

# Date Marking

## Time And Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) Food

This guidance is meant for food that is either:

- Prepared in a food establishment.
- Commercially prepared in a food processing plant and opened in the food establishment.

Day 1 is defined as either:

- The day of preparation.
- The day the container or commercial package is opened.

## What do you plan to do with the food?

- If you are planning to use the food within 24 hours, no dating of product is required.
- If you are planning to place the food in the freezer, go to [Frozen Food](#).
- If you are planning to refrigerate the food for more than 24 hours at 41°F or below, go to [Refrigerated Food](#).

## Frozen Food

### Before Placing the Food in the Freezer

Before you place the food in the freezer, the TCS food must be date marked to indicate the number of days it is kept in refrigeration.

### After Removing TCS Food from the Freezer

- If the TCS food is not date marked, the food must be used within 24 hours.
- If TCS food is to be held under refrigeration at 41°F or below, it must be date marked to indicate 7 days minus the time held at refrigeration before freezing. Use the new adjusted date to indicate when the food is consumed, sold, or discarded.
- If the TCS food will be thawed and used in 24 hours, no date marking is required.

## Refrigerated Food

1. TCS food shall be date marked to indicate the food shall be consumed, sold, or discarded within 7 days.
2. TCS food is placed under refrigeration at 41°F or below.
3. What do you plan to do with the TCS food in the 7 day period?
  - If you plan to place the TCS food in the freezer before the end of 7 days, go to [Frozen Food](#).
  - Within 7 days, the TCS food should be consumed or sold.
  - If 7 days have passed, the TCS food should be discarded.

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### **Health Response and Licensure • Food and Lodging**

1720 Burlington Drive, Suite A, Bismarck, ND 58504-7736  
Phone: (701) 328-1291 • Toll-free: 1 (800) 472-2927 • 711 (TTY)  
[hhs.nd.gov/foodandlodging](https://hhs.nd.gov/foodandlodging)

