

Safe method:

Hot holding and delivery

It is very important to keep food hot until it is served or delivered to the customer, to prevent harmful bacteria from growing.



Safety point

If you need to keep food hot before serving, or on display, you should use suitable equipment. Follow the equipment manufacturer's instructions.

Why?

It is difficult to keep food at a consistent, safe temperature without suitable equipment.



How do you do this?

Do you hot hold?

Yes No

What equipment do you use?

Preheat hot holding equipment before you put any food in it.

Putting food into cold equipment means it might not be kept hot enough to stop harmful bacteria growing.

Food must be cooked thoroughly and very hot (steaming) **before** hot holding or display begins.

Hot holding equipment is for hot holding only. It should not be used to cook or reheat food.



Think twice!

Hot food must be kept above 63°C, except for certain exceptions.

When you display hot food, e.g. on a buffet, you should use suitable hot holding equipment to keep it above 63°C. If this is not possible, you can take food out of hot holding to display it for up to two hours. You can only do this once.

After this time, you should either reheat the food until it is very hot (steaming) and put it back in hot holding, chill it down as quickly as possible to 8°C or below, or throw it away. Remember to keep the food at a safe temperature until it is used.

If you do take food out of hot holding to display it, remember not to mix new food with the food that is already on display. This could lead to the older food being left out for too long.

Safety point

Delivery

Make sure food is kept very hot until it is collected by the delivery driver or customer.

You also need to make sure that food is kept hot until it arrives at the customer's home. It is a good idea to use an insulated bag or box to transport food.

Why?

If food is not kept hot, harmful bacteria can grow in it.

How do you do this?

How do you keep food hot until it is delivered?

Check it

Make sure food is very hot (steaming) all the way through from the moment it is cooked to the moment it is served.



If you do not do this, what do you do?

What to do if things go wrong

If a dish is not hot enough at any point during hot holding:

- reheat it until it is very hot and put back into hot holding (you should only do this once)
- or chill down the food safely (see the 'Chilling down hot food' safe method in the Chilling section) and reheat it later before serving

If you cannot do either of these things, throw the food away.

Remember that rice needs extra care. See the 'Rice' safe method.

How to stop this happening again

- Check your equipment is working correctly.
- Review your hot holding safe method. Try using a higher temperature setting or smaller quantities of food.
- If food is getting cold while it is being delivered, use an insulated bag or box if you are not using one already, and/or consider making your delivery area smaller.
- Train staff again on this safe method.
- Improve staff supervision.



Write down what went wrong and what you did about it in your diary.



Prove it

If you would like extra reassurance that food in hot holding is hot enough, you can use a temperature probe as a one-off test to prove that your method keeps food at a safe temperature. (See the 'Prove it' method in the Management section for advice on using probes safely).