

Safe method:

'Bake off' products, reheating and hot holding

It is very important to bake off or reheat products properly, and keep them hot until they are sold, to prevent bacteria from growing.



Safety point

Make sure you use suitable equipment for baking off, reheating and hot holding. Follow the equipment manufacturer's instructions.

Why?

If equipment is not suitable for baking off, reheating or hot holding, the food might not get hot enough to kill bacteria, or it might not be kept at a safe temperature.



Bake off



Hot holding

Do you hot hold? Yes No If yes, what equipment do you use?

Preheat equipment before you put any food in it.

Food will take longer to bake off or reheat if you use equipment before it has preheated. This means that the manufacturer's recommended times might not be long enough.

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

Follow the product manufacturer's instructions on times and temperatures for cooking, reheating and standing.

If you provide a microwave for customers to reheat food, it is a good idea to supply instructions.

The manufacturer has tested these to make sure that products will be properly cooked/reheated. Standing times are part of the process of cooking/reheating in a microwave and help make sure the food is the same temperature all the way through, with no cold spots.

Sell bake-off products or reheated food immediately, unless they are going straight into hot holding or are intended to be sold cold, e.g. bread rolls.

Products should be thoroughly cooked and piping hot before hot holding begins.

If food is not sold immediately, the temperature will drop and harmful bacteria could grow.

Hot-holding equipment is used for keeping food hot. It should not be used to cook or reheat food. Hot food should be transferred straight from the oven to the hot-holding equipment.

Think twice!

Remember, reheating means cooking again, not just warming up. Always reheat food until it is piping hot all the way through (in Scotland there is a legal requirement for reheated foods to reach at least 82°C). Do not put food into hot holding without reheating it properly first.

Food in hot holding must be kept above 63°C, except for certain exceptions. See the 'Prove it – cooking' safe method.

Check it

It is important that the products you sell are properly baked off or reheated and for you to show how you check this. Check that food is piping hot (steaming) all the way through from the moment it is baked off or reheated to the moment it is sold.



You could also use a temperature probe to check that products are properly cooked or reheated. See the 'Prove it – cooking' safe method for advice on using probes. List the products you check with a probe:

If you do not use one of the checks above, what do you do?

Chilling down food

If you chill down food, for example food in hot holding that has not been sold, remember to chill it down safely. Cover the food and move it to a colder area. Try to chill food down as quickly as possible and then put it in the fridge.

What to do if things go wrong

- If a product you are reheating is not hot enough and the equipment seems to be working, reheat the product for longer and then test it again.

If a product in hot holding is not hot enough:

- reheat it until it is piping hot and put back into hot holding (you should only do this once)
- or chill down the food safely and reheat it later before selling

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

How to stop this happening again

- Check your equipment is working correctly.
- Review your method. You may need to increase the time and/or temperature or use different equipment.
- Train staff again on this safe method.
- Improve staff supervision.



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

