

Food Product Thermometer Calibration

A food product thermometer is a useful tool that is required for all food establishments and regulated child care providers.

A typical analog food product thermometer is composed of a metal stem and head with a dial. The dial measures from 0-220° Fahrenheit in 2-degree increments to allow accurate measurements for cold-holding, hot-holding, cooking temperatures, hot water and ambient air.

When using a food product thermometer, allow adequate time for the thermometer to adjust to the right temperature, and remember to sanitize the stem between uses.

An important feature of any food product thermometer is that it can be calibrated. Thermometers should be calibrated before initial use, after being dropped and at regular intervals to ensure accuracy.

Most thermometers can be calibrated with the following method using ice water:

1. Fill an insulated cup with crushed ice and water.
2. Immerse the food thermometer stem a minimum of 2 inches into the mixture, touching neither the sides nor the bottom of the glass.
3. Wait 4-5 minutes to allow the temperature to stabilize. It may be necessary to add ice during this process to ensure the solution is maintained at 32° F.
4. Be sure to hold the stem of the instrument away from the bottom and sides of the container to avoid error.
5. If the thermometer is not accurate within +/- 2° F of 32° F, it must be adjusted accordingly.
6. Without removing the stem from the ice, hold the adjusting nut under the head of the thermometer with a suitable tool and turn the head so the dial reads 32° F.

