



Non-Continuous Cooking

Background

Non-Continuous cooking means partially cooking raw animal food, properly cooling it, and then finishing the cooking process later. Close attention must be paid to control biological hazards when a food establishment cooks raw animal foods using a process in which the food is partially cooked.

What are the requirements?

NAVMED P 5010-1, *Tri-Service Food Code*, does specifically addresses Non-Continuous cooking requirements. The goal of this fact sheet is to provide a quick reference for inspectors and facilities regarding Non-Continuous cooking.

Follow these steps for safe non-continuous cooking:

1. Heat food for 60 minutes or less.
2. Cool food properly (135° F to 70° F within 2 hours and completely cooled to 41° F or below within 6 hours).
3. Store food cold (41° F or below) or frozen.
4. Cook food completely. Food must meet time/temperature requirements:
5. 165° F for 15 seconds – poultry; wild animals, stuffed fish, meat, or pasta; stuffing containing fish, meat, or poultry.
6. 155° F for 15 seconds – chopped or ground meat, fish, and game animals; injected or tenderized meats; eggs for hot holding.

7. 145° F for 15 seconds – fish; whole muscle meat; game animals; eggs for immediate service
8. Serve immediately, hot hold, or properly cool.

Written Procedures

Effective written procedures ensure that non-continuous cooking is done in a manner that controls risks and ensure consistent monitoring.

[Written procedures must be pre-approved by the regulatory authority, maintained in the establishment and be available for review by the inspector.](#)

Written procedures must describe:

- How the requirements (steps 1-5) for non-continuous cooking are monitored and documented.
- Corrective actions if the requirements (steps 1 – 5) for non-continuous cooking are not met.
- How food that has been partially cooked will be marked or otherwise identified.
- How food that has been partially cooked will be separated from ready-to-eat (RTE) foods to prevent cross-contamination.

When is non-continuous cooking used?

- Mass production of chicken breasts or steaks for banquets.
- Grill-marking chicken wings for large scale catering operations.



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- Partially cooked hamburger patties held for final preparation and service during peak periods.
- Commercial applications for consistency i.e., Chicken Nuggets, French Fries, etc.

How can I get help in developing non-continuous cooking procedures?

Food establishments are encouraged to work with their inspectors to develop procedures that will comply with non-continuous cooking requirements.

Can I serve food that has undergone non-continuous cooking in an undercooked or raw state or with a consumer advisory?

No. Animal food cooked using non-continuous process may not be served undercooked or in a raw state, even upon consumer request or with an adequate consumer advisory. Food cooked by a non-continuous cooking process must reach the minimum final cook temperatures and times specified in the Tri-Service Food Code. The final cook temperature and time is vital to ensure control of disease-causing pathogens.

Guidance for Preventive Medicine Personnel

NAVMED P 5010-1, Tri-Service Food Code, contains a provision that directly describes

non-continuous cooking of raw animal foods requirements [3-401.14].

During sanitation inspections, Preventive Medicine personnel should ask probing questions regarding food preparation and ask for detailed steps on how the facility prepares menu items.

Open-ended questions are a crucial step where details immerse depicting scenarios such as “partially-cooking” procedures that may not have been approved. If a facility is “partially-cooking” food, ensure they have written approval for their non-continuous cooking process. Without prior approval the facility is subject to being cited a critical discrepancy that can only be resolved by:

[Regulatory Authority approving non-continuous cooking procedures \(Follow Page 1\)](#)
or
[Immediate stoppage and discard all non-continuously cooked foods.](#)

It is important to remember that Preventive Medicine are supporting roles for food establishments. While we are performing routine sanitary inspections, we must provide public health education while enforcing public health compliance. Public health education is considered the silver bullet that cements understanding of “why” compliance is important and significantly increases adherence.

For more information on Non-continuous cooking:
[Learn more: TRI-SERVICE FOOD CODE](#)
[Learn more: FDA FOOD CODE 2022 EDITION](#)