

SECTION 2 - OPERATIONAL STANDARDS

OS/04: Defrosting of food

1.0 Introduction

1.1 If food is not thoroughly thawed prior to cooking, then ice is most likely to be present at the centre and subsequently heat from the cooking process will be used to melt the ice and not to raise the core temperature above that required in order to destroy pathogenic bacteria that may be present.

2.0 Defrosting

2.1 Large joints of meat, poultry and other large items of food must be thoroughly defrosted prior to cooking and wherever appropriate the manufacturers'/suppliers' instructions must be followed.

2.2 It is deemed 'best practice' to place raw meat and poultry into a container with a lid to reduce the risk of blood and liquid spillage and subsequent cross-contamination of other foods.

2.3 When defrosted in a refrigerator raw food must be placed on the lower shelf and never above cooked foods. Raw food must always be kept separate from cooked foods during the defrosting procedure.

2.4 Wherever possible defrosting must take place in a refrigerator or other appropriate temperature controlled environment e.g. between 1°C - 5°C.

2.5 Small items of frozen food, for example; prawns, fish portions, frozen vegetables etc. may be defrosted under cold, running water, however time and ambient temperature exposure during this procedure must be kept to a minimum.

2.6 The use of micro-wave ovens for defrosting is not endorsed.

3.0 Dating and labelling of food during the defrosting process

3.1 On decanting products from a freezer any manufacturers/suppliers 'use-by' and 'best-before' dates will be rendered invalid.

3.2 When defrosting products a 'defrost' date must be affixed along with a new 'use-by' date, the latter must be calculated taking into account either:

- the manufacturers/suppliers stated shelf life upon defrosting; or
- whatever shelf life was intact when frozen-down on-site.

3.3 The new 'use-by' date must not exceed the time between the suppliers' original 'use-by' date and the date of 'freezing'.

Version	Date of issue	Author	Endorsed by
V3	June 2019	Graham Day; Health & Safety Adviser	Graham Hakes; Senior Health & Safety Adviser