

# Washington State Retail Food Code Changes



Whatcom County  
**HEALTH**  
Department



Hello and welcome to Whatcom County Health Department's Food Safety Program presentation, in which we will be reviewing some of the main Washington State retail food code changes.

# Food Specific Rule Changes

- TCS Terminology
- Cooking temperature of ground meats
- Frozen vacuum-packed fish
- Serving undercooked fish
- Shellstock Tags



This video will cover food specific rule changes that went into effect on March 1, 2022. These include: TCS terminology, cooking temperature of ground meats, frozen vacuum-packed fish, serving undercooked fish and shellstock tags.

## **Rule Change: TCS Terminology**

**Potential Hazardous Foods (PHF)  
= Time/Temperature Control for Safety  
Food (TCS)**

Any food that requires time and/or  
temperature control for safety.



The first of these changes is TCS Terminology. Potentially Hazardous Foods (PHF) will now be referred to as Time/Temperature Control for Safety Foods (TCS).

They mean the same thing, which is simply any food that requires time and/or temperature control for safety.

## Time/Temperature Control For Safety Foods

### Animal Products.

- Fish, shellfish, beef, milk, eggs, poultry, dairy products.

### Cooked Starches.

- Rice, potatoes, pasta, beans.

### Fruits and Vegetables.

- Cooked vegetables, sliced melons.



TCS Foods



Examples of TCS food include raw and cooked animal products, cooked starches, cooked vegetables and fruits and certain raw, cut produce such as sliced tomatoes, sliced melons and cut leafy greens.

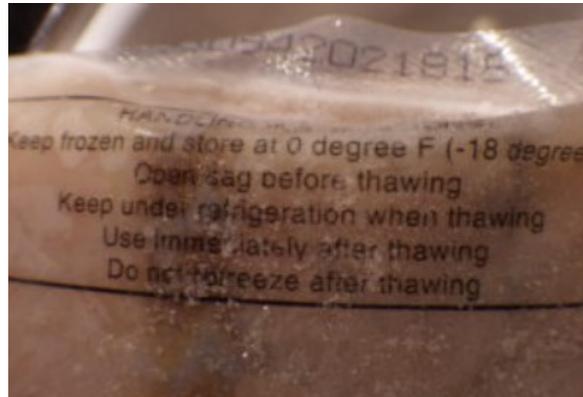
## Rule Change: Cooking Raw Animal Foods

Ground meats (i.e. hamburgers) must now be cooked to 158°F.



The next rule change is cooking temperature requirements of raw animal foods. Ground meats, like beef and pork, must now be cooked to 158F. The cooking temperature requirement went up by three degrees from 155F.

## Rule Change: Frozen Vacuum-Packed Fish with “Keep Frozen Until Use” Label



The third rule change pertains to frozen vacuum-packed fish. Frozen fish products in reduced oxygen packaging must be removed from packaging when thawing.

## Options

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- A. Open frozen package prior to thawing under refrigeration. OR
- B. Thaw under cold running water and open package immediately after fish is thawed.



The options for thawing are to a) open the frozen package prior to thawing in the fridge or B) thawing under cold running water and opening the package immediately after the fish is thawed.

## Reason for Change

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- Prevent deadly botulism illnesses.
- *Clostridium botulinum* grows in anaerobic environments at 38°F and above.



The reason for this change is to prevent illness from a deadly bacteria that causes botulism. This bacteria, called *Clostridium botulinum* grows in anaerobic environments or environments that have little oxygen.

## Rule Change: Serving Undercooked Fresh Fin Fish



The next rule change pertains to serving undercooked fresh fin fish.

## Fresh Finfish

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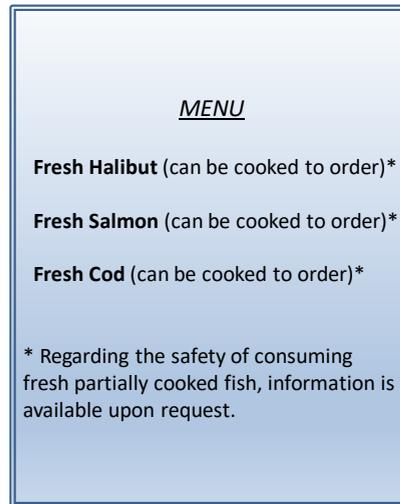
Fresh, unfrozen finfish may be partially cooked upon consumer request, as long as...



When fresh finfish, like halibut and salmon, are overcooked, they get dry and tough. Many chefs prefer to cook fresh finfish to less than the minimum cooking temperature of 145 F that is required. This new code revision allows fresh finfish to be cooked to a temperature less than 145 F upon consumer request as long as a few requirements are met.

# Menu Requirements

1. Disclosure states that  
*“fresh fish can be cooked to order”*
2. Health reminder footnote with asterisk (\*), stating:  
*“Regarding the safety of consuming fresh partially cooked fish, information is available upon request”*



All fresh fin fish can be served undercooked if the menu has the following:

- The first part discloses to the consumer the cooking status of the menu item. Stating the fish can be “cooked to order” or “undercooked” is letting the customer know that it may not be fully cooked.
- The second part is a reminder that informs the consumer of the health risk. Written information regarding the safety of consuming fresh, partially cooked fish must be immediately available. This is so the consumer understands there may be an increased risk of foodborne illness when consuming undercooked fish. This may also be stated on the menu.
- Notice that there is an asterisk that connects the Disclosure part to the statement at the bottom.

## Freezing Requirements

Raw or raw marinated finfish are still required to be frozen.



All finfish, except Tuna, served raw or raw marinated are still required to be frozen. This includes raw fish sushi or poke not made from tuna.

# Shellstock Tags

DEALER NAME: John Smith	CERT. NO. 1234
Dealer Address: 123 Shellfish Rd, City, AK 99999	
City, State Zip Code	
ORIGINAL SHIPPER'S CERT. NO. IF OTHER THAN ABOVE:	
HARVEST DATE: 03/11/13 7:00 AM	
HARVEST LOCATION: Somewhere Island, WA	
TYPE OF SHELLFISH: Kumamoto Oysters	
QUANTITY OF SHELLFISH: 1 dozen	
THIS TAG IS REQUIRED TO BE ATTACHED UNTIL CONTAINER IS EMPTY AND THEREAFTER KEPT ON FILE FOR 90 DAYS.	

*Sold out 3/18/22*

RETAILERS, RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS: Thoroughly wash and store all animal origin such as beef, pork, lamb, poultry, or shellfish to reduce the risk of foodborne illness. Discard any perishable health conditions may be at higher risk of these foods are consumed. For more information, contact your jurisdiction or public health official.

Record when the first and last shellstock is sold or served.



The last rule change pertains to shellstock tags. The existing Food Code states to record on the tag the last date the shellstock from the container is sold or served. The revised food code requires operators to also include the date when the first shellstock is used from the container. This helps to trace back shellstock to its original source if a foodborne illness outbreak happens. Remember to keep records for at least 90 days. This 90 day period starts at the time the container of shellstock is emptied.

**Thanks for Watching!**

