OS/06: Cooking of food

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Inadequate cooking can present a serious risk to food safety. Raw meat, poultry, eggs and raw vegetables must be treated as potentially being contaminated with food poisoning (pathogenic) bacteria, and therefore it is essential that these foods are thoroughly cooked. The critical stage of cooking is designed to eliminate or reduce the amounts of bacteria and toxins on or within such foods. Refer to ***CCP/01: Cooking of food.***

1.2 The fundamental objective is to cook food immediately prior to service, wherever possible. The amount of food to be cooked must be controlled to reduce, so far as is reasonably practicable the need for reheating, chilling or freezing down.

1.3 As an integral part of the Hazard Analysis system the monitoring of final 'cooking' temperatures must be recorded to ensure that food is safe to eat and as supportive evidence in the event of a defence of 'due-diligence'.

1.4 All joints of meat and poultry must be thoroughly defrosted prior to cooking, using method/s as identified in the appropriate procedure. Refer to ***OS/04: Defrosting of food.***

2.0 Joints of meat - bone in (beef and lamb)

2.1 Exceptions for achieving a general core temperature of 75°C for 30-seconds are for the cooking of whole cuts of beef or lamb that are intended for service in a rare or medium state. Such joints of meat must be solid.

3.0 Joints of meat - boned & rolled, minced products

3.1 Joints of meat that have been boned and rolled as well as processed items such as; sausages, burgers, meat loaf and pâté have been through a process where contamination is taken from the surface area into the centre of the product. Such products must be cooked to a core temperature of 75°C for 30-seconds.

4.0 Casseroles, stews and pie fillings (containing meat or poultry)

4.1 Where minced or diced meat/poultry is used as an ingredient for a dish it must be cooked to a core temperature of 75°C for 30-seconds due to the fact that mincing and dicing will distribute contamination throughout the product.

5.0 Steaks & cutlets

5.1 When cooked pink or undercooked e.g. blue, rare and medium-rare this would normally not present a risk of harm upon consumption as any bacteria present on the surface of the meat would be destroyed during the cooking process.

6.0 Joints and cuts of poultry (whole carcase, boned and rolled)

6.1 Chicken, turkey and other poultry products are more likely to have contamination within the meat muscle and cavity.

6.2 Whole carcase, boned & rolled joints and cuts of poultry must achieve a core temperature of 75°C for 30-seconds. Joints and cuts of poultry must not be cooked rare with the exception of duck breast (game), if so requested by the customer.

6.3 Whole chicken, turkey etc. must not be cooked with stuffing inside the body cavity as this will hinder the effective cooking and destruction of pathogenic bacteria within the carcase. Stuffing should be cooked separately.

7.0 Fish entrees

7.1 Where fish is sautéed, grilled, steamed, baked etc. the final cooking temperature would not normally reach 75°C as this would ultimately affect the quality of the finished product.

7.2 The food handler must be confident that the time and temperature combination used for the cooking of any such fish will not compromise the health & wellbeing of those consuming the end product.

8.0 General cooking of foods

8.1 Foods can be cooked by using the following time/temperature combinations, for example:

- 80°C for 6 seconds;
- 75°C for 30 seconds;
- 70°C for 2 minutes; or
- 65°C for 10 minutes.

8.2 Using a specific time/temperature combination for cooking a particular food must not compromise the health & well-being of the end-consumer.

9.0 Temperature monitoring

9.1 Recordings must be taken at the centre of a solid joint of meat or the deep muscle of breast and leg of poultry.

9.2 The cooking temperature of food must be monitored using an appropriate probe thermometer.

9.3 On completion of cooking, the core temperature must be recorded on the appropriate control sheet. Refer to ***TM/05: Cooking of food.***

10.0 Acrylamide in food

10.1 Acrylamide is a chemical that can form in certain foods during the cooking process especially when high temperatures are applied, such as frying, roasting, and baking. Sugars and amino acids that are naturally present in foods form to produce acrylamides. It does not come from food packaging or the environment.

10.2 For further information on acrylamide in food. Refer to ***FH/01: Acrylamide in food***.