

## FREE OPERATIONAL TEMPLATE

# Hot Holding and Cold Holding Checklist

Use this 60-point checklist to verify holding equipment, actual food temperatures, time control, service hygiene, deviations, product disposition, and corrective action.

Restaurant / location

Checklist date

Reviewer

Shift lead

## 1. Checklist setup, product scope, approved limits, roles, and record control

### 1 Confirm the location, date, shift, responsible employee, service areas, and holding equipment included in the checklist.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

NAME Enter

DATE / TIME Enter

APPROVAL Sign

 **Execution tip:** Define product scope, approved limits, monitoring methods, and escalation ownership before service starts.

### 2 List every time and temperature controlled food held hot or cold, including product, batch, service point, and intended holding method.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

| Finding / record | Current | Owner | Evidence | Action |
|------------------|---------|-------|----------|--------|
|                  |         |       |          |        |

 **Execution tip:** Define product scope, approved limits, monitoring methods, and escalation ownership before service starts.

### 3 Verify approved hot-holding, cold-holding, and any time-as-control limits are documented for each applicable product and process.

CRITICAL

HOT / COLD HOLDING

Compliant

Partial

Non-compliant

N/A

 **Execution tip:** Define product scope, approved limits, monitoring methods, and escalation ownership before service starts.

### 4 Confirm monitoring frequency, measurement method, device, responsible role, and escalation route are defined.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

| Finding / record | Current | Owner | Evidence | Action |
|------------------|---------|-------|----------|--------|
|                  |         |       |          |        |

 **Execution tip:** Define product scope, approved limits, monitoring methods, and escalation ownership before service starts.

### 5 Check that current SOPs, product specifications, allergen controls, disposition rules, and emergency contacts are available.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

Compliant

Partial

Non-compliant

N/A

 **Execution tip:** Define product scope, approved limits, monitoring methods, and escalation ownership before service starts.

### 6 Review previous deviations, customer complaints, recurring equipment problems, food waste, and open corrective actions.

CRITICAL

HOT / COLD HOLDING

| Finding / record | Current | Owner | Evidence | Action |
|------------------|---------|-------|----------|--------|
|                  |         |       |          |        |

 **Execution tip:** Define product scope, approved limits, monitoring methods, and escalation ownership before service starts.

## 2. Equipment readiness, cleaning, capacity, preheating, and prechilling

7

Inspect hot-holding units, steam tables, bain-maries, soup kettles, heat lamps, heated cabinets, and serving wells for cleanliness and condition.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

Safe

Needs action

Critical

LIVE PHOTO

Add



**Execution tip:** Preheat or prechill equipment and inspect it before loading. Holding equipment should maintain safe food, not correct an unsafe product.

8

Inspect refrigerated displays, cold wells, salad bars, chilled counters, cold rooms, ice beds, and insulated carriers for cleanliness and condition.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

Safe

Needs action

Critical

LIVE PHOTO

Add



**Execution tip:** Preheat or prechill equipment and inspect it before loading. Holding equipment should maintain safe food, not correct an unsafe product.

9

Verify hot-holding equipment is preheated and cold-holding equipment is prechilled before food is loaded.

CRITICAL

HOT / COLD HOLDING

READING Enter

LIMIT Enter

DEVICE ID Enter



**Execution tip:** Preheat or prechill equipment and inspect it before loading. Holding equipment should maintain safe food, not correct an unsafe product.

10

Confirm set points, water levels, lids, drains, fans, vents, controls, alarms, and built-in thermometers are ready and operating.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

Compliant

Partial

Non-compliant

N/A



**Execution tip:** Preheat or prechill equipment and inspect it before loading. Holding equipment should maintain safe food, not correct an unsafe product.

11

Check equipment capacity prevents overcrowding, overfilled pans, deep food layers, blocked airflow, and unstable temperature control.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

Compliant

Partial

Non-compliant

N/A



**Execution tip:** Preheat or prechill equipment and inspect it before loading. Holding equipment should maintain safe food, not correct an unsafe product.

12

Verify suitable backup equipment, insulated carriers, ice or coolant packs, and alternate storage are available for breakdowns or peak demand.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

Safe

Needs action

Critical

LIVE PHOTO

Add



**Execution tip:** Preheat or prechill equipment and inspect it before loading. Holding equipment should maintain safe food, not correct an unsafe product.

### 3. Product preparation, transfer, containers, labelling, and contamination control

13

Verify food has completed the approved cooking, reheating, cooling, or chilled preparation step before it enters holding.

CRITICAL

HOT / COLD HOLDING

Compliant

Partial

Non-compliant

N/A



**Execution tip:** Mark each batch and control the transfer so the holding period begins from a known, traceable point.

14

Transfer food into holding without unnecessary delay and do not use holding equipment for cooking or cooling unless it is designed and approved for that purpose.

CRITICAL

HOT / COLD HOLDING

Compliant

Partial

Non-compliant

N/A



**Execution tip:** Mark each batch and control the transfer so the holding period begins from a known, traceable point.

15

Use clean, food-grade containers, pans, lids, trays, and inserts of the correct size, depth, and condition.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

Safe

Needs action

Critical

LIVE PHOTO

Add



**Execution tip:** Mark each batch and control the transfer so the holding period begins from a known, traceable point.

16

Label each product with name, batch, preparation time, holding start time, review or discard time, and allergen information where required.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

NAME Enter

DATE / TIME Enter

APPROVAL Sign



**Execution tip:** Mark each batch and control the transfer so the holding period begins from a known, traceable point.

17

Separate raw food, ready-to-eat food, allergen-sensitive products, utensils, and garnishes to prevent contamination or cross-contact.

CRITICAL

HOT / COLD HOLDING

Compliant

Partial

Non-compliant

N/A



**Execution tip:** Mark each batch and control the transfer so the holding period begins from a known, traceable point.

18

Protect food from contamination during movement from preparation areas to the service, display, buffet, dispatch, or catering point.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

Safe

Needs action

Critical

LIVE PHOTO

Add



**Execution tip:** Mark each batch and control the transfer so the holding period begins from a known, traceable point.

## 4. Hot-holding readings, service control, batch management, and immediate action

19

Record actual temperatures for representative hot-held foods at the approved monitoring frequency.

CRITICAL

HOT / COLD HOLDING

READING Enter

LIMIT Enter

DEVICE ID Enter



**Execution tip:** Measure the food itself at representative points and respond immediately when a cold spot or unstable batch is identified.

20

Measure the food rather than relying only on the equipment display, using the thickest, coolest, or least-protected point where appropriate.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

READING Enter

LIMIT Enter

DEVICE ID Enter



**Execution tip:** Measure the food itself at representative points and respond immediately when a cold spot or unstable batch is identified.

21

Verify stirring, rotation, covering, pan depth, water level, and equipment settings maintain even heat and prevent cold spots.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

Compliant

Partial

Non-compliant

N/A



**Execution tip:** Measure the food itself at representative points and respond immediately when a cold spot or unstable batch is identified.

22

Check appearance, moisture, texture, portion quality, and service condition remain acceptable without weakening food-safety control.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

Safe

Needs action

Critical

LIVE PHOTO

Add



**Execution tip:** Measure the food itself at representative points and respond immediately when a cold spot or unstable batch is identified.

23

Prevent topping up an older batch with a new batch, and follow approved batch identification, first-in-first-out, and replenishment rules.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

Compliant

Partial

Non-compliant

N/A



**Execution tip:** Measure the food itself at representative points and respond immediately when a cold spot or unstable batch is identified.

24

Take immediate action for food below its approved limit, including approved reheating, equipment adjustment, transfer, hold, assessment, or disposal.

CRITICAL

HOT / COLD HOLDING

READING Enter

LIMIT Enter

DEVICE ID Enter



**Execution tip:** Measure the food itself at representative points and respond immediately when a cold spot or unstable batch is identified.

## 5. Cold-holding readings, display control, high-risk foods, and immediate action

25

Record actual temperatures for representative cold-held foods, chilled displays, cold wells, and service containers at the approved frequency.

CRITICAL

HOT / COLD HOLDING

READING Enter

LIMIT Enter

DEVICE ID Enter



**Execution tip:** Sample high-risk and frequently handled cold foods, not only the surrounding air or equipment display.

26

Verify product temperature with a clean calibrated probe, especially for high-risk, top-layer, edge, garnish, and frequently handled items.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

READING Enter

LIMIT Enter

DEVICE ID Enter



**Execution tip:** Sample high-risk and frequently handled cold foods, not only the surrounding air or equipment display.

27

Confirm cold wells, refrigerated displays, ice beds, lids, pans, airflow, and loading pattern keep every product under control.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

Compliant

Partial

Non-compliant

N/A



**Execution tip:** Sample high-risk and frequently handled cold foods, not only the surrounding air or equipment display.

28

Check dairy, desserts, salads, sauces, cut produce, cooked foods, fillings, garnishes, and other high-risk items during live service.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

Safe

Needs action

Critical

LIVE PHOTO

Add



**Execution tip:** Sample high-risk and frequently handled cold foods, not only the surrounding air or equipment display.

29

Prevent warm loading, overfilled pans, uncovered product, blocked vents, prolonged door opening, and uncontrolled replenishment.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

Compliant

Partial

Non-compliant

N/A



**Execution tip:** Sample high-risk and frequently handled cold foods, not only the surrounding air or equipment display.

30

Take immediate action for food above its approved limit, including relocation, rapid chilling where permitted, time assessment, hold, or disposal.

CRITICAL

HOT / COLD HOLDING

READING Enter

LIMIT Enter

DEVICE ID Enter



**Execution tip:** Sample high-risk and frequently handled cold foods, not only the surrounding air or equipment display.

## 6. Time as a control, service duration, replenishment, and leftover handling

31

**Confirm an approved written procedure is available before time is used instead of temperature as the control.**

CRITICAL

HOT / COLD HOLDING

| Finding / record | Current | Owner | Evidence | Action |
|------------------|---------|-------|----------|--------|
|                  |         |       |          |        |



**Execution tip:** When time is used instead of temperature, start the clock visibly and remove or discard food at the approved deadline.

32

**Mark the removal or start time and the required use, review, or discard deadline on every applicable container or batch.**

CRITICAL

HOT / COLD HOLDING

NAME

Enter

DATE / TIME

Enter

APPROVAL

Sign



**Execution tip:** When time is used instead of temperature, start the clock visibly and remove or discard food at the approved deadline.

33

**Ensure food is served or discarded within the approved time and is not returned to temperature control unless the procedure specifically permits it.**

CRITICAL

HOT / COLD HOLDING

Compliant

Partial

Non-compliant

N/A



**Execution tip:** When time is used instead of temperature, start the clock visibly and remove or discard food at the approved deadline.

34

**Track service duration for buffets, banquets, events, catering, room service, delivery staging, and temporary service points.**

HOT / COLD HOLDING

| Finding / record | Current | Owner | Evidence | Action |
|------------------|---------|-------|----------|--------|
|                  |         |       |          |        |



**Execution tip:** When time is used instead of temperature, start the clock visibly and remove or discard food at the approved deadline.

35

**Use smaller batches and planned replenishment to reduce exposure, protect quality, and avoid mixing old and new product.**

HOT / COLD HOLDING

Compliant

Partial

Non-compliant

N/A



**Execution tip:** When time is used instead of temperature, start the clock visibly and remove or discard food at the approved deadline.

36

**Control leftovers by identifying eligible food, applying approved rapid cooling or disposal rules, and never relabelling to extend the safe life.**

CRITICAL

HOT / COLD HOLDING

| Finding / record | Current | Owner | Evidence | Action |
|------------------|---------|-------|----------|--------|
|                  |         |       |          |        |



**Execution tip:** When time is used instead of temperature, start the clock visibly and remove or discard food at the approved deadline.

## 7. Measuring devices, calibration, placement, hygiene, and reading accuracy

37

Verify probes, data loggers, infrared devices, built-in thermometers, sensors, and reference devices are suitable and uniquely identified.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

| Finding / record | Current | Owner | Evidence | Action |
|------------------|---------|-------|----------|--------|
|                  |         |       |          |        |



**Execution tip:** Trust a reading only when the device is clean, suitable, calibrated, correctly placed, and used with the approved method.

38

Check calibration status, calibration date, next due date, acceptable accuracy, and reference method are current.

CRITICAL

HOT / COLD HOLDING

NAME

Enter

DATE / TIME

Enter

APPROVAL

Sign



**Execution tip:** Trust a reading only when the device is clean, suitable, calibrated, correctly placed, and used with the approved method.

39

Clean and sanitize probes before and after use and prevent cross-contamination or allergen transfer between products.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

Safe

Needs action

Critical

LIVE PHOTO

Add



**Execution tip:** Trust a reading only when the device is clean, suitable, calibrated, correctly placed, and used with the approved method.

40

Use the approved air, surface, between-pack, or core measurement method and allow sufficient stabilization time.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

Compliant

Partial

Non-compliant

N/A



**Execution tip:** Trust a reading only when the device is clean, suitable, calibrated, correctly placed, and used with the approved method.

41

Compare the equipment display with an independent reading when values are unstable, close to the limit, implausible, or inconsistent with product condition.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

READING

Enter

LIMIT

Enter

DEVICE ID

Enter



**Execution tip:** Trust a reading only when the device is clean, suitable, calibrated, correctly placed, and used with the approved method.

42

Remove, label, replace, or repair any damaged, contaminated, inaccurate, overdue, or unreliable measuring device.

CRITICAL

HOT / COLD HOLDING

| Finding / record | Current | Owner | Evidence | Action |
|------------------|---------|-------|----------|--------|
|                  |         |       |          |        |



**Execution tip:** Trust a reading only when the device is clean, suitable, calibrated, correctly placed, and used with the approved method.

## 8. Service hygiene, customer protection, allergens, utensils, and counter condition

43

Protect held food with lids, covers, sneeze guards, supervised service, and barriers suited to the service format.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

Safe

Needs action

Critical

LIVE PHOTO

Add



**Execution tip:** Observe live service and replace contaminated utensils, containers, or food immediately rather than waiting for the next scheduled check.

44

Provide clean dedicated utensils, keep handles away from food, and replace utensils at the approved frequency or after contamination.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

Compliant

Partial

Non-compliant

N/A



**Execution tip:** Observe live service and replace contaminated utensils, containers, or food immediately rather than waiting for the next scheduled check.

45

Control customer self-service, spills, returned items, tasting, utensil misuse, touching, and contamination at buffet or display points.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

Safe

Needs action

Critical

LIVE PHOTO

Add



**Execution tip:** Observe live service and replace contaminated utensils, containers, or food immediately rather than waiting for the next scheduled check.

46

Maintain clear allergen identification and prevent cross-contact through pans, utensils, garnishes, labels, and employee practice.

CRITICAL

HOT / COLD HOLDING

Compliant

Partial

Non-compliant

N/A



**Execution tip:** Observe live service and replace contaminated utensils, containers, or food immediately rather than waiting for the next scheduled check.

47

Verify employee hand hygiene, glove use, uniform condition, illness reporting, and task-specific food-handling controls.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

Compliant

Partial

Non-compliant

N/A



**Execution tip:** Observe live service and replace contaminated utensils, containers, or food immediately rather than waiting for the next scheduled check.

48

Inspect counters, trays, pans, wells, drains, surfaces, condensation, waste, and surrounding areas for cleanliness and pest evidence.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

Safe

Needs action

Critical

LIVE PHOTO

Add



**Execution tip:** Observe live service and replace contaminated utensils, containers, or food immediately rather than waiting for the next scheduled check.

## 9. Deviations, food hold, disposition, maintenance, complaints, and incident response

49

Record the product, batch, actual reading, approved limit, time, quantity, equipment, employee, and likely cause for every deviation.

CRITICAL

HOT / COLD HOLDING

| Finding / record | Current | Owner | Evidence | Action |
|------------------|---------|-------|----------|--------|
|                  |         |       |          |        |



**Execution tip:** Keep affected food on hold until time and temperature exposure, product risk, corrective action, and authorized disposition are documented.

50

Isolate, label, and protect affected food so it cannot be served, sold, mixed, transferred, or relabelled before assessment.

CRITICAL

HOT / COLD HOLDING

Safe

Needs action

Critical

LIVE PHOTO

Add



**Execution tip:** Keep affected food on hold until time and temperature exposure, product risk, corrective action, and authorized disposition are documented.

51

Assess time and temperature exposure, product type, packaging, service history, previous reading, and applicable rules before release or disposal.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

| Finding / record | Current | Owner | Evidence | Action |
|------------------|---------|-------|----------|--------|
|                  |         |       |          |        |



**Execution tip:** Keep affected food on hold until time and temperature exposure, product risk, corrective action, and authorized disposition are documented.

52

Document approved reheating, rapid chilling, transfer, discard, customer response, equipment repair, and product disposition.

CRITICAL

HOT / COLD HOLDING

READING Enter

LIMIT Enter

DEVICE ID Enter



**Execution tip:** Keep affected food on hold until time and temperature exposure, product risk, corrective action, and authorized disposition are documented.

53

Escalate repeated or critical deviations and assign corrective action with an owner, due date, temporary control, and closure evidence.

CRITICAL

HOT / COLD HOLDING

| Finding / record | Current | Owner | Evidence | Action |
|------------------|---------|-------|----------|--------|
|                  |         |       |          |        |



**Execution tip:** Keep affected food on hold until time and temperature exposure, product risk, corrective action, and authorized disposition are documented.

54

Verify equipment repair, set-point correction, process change, additional monitoring, and employee retraining before normal service resumes.

CRITICAL

HOT / COLD HOLDING

Safe

Needs action

Critical

LIVE PHOTO

Add



**Execution tip:** Keep affected food on hold until time and temperature exposure, product risk, corrective action, and authorized disposition are documented.

## 10. Verification, trend review, corrective-action closure, and management sign-off

55

Review completed records for missing foods, missed times, blank fields, implausible readings, repeated corrections, unclear initials, and incomplete actions.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

| Finding / record | Current | Owner | Evidence | Action |
|------------------|---------|-------|----------|--------|
|                  |         |       |          |        |



**Execution tip:** Keep actions open until repeat evidence confirms temperatures are stable, food risk is controlled, and recurring causes have been addressed.

56

Verify critical deviations, food holds, disposals, maintenance calls, complaints, and corrective actions were approved by the correct person.

CRITICAL

HOT / COLD HOLDING

| Finding / record | Current | Owner | Evidence | Action |
|------------------|---------|-------|----------|--------|
|                  |         |       |          |        |



**Execution tip:** Keep actions open until repeat evidence confirms temperatures are stable, food risk is controlled, and recurring causes have been addressed.

57

Compare recurring hot or cold spots, equipment failures, peak-time gaps, replenishment delays, product waste, and complaints across periods.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

Compliant

Partial

Non-compliant

N/A



**Execution tip:** Keep actions open until repeat evidence confirms temperatures are stable, food risk is controlled, and recurring causes have been addressed.

58

Confirm corrective actions are closed through repeat readings, live photos, maintenance proof, retraining, or management verification.

CRITICAL

HOT / COLD HOLDING

READING Enter

LIMIT Enter

DEVICE ID Enter



**Execution tip:** Keep actions open until repeat evidence confirms temperatures are stable, food risk is controlled, and recurring causes have been addressed.

59

Update monitoring frequency, batch sizes, equipment capacity, set points, service layout, or training where trends show recurring risk.

HOT / COLD HOLDING

| Finding / record | Current | Owner | Evidence | Action |
|------------------|---------|-------|----------|--------|
|                  |         |       |          |        |



**Execution tip:** Keep actions open until repeat evidence confirms temperatures are stable, food risk is controlled, and recurring causes have been addressed.

60

Record final review status, unresolved risks, next verification date, manager, reviewer, date, time, and signatures.

CRITICAL

HOT / COLD HOLDING

NAME Enter

DATE / TIME Enter

APPROVAL Sign



**Execution tip:** Keep actions open until repeat evidence confirms temperatures are stable, food risk is controlled, and recurring causes have been addressed.

RUN THIS CHECKLIST DIGITALLY

### Turn holding readings into verified food-safety control

Use Taqtics to schedule holding checks, capture product readings and live evidence, hold affected food, assign actions, verify disposition, and compare recurring risks.

Try the Hot and Cold Holding Checklist in Taqtics