



## Cut Tomatoes Policy Update

In 2007 the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) added cut tomatoes to the definition of a potentially hazardous food in the FDA Food Code. Potentially Hazardous Food is defined as a food that requires time/temperature control for safety (TCS) to limit pathogenic microorganism growth or toxin formation.

Multiple outbreaks of Salmonella infection have been associated with fresh tomatoes. NAVMED P-5010, Chapter 1 also known as the Tri-Service Food Code (TSFC), has adopted the FDA definition of a potentially hazardous food (food that requires time/temperature control for safety) which includes raw seed sprouts, cut melons, cut leafy greens, cut tomatoes, or mixtures of cut tomatoes that are not modified in a way so that they are unable to support pathogenic microorganism growth or toxin formation; or garlic-in-oil mixtures that are not modified in a way so that they are unable to support pathogenic microorganism growth or toxin formation.



100917-N-3705H-304 U.S. 5TH FLEET AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (Sept. 17, 2010) Senior Chief Engineman Selena Prater inspects tomatoes for bacteria and mold during a replenishment at sea aboard the guided-missile destroyer USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81).

### Types of tomato products that must maintain temperature control:

- Cooked tomatoes.
- Sliced, diced, or chopped fresh tomatoes.
- Cut tomatoes used as an ingredient in another food such as salsa, salads, guacamole, etc.
- Commercially canned/processed cooked tomatoes and tomato products upon opening, unless written documentation from the manufacturer proves the product is a non-potentially hazardous food.

### Food Safety Controls

- Cut tomatoes must be maintained at temperatures of 41°F (5°C) or less, or hot held at 135°F (57°C) or above.
- Fresh cut tomatoes and cooked tomato products must be used within 4 hours if Time as a public health control has been approved by preventive medicine.
  - Refrigerated leftover or pre-prepared products must be date marked and used or discarded within 72 hours.
  - Time as a public health control begins upon slicing, dicing, or chopping fresh tomatoes.
  - Refrigerate raw tomatoes before slicing so they are already below 41°F (5°C) if Time will be used as a control.
- Cut tomatoes must be stored separately from raw, unwashed produce, raw meats and seafood.
- Wash whole tomatoes thoroughly before use.

### On-site Acidification

Prior approval from Preventive Medicine Authority is required in order for a food establishment to utilize on-site acidification to render a food shelf-stable (no temperature requirements).

**For more information, resources tools on food safety and Public Health Reasons:**

- ▶ Visit <http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/program-and-policy-support/food-sanitation-and-safety/Pages/default.aspx>
- ▶ Public Health Reasons: <http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/RetailFoodProtection/FoodCode/ucm189169.htm>
- ▶ Contact your local Military Treatment Facility's Preventive Medicine office