Huron County Public Health

DATE MARKING

WHAT IS DATE MARKING?

A system required by the Food Code to regulate the amount of time ready-to-eat (RTE), time/temperature controlled for safety (TCS) foods can be kept in a licensed food facility.

WHAT FOODS ARE REQUIRED TO BE DATE MARKED?

Foods that are refrigerated, RTE, TCS (e.g. diced tomatoes, cut melon, lunchmeat, hot dogs, shredded lettuce, baked beans, cooked noodles, grilled chicken) and held for more than 24 hours.

EXEMPTIONS: *The only RTE, TCS foods permitted to use manufacturer's expiration date:*

- Commercially manufactured deli salads (i.e. pasta salad)
- Some hard cheeses (i.e. cheddar, provolone, parmesan)
- Some semi-soft cheese (i.e. bleu, gorgonzola, Monterey jack)
- Cultured dairy products (i.e. yogurt, sour cream)
- Shelf stable, dry fermented sausages (pepperoni and salami) and shelf stable salt-cured products (prosciutto) not labeled "Keep Refrigerated"
- Some preserved/acidified fish products
- *Just a reminder that raw meats and uncut vegetables do not require date marking*

HOW TO DATE MARK

Clearly mark the time of original preparation, opening, or cooking to indicate the date that is a maximum of seven days, by which the food shall be consumed, sold, or discarded. **The day food is opened or prepared must count as day 1 (date of preparation/opening/cooking + 6 days).**

Facility must do one of the following:

- Record on the container the start date of preparation, opening, or cooking
- Record on the container the end date when the food is expired
- Best Method: Record on the container both the start date (opening, preparing, cooking) and the end date (Discard date)

Example: **Deli Turkey Slices   5/3-5/9**

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

- Freezing pauses the date marking process, but does not reset it. When frozen foods are thawed back out, the date marking process resumes with the days left.
- When combining two ingredients that are date marked, the earliest-prepared ingredient date shall be marked for the newly prepared food.

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