A Time-Stamping Guide for Catering

Importance of Time Temperature Control

Temperature Factor

100°C

Bacteria that cause food to spoil, multiply rapidly in food exposed at temperatures between 5°C and 60°C (temperature danger zone).

60°C

Bacteria that cause food poisoning takes time to multiply to unsafe levels and form toxins.

Food left in the temperature danger zone for more than 4 hours should not be served to consumers.

5°C

Low temperature; bacteria grow slowly.

High temperature; bacteria multiply rapidly.

Temperature danger zone: Bacteria multiply rapidly.

Time-stamping

What is a time stamp?

An advisory from caterers to inform customers on the time the food is cooked or ready to be eaten, and the time to consume the food by.

How to do time-stamping?

You are required to provide a time-stamp for every catered packed meal, tingkat and displayed meal (buffets).

For time-stamp labels on packed meals and tingkat, the lettering should be at least 3mm in height. For time-stamp signs at buffet spreads, the sign should be at least A4-sized, with lettering at least 10mm in height. The time-stamp should also carry your company name and licence number. Please use the following prescribed wordings on your time-stamp:

- FOOD READY-TO-EAT ON __________ (DATE) AT __________ (TIME).
- CONSUME BY __________ (DATE) AT __________ (TIME).

- The time the food is cooked or ready to be eaten should be the time that the earliest food item is cooked or ready to be eaten for a particular order.
- The “consume by” time should be within 4 hours from the time the earliest food item is cooked or ready to be eaten and kept between 5°C and 60°C. You should not provide food that is kept in this temperature zone for more than 4 hours, as harmful bacteria might have grown to unsafe levels.

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