



NAVY AND MARINE CORPS PUBLIC HEALTH CENTER

IMPROVING READINESS THROUGH PUBLIC HEALTH ACTION

Cut Tomatoes Policy

In 2007, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) added cut tomatoes to the definition of a time/temperature control for safety (TCS) in the FDA Food Code. This is defined as a food that requires time/temperature control 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 TCS (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.

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-TCS 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 the Preventive Medicine Authority (PMA) is required in order for a food establishment to utilize on-site acidification to render a food shelf stable (no time/temperature control requirements).



100917-N-3705H-304 U.S. 5TH FLEET AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (Sept. 17, 2015) 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).



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For more information, resources and tools on food safety:

- Visit <https://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/program-and-policy-support/food-sanitation-and-safety/Pages/default.aspx>
- Public Health Reasons: <https://www.fda.gov/food/retail-food-protection/retail-food-industryregulatory-assistance-training>
- Contact your local Military Treatment Facility's Preventive Medicine Office for further guidance.