

## PURCHASING AND RECEIVING

The flow of food is the steps that food goes through from the time the food is received until the time that it is served. If food is not handled safely at each step, contamination or bacterial growth could occur. Three common flow charts are:

1. Receiving →Storage→Serving
2. Receiving →Storage→Preparation →Cooking →Holding →Serving
3. Receiving →Storage → Preparation → Cooking → Cooling → Reheating → Serving

Your food safety plan should address how you will keep food safe at each step. Therefore, food safety and standard operating procedures need to be developed for each step. The first step is develop procedures to determine if a food is safe upon receipt.

### Safe and Approved Food Source

The first line of defense in preventing foodborne illness is to obtain food from safe and approved sources. Safe and approved sources are suppliers that comply with pertinent laws and regulations. The only exception is that fresh, whole, uncut produce can come from any source, including roadside vendors, Farmer's Market, and local gardens. Never use home prepared or home canned food in your restaurant as it is not known if it was safely prepared.

### Inspect before You Accept

Inspect foods to reduce your risk for foodborne illness and to be sure that food is safe. Check delivery vehicles for cleanliness and proper temperature control. Dirty vehicles could contaminate food. Never accept food that has been shipped in a vehicle that has carried live animals or harmful substances. If these vehicles must be used, they must be thoroughly washed, rinsed, and sanitized before they are used to transport food. Temperature-controlled vehicles must be at the proper temperature.

- Vehicles used to transport refrigerated foods must be at 41°F (5°C) or colder;
- Vehicles used to transport frozen foods must be at 0°F (-18°C) or colder; and
- Vehicles used to transport hot foods must be at 135°F (57°C) or hotter.

Inspect all deliveries before you accept them. It is important to have a list of criteria that you or your workers will use to determine if the food will be accepted or rejected. The food worker who accepts food deliveries must be trained on how to use this criteria.

### Other considerations

Shellstock is raw molluscan shellfish still in their shell. Molluscan shellfish include oysters, clams, mussels, and scallops. Shellstock tags must remain attached to the container until the container is empty. They must be kept on file for 90 calendar days from the harvest date.

## Criteria for Accepting or Rejecting a Food Delivery

FOOD	Criteria to Accept Delivery
Meat and Poultry	41°F (5°C) or colder. Obtained from an approved source. Stamped with USDA inspection stamp. Good color and no odor. Packaging clean and in good condition.
Seafood	41°F (5°C) or colder. Obtained from an approved source. Good color and no off-odors. Packaging clean and in good condition.
Shellfish	45°F (7°C) or colder. Obtained from approved source. Clean, shells closed, and no broken shells. Shellstock tags must be readable and attached.
Crustacea	45°F (7°C) or colder. Obtained from an approved source.
Fresh produce	Clean and good condition. If produce is cut or processed, it is at 41°F or colder.
Dairy Products	41°F (5°C) or colder unless labeled otherwise. Obtained from an approved source. Packaging clean and in condition. All products are pasteurized.
Eggs	Shell eggs at 45°F (7°C) or colder; liquid eggs at 41°F (5°C) or colder. Shell eggs -- clean and uncracked; frozen, and dry eggs – pasteurized. Obtained from an approved source.
Refrigerated and frozen processed food	41°F (5°C) or colder; if frozen, the product is rock solid. Packaging clean and in good condition. Obtained from an approved source.
MAP	If the product requires refrigeration, it is at 41°F (5°C) or colder. Obtained from an approved source. Packaging clean and in good condition. Labels can be read and attached to the product.
Canned food	Obtained from an approved source. No swollen ends, leaks, rust, dents. Label can be read and is attached to the product.
Dry foods	Obtained from an approved source. Packaging clean and in good condition. No signs of pest infestation.
UHT	Obtained from an approved source. Packaging clean and in good condition. If product requires refrigeration, it is at 41°F (5°C) or colder. Label is attached and can be read.

---

**Criteria for Accepting or Rejecting a Food Delivery (continued)**

<b>FOOD</b>	<b>Criteria to Accept Delivery</b>
Baked Goods	Obtained from an approved source. Packaging clean and in good condition. Products are not moldy.
Potentially Hazardous Hot Foods	Obtained from an approved source. Temperature at 135°F (57°C) or hotter. Holding containers are clean and in good condition.

**Prepared by:**

Angela M. Fraser, Ph.D., Associate Professor/Food Safety Specialist  
Department of Family and Consumer Sciences  
NC State University, Raleigh, NC 27695-7605

The material in this fact sheet, unless otherwise identified, is based upon work supported by the Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under special project number 2003-51110-01715, the National Integrated Food Safety Initiative of the Integrated Research, Education, and Extension Competitive Grants Program. For more information, contact Dr. Angela Fraser at 919-515-9150 or at [angela\\_fraser@ncsu.edu](mailto:angela_fraser@ncsu.edu).

Employment and program opportunities are offered to all people regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability through North Carolina State University, North Carolina A & T State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments cooperating.