



Preparing food from vertical rotating spits

This fact sheet will help food businesses that cook meat from vertical rotating spits to comply with the *Food Safety Standards Standard 3.2.2 Food Safety Practices and General Requirements*. Guidance is provided on how to ensure meat is produced safely by identifying the most appropriate methods to manage potential hazards associated with cooking meat from vertical rotating spits.

Frozen storage

Spits are often supplied frozen to retail stores.

- **Never put frozen meat on the machine.** Spits which are completely or partly frozen are difficult to cook properly to kill the bacteria. Spits should be always be thawed in the refrigerator or coolroom. Thawing food out of refrigeration can allow bacteria to multiply.
- **Plan ahead.** Frozen spits can take between one to two days to thaw completely.
- Food should be covered during thawing to prevent cross contamination.
- Ready-to-eat food should be protected from food that is being thawed.
- Never refreeze thawed food.

Cooking

It takes thorough cooking to kill harmful bacteria. Foods are properly cooked when they are heated for a long enough time at a high enough temperature to kill harmful bacteria that cause food-borne illness.

To avoid food poisoning, the internal temperature of the meat needs to reach at least **75°C before being cut from the spit**. Even when the surface temperature may reach above 75°C, the internal temperature of the meat could potentially be in the danger zone of 5°C to 60°C. This will provide an ideal temperature for pathogenic bacteria to multiply and there is also a risk of cross-contamination from cooked to raw meat during slicing.

- **Meat must** be further cooked on a hot plate/grill prior to serving to prevent the risk of partly cooked meat being served to a customer.
- Cut/slice meat from the area of the spit that has reached **75°C**.
- Use thin cuts of meat to stack on the spit.
- **Never** serve raw or partly-cooked food to customers.
- **Do not allow meat to fall in the drip tray.** The drip tray may contain raw juices from the meat and may contaminate ready-to-eat meat with food poisoning bacteria.

Cooling spits

It is not a good idea to re-use leftover spits. While the spit is cooling, bacteria can survive and multiply and produce toxins (poisons) that survive reheating.

Before cooling, the spit must be cooked completely, reaching an internal temperature of at least 75°C, as bacteria can survive in food which does not reach at least 75°C in the centre.

- **Do not re-use a spit** if the internal temperature of the spit has not reached 75°C.
- The meat should be cooled quickly- that is, cooled to **21°C within two hours** then to **5°C within the next four hours**. Food that is not cooled quickly enough can allow bacteria to multiply.
- For large quantities of meat, cut into smaller pieces to ensure it cools quickly.
- Store the leftover meat in the refrigerator or coldroom. **Never** leave the meat on the rotating spit to cool overnight.

Checking temperatures

Checking internal temperatures of meat should be done using a probe thermometer that can reach the middle of the spit. The probe should be cleaned with water and detergent then sanitised with boiling water or an alcohol wipe before and after each use.

The following records should be kept in a temperature log whenever temperature checks are completed:

- date
- time
- who completed the check
- the product that was checked
- the internal temperature reading.

For further information

Contact your Local Government Environmental Health Officer if you have any further questions (contact details can be found in the White Pages).

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August 2008

