Date Marking

Refrigerated, ready-to-eat (RTE), time/temperature controlled for safety (TCS) food prepared in a food service operation or in a retail food establishment and held at a temperature of 41°F or less for more than 24 hours shall be clearly marked to indicate the date or day that is a maximum of seven days, by which the food shall be consumed on the premises, sold, or discarded. The day of preparation counts as day one.

The following foods are examples of RTE, TCS foods:

- Sliced tomatoes
- Salad
- Soup
- Cooked pasta
- Milk
- Lunchmeat

### Combining Ingredients

When combining ingredients made on different days use the earliest discard date.

For example: If combining chicken salad mix prepared on January 7 with chicken that was prepared on January 3, then the chicken salad should be discarded on January 10, which is seven days from the earliest prepared ingredients (the chicken).
Freezing Food

Freezing food can "stop the clock" on date marking. It is important to indicate the remaining number of days the food can be used once it is thawed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jan 1</th>
<th>Jan 2</th>
<th>Jan 3</th>
<th>Jan 4</th>
<th>Jan 5</th>
<th>Jan 6</th>
<th>Jan 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day Food is Prepared (Day 1)</td>
<td>Food placed in the freezer (Day 2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 8</td>
<td>Jan 9</td>
<td>Jan 10</td>
<td>Jan 11</td>
<td>Jan 12</td>
<td>Jan 13</td>
<td>Jan 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Food Thawed (Day 3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Day 4</td>
<td>Day 5</td>
<td>Day 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 15</td>
<td>Jan 16</td>
<td>Jan 17</td>
<td>Jan 18</td>
<td>Jan 19</td>
<td>Jan 20</td>
<td>Jan 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food shall be discarded at the end of the day (Day 7)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here is an example of one way to date mark food efficiently:

- Prepared Date _____/ _____/ _____
- Frozen on _____/ _____/ _____
- Thawed on _____/ _____/ _____
- Discard on _____/ _____/ _____