



Cut Tomatoes Fact Sheet

Background

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.

Tomato Products Requiring 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.
- 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.



100917-N-3705H-304 U.S. 5th Fleet AOR (Sept. 17, 2015) ENCS Selena Prater inspects tomatoes for bacteria and mold during a replenishment at sea aboard USS WINSTON S. CHURCHILL (DDG 81)



NAVY AND MARINE CORPS FORCE HEALTH PROTECTION COMMAND IMPROVING READINESS THROUGH PUBLIC HEALTH ACTION

On-Site Acidification

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

For more information, resources, and tools on food safety:

Learn more: [NMCFHPC Program Policy & Support – Food Sanitation and Safety](#)

Learn more: [Retail Food Industry/Regulatory Assistance & Training](#)