

FREE CHEAT SHEET

Food Manager Exam Cheat Sheet

The numbers and lists manager exams such as ServSafe Manager and NRFSP test most, from the FDA Food Code. Tick each one once you can recall it without looking, then take our free practice test at foodhandlergear.com/food-manager-practice-test.html.

Name _____

Exam date _____

COOKING

- ☐ Poultry, stuffing, stuffed meats: **165°F** for less than a second (§3-401.11)
- ☐ Ground, injected, or mechanically tenderized meat: **155°F** for 17 seconds
- ☐ Whole cuts of beef and pork, seafood, eggs for immediate service: **145°F** for 15 seconds
- ☐ Fruits and vegetables for hot holding: **135°F**
- ☐ Microwave: **165°F**, covered and stirred, then stand 2 minutes (§3-401.12)
- ☐ Reheating for hot holding: **165°F** for 15 seconds, within 2 hours (§3-403.11)

HOLDING, COOLING, AND TIME

- ☐ Hot holding **135°F** or above; cold holding **41°F** or below (§3-501.16)
- ☐ Cooling: 135°F to 70°F in **2 hours**, then to 41°F, **6 hours** total (§3-501.14)
- ☐ Date marking: ready-to-eat TCS food, **7 days** at 41°F, day made = day 1 (§3-501.17)
- ☐ Time as a control: serve or discard within **4 hours**; cold food **6 hours** if it starts at 41°F and stays at or below 70°F (§3-501.19)
- ☐ Fish served raw: freeze at -4°F for 7 days, or -31°F until solid and hold 15 hours; keep records 90 days (§3-402.11)
- ☐ Food thermometers accurate to **±2°F** (§4-203.11)

RECEIVING AND STORAGE

- ☐ Approved sources only; no food made in a private home
- ☐ Cold TCS food received at **41°F** or below (§3-202.11)
- ☐ Reject frozen food with large ice crystals, frozen liquid, or water stains
- ☐ Shellstock tags kept **90 days** after the container is emptied (§3-203.12)
- ☐ Fridge order, top to bottom: ready-to-eat, seafood, whole beef and pork, ground meat, poultry (§3-302.11)

EMPLOYEE HEALTH

- ☐ The Big 6 to report: norovirus, hepatitis A, Shigella, Shiga toxin-producing E. coli, Salmonella Typhi, nontyphoidal Salmonella (§2-201.11)
- ☐ Exclude for vomiting, diarrhea, or jaundice (§2-201.12)
- ☐ Back to work after vomiting or diarrhea without a diagnosis: **24 hours** symptom-free (§2-201.13)
- ☐ Sore throat with fever: restrict (exclude if you serve a highly susceptible population)
- ☐ Infected cut on the hand: impermeable cover plus a single-use glove
- ☐ No bare-hand contact with ready-to-eat food (§3-301.11)

HACCP, IN ORDER

- ☐ 1 Hazard analysis · 2 Critical control points · 3 Critical limits · 4 Monitoring · 5 Corrective actions · 6 Verification · 7 Record keeping
- ☐ Variance (and usually a HACCP plan) first for smoking to preserve, curing, sprouting seeds, or a live shellfish tank (§3-502.11)
- ☐ Raw or undercooked animal food on the menu needs a consumer advisory (§3-603.11)

CLEANING, FACILITIES, AND CRISES

- ☐ Wash water at least **110°F** (§4-501.19); hot-water sanitizing at **171°F** for 30 seconds (§4-501.111)
- ☐ Dishwasher final rinse **180°F** (165°F for single-temperature, stationary-rack machines) (§4-501.112)
- ☐ Air gap: twice the inlet diameter, never less than **1 inch** (§5-202.13)
- ☐ Chemicals labeled and stored below and away from food (§7-201.11)
- ☐ Sewage backup, fire, flood, or long water or power outage: stop service and call the health department (§8-404.11)

PATHOGENS TO MATCH

- ☐ **Norovirus:** sick workers, vomit · **Hepatitis A:** jaundice, shellfish · **Staph:** hands, toxin survives cooking
- ☐ **C. perfringens:** slow-cooled stews and gravy · **B. cereus:** cooked rice · **Listeria:** grows in the fridge
- ☐ **C. botulinum:** no oxygen, garlic-in-oil · **Scombroid:** temperature-abused tuna · **Ciguatoxin:** reef fish

The Food Code is a model, not federal law: it applies once your state or local health department adopts it, often with changes, and local rules can be stricter. Confirm with your health department. Section numbers are from the FDA Food Code. Explained in plain English at www.foodhandlergear.com/food-manager-certification-guide.html. © 2026 FoodHandlerGear. Free to print and share. **Free 40-question manager practice test with explanations:**

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