed produce should not serve as a barrier between raw poultry and washed salad.
Produce	Separate unwashed fruits and vegetables from ready-to-eat food. Produce can bring soil and other contamination into the cooler even when it has no animal ingredients.
Raw-food order	A useful top-to-bottom arrangement is protected ready-to-eat food, ordinary fish and intact steaks, ground beef, then poultry. Keep different raw types separated. The order follows required cooking treatment and contamination prevention, not species alone: ground or tenderized meat differs from intact meat.
Narrow frozen exception	Frozen, commercially processed and packaged raw animal food may be stored with or above frozen, commercially processed and packaged ready-to-eat food. This does not extend to an open raw-chicken pan, on-site wrapping, or food that is no longer frozen.
Correcting placement	Stop the exposure and assess whether food was actually contaminated. A bad shelf position establishes a protection problem; it does not by itself establish that a drip reached the food. Actual unsafe food needs proper disposition, not merely a better shelf.

Two Uses for Fish

Keep fish for sushi in protected ready-to-eat storage. Ordinary raw fish for cooking belongs in the separate raw-food arrangement. The word 'fish' on both containers does not make their intended uses equivalent.

Remember: Protect ready-to-eat food first, then separate raw types according to their actual cooking categories and contamination risks.

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Holding Temperature and Failed Readings

Storage limits depend on both the food and its state. Ordinary holding is different from active preparation, cooking, cooling, or a valid time-as-control process. Equipment monitoring helps identify a problem, but a reassuring display cannot cancel a reliable food-temperature measurement. Use the measurement methods learned in Chapter 5.

Recognize	Understand and apply
Ordinary TCS holding	Keep cold TCS food at 41 F (5 C) or below and hot TCS food at 135 F (57 C) or above. TCS means time/temperature control for safety. These are holding limits, not cooking or reheating instructions.
Explicit exceptions	Shell eggs not treated to destroy viable Salmonella require equipment air at 45 F (7 C) or below. Roasts cooked under 3-401.11(B), or reheated under 3-403.11(E), may be held at 130 F (54 C) or above. A separate narrow exception concerns homogeneous liquids inside specially designed compliant equipment; ordinary pans do not qualify.
Frozen state	Stored frozen food must stay frozen. Section 3-501.11 does not specify one universal freezer-air number. Follow product and equipment needs without mislabeling a restaurant setpoint as the rule in that section.
Equipment versus food	A mechanical cold-storage sensor measures air or simulated product in the warmest part; a hot-storage sensor belongs in the coolest part. Ordinary TCS compliance still depends on the food temperature. Remember when an explicit rule, such as the shell-egg rule, instead specifies equipment air.
Failed reading	Keep affected food out of service while the person in charge reviews reliable history and the applicable corrective procedure. Correct the equipment or handling cause. Do not retroactively invent time control. Unsafe food requires discard or regulatory-approved reconditioning, not an improvised rescue.

Cold Display, Warm Melon

A display reads 37 F while cut melon in ordinary cold holding measures 46 F. Use the food reading to identify the holding failure. A later colder reading alone cannot establish the earlier history was safe.

Remember: Measure the right thing, then make a food disposition decision using facts and the applicable procedure.

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Food Identity and Allergens

Food identity, allergen information and safety dates solve different problems. A correct date cannot identify an unknown powder; an ingredient label cannot stop a spill. Match the label to the container's purpose and keep enough reliable product information available for staff to avoid guessing when ingredients are decanted or substituted.

Recognize	Understand and apply
Working containers	Identify food removed from its original package with its common name unless readily and unmistakably recognizable, such as dry pasta. A shelf code, employee initials or preparation date does not identify cornstarch. Required date marking remains a separate obligation.
Retail packages	Food packaged in the establishment for retail sale needs the applicable legal label: identity; ingredients and subingredients in descending weight order, including applicable additives; net quantity; manufacturer, packer or distributor identity and location; and major allergen food sources. Nutrition labeling applies unless a lawful exemption covers it. Special product requirements may also apply.
Major allergens	The nine categories are milk, egg, fish, crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, wheat, peanuts, soybeans and sesame. Identify the source as required; fish species, crustacean species and tree-nut type matter. A nutrition-labeling exemption does not remove allergen identification requirements.
Cross-contact prevention	Keep ingredients contained and positioned so spills cannot enter another food. Control scoops and clean food-contact equipment so they do not transfer allergen residue. Specific shelf zones or color choices are operating practices, not universal Code color requirements.
Information continuity	Retain accessible ingredient and allergen information as a restaurant practice when transferring food to working containers. Review substituted products instead of assuming the recipe's familiar bottle still contains the same ingredients. The Code prohibits concealing or altering establishment or manufacturer dating information.

Sesame Above Rice

An open sesame container above uncovered rice creates a transfer risk even with correct labels. Close and reposition the container, control its scoop, and preserve ingredient information. Do not treat a warning label as a substitute for preventing cross-contact.

Remember: Name internal food accurately, label retail food fully, and prevent unintended allergen transfer.

The Date-Marking Clock

The ordinary rule covers refrigerated ready-to-eat TCS food prepared here or commercially processed and packaged food opened here, held over 24 hours. Check the next page's exceptions. Raw food awaiting cooking and unopened packages do not receive this seven-day allowance. Reduced-oxygen packaging has separate provisions.

Recognize	Understand and apply
Day One	Preparation is Day 1 for food made here. When a qualifying commercial package is opened for use over more than 24 hours, mark it at opening and count that day as Day 1. Do not wait for 24 hours to pass. At 41 F or below, seven days is the ordinary maximum, assuming safe handling and no earlier safety limit. Lentils prepared October 8 reach Day 7 on October 14, not October 15.
Effective marks	Use a discard date, or a preparation/opening date with a procedure ensuring timely use or discard. Weekdays, calendar dates, color coding and other effective systems are allowed; explain the system to the regulator on request. Specified frequently rewrapped or impractical-to-mark foods may use an approved method.
Combined food	Carry forward the earliest-prepared qualifying ready-to-eat TCS ingredient's date when mixing with other ingredients. October 8 lentils mixed with new vegetables on October 10 still have October 8 as Day 1. Transferring containers does not restore days.
Earlier safety limit	The establishment's mark for opened commercial food cannot exceed a manufacturer use-by date based on safety. If opening on November 2 would give Day 7 on November 8, but the verified safety use-by is November 5, use November 5. A verified quality-only date has a different basis; resolve unclear dates before assigning a usable period.
Freezing	Exclude time actually frozen, but keep the earlier refrigerated history. Two counted refrigerated days used leaves five under the ordinary seven-day allowance. Time spent entering or leaving the frozen state is not automatically frozen time. Use an effective record and preserve any earlier controlling safety limit.

New Recipe, Old Ingredient

Fresh vegetables added to two-day-old lentils do not create a new Day 1. Preserve the lentils' date.

Remember: Count inclusively, retain the earliest qualifying history, and never use freezing or repackaging to create a new Day 1.

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Exceptions, Discard and Rotation

An exception applies because the food and processing conditions fit the provision, not because the product looks durable. Date-marking exemptions do not waive temperature, contamination, manufacturer instructions or other applicable controls. FIFO, meaning first in, first out, is a rotation practice; it cannot authorize service past a controlling safety deadline.

Recognize	Understand and apply
Portions and shellstock	Individual meal portions served or repackaged from a bulk container on a consumer's request are excepted from this date-marking rule. The exception does not erase the bulk container's date. Shellstock is excepted from this section but still has its own identification and storage controls.
Inspected-plant foods	The commercial-opening rule excludes listed products prepared and packaged by an inspected processing plant: deli salads manufactured under 21 CFR 117; hard cheese with no more than 39% moisture; defined semi-soft cheese with more than 39% through 50% moisture; cultured dairy; specified preserved or acidified fish; shelf-stable dry fermented sausages; and shelf-stable salt-cured products.
Boundary examples	A qualifying plant-made potato salad is different from restaurant-made potato salad. Cheddar or a qualifying semi-soft cheese is not a reason to exempt every cheese. Verify product specifications, especially moisture, shelf stability and processing origin. A familiar food name alone is insufficient.
Required discard	For food subject to the rule, discard if the allowed time-temperature combination is exceeded, the required date or day is missing, or the mark improperly exceeds the allowed combination. Do not smell-test, freeze, or redate it to bypass these conditions.
Rotation	Among otherwise safe foods, prioritize the earlier actual usable deadline when arrival order conflicts with it. Keep dates visible, remove unusable food from picking stock and never conceal or alter original dating information.

The Later Delivery Expires First

On Wednesday, safe Batch A has a Friday deadline and safe Batch B has a Thursday deadline. Use B first even if A arrived earlier. If either batch is already beyond its applicable safety limit, remove it rather than moving it to the front.

Remember: Verify narrow exemptions, discard when required, and use rotation to support the safety decision.

Chemicals, Medicines and Held Products

A storage area must prevent nonfood materials and unusable products from being mistaken for usable food. Location, identification and physical protection work together. A label alone does not correct storage above ingredients, and separation alone does not identify a chemical or tell staff how to handle a recalled lot.

Recognize	Understand and apply
Operational chemicals	Keep required original labels legible and label working cleaners, sanitizers and disinfectants with the common name. Separate by spacing or partitioning and do not locate them above food, equipment, utensils, linens or single-use supplies. Only operationally necessary toxic materials are allowed, apart from packaged retail-sale stock.
Narrow exception	Equipment and utensil cleaners and sanitizers may be kept for convenience in warewashing areas under the stated exception, but must still be stored to prevent contamination. This does not authorize a general chemical shelf above food.
Containers	Never reuse a container formerly holding poisonous or toxic materials for food, equipment, utensils, linens or single-service/single-use articles. Cleaning it and applying a food label do not remove that prohibition.
Medicines and first aid	Employee medicines must be necessary, labeled and located to prevent contamination, apart from retail-sale medicines. Refrigerated employee or daycare-child medicines in a food refrigerator stay packaged inside a covered, leakproof container identified for medicines and inaccessible to children. First-aid supplies need labels and a protected kit or container.
Credit, return and recall	Segregate damaged, spoiled or recalled products held for credit, redemption or return in designated areas separated from usable food and protected supplies. A 'Do not use' marker and retained lot identity are helpful practices. Follow the specific recall directions. Unsafe food requires discard or a regulatory-approved reconditioning procedure, not an improvised treatment.

A Familiar Sauce Case

A recalled lot looks normal. Remove it from usable inventory, retain its identity, segregate it in the designated hold area and follow the recall direction. Do not taste it to decide whether to continue using it.

Remember: Protect usable stock from spills, mistaken identity and accidental selection of held products.

CHAPTER 07 | REMEMBER THE DIFFERENCE

Seven Days Includes Day One

RTE + TCS + refrigerated + over 24 hours: check date marking.

For the ordinary nonexempt date-marking rule, hold at 41 F or below for no more than 7 days. Preparation or opening counts as Day 1. The 24-hour trigger is not a free first day.

Count inclusively	Prepared Monday for use over more than 24 hours: Monday is Day 1, Sunday is Day 7. Mark at preparation/opening when planning that extended storage. Do not begin the count on Tuesday.
Mixing keeps the oldest clock	A new recipe containing an older qualifying RTE TCS ingredient keeps that ingredient's earlier date. Fresh vegetables do not give yesterday's cooked chicken a new Day 1.
Freezing pauses; it does not reset	Exclude time actually frozen, but retain the earlier refrigerated days. Two counted days before freezing leaves five under the ordinary seven-day allowance. Earlier safety-based limits still apply.
Storage order follows use	Protect RTE food above/separate from raw food for cooking; keep different raw types separated. A practical order follows required cooking treatment: ordinary intact fish/meat, ground meat, then poultry. Sushi fish needs protected RTE treatment, not automatic placement with raw fish for cooking.

Use it on shift: Chicken is cooked Monday and added to salad Wednesday. Under the ordinary rule, the salad still has Monday as Day 1. If a safety-based manufacturer limit or another applicable limit is earlier, use the earlier limit.

Cover the answers. Explain the reason.

Does seven days cover every food? No. Verify RTE/TCS status and specific exemptions. Raw food awaiting cooking and unopened packages do not receive this allowance.

Can a missing required date be replaced with a guess? No. Food subject to the rule with a missing required date/day must be discarded. Smell is not a dating system.

Review: earlier guide pp. 2, 5-6. **Sources:** 3-302.11; 3-501.17-.18; 3-602.12. Shelf order is an implementation example, not a waiver of separation.

2026 FDA model Food Code