

Probe Thermometers

PUBLIC HEALTH REASONS:

The presence and accessibility of food temperature measuring devices is critical to the effective monitoring of food temperatures. Proper use of such devices provides the operator with important information with which to determine if temperatures should be adjusted or if foods must be discarded. Bimetal, bayonet style thermometers are not suitable for accurately measuring the temperature of thin foods such as hamburger patties because of the large diameter of the probe and the inability to accurately sense the temperature at the tip of the probe. However, temperature measurements in thin foods can be accurately determined using a small-diameter probe 1.5 mm (0.059 in), or less, connected to a device such as thermocouple thermometer.

FOOD CODE, OAR 603-25-0030, CHAPTER 4-302.12

Retail food establishments serving thin foods such as hamburger patties, pork chops, chicken breasts, or fish fillets must have a small diameter probe thermometer (as shown in the picture to the right) to check these foods.



Bi-metal thermometers (as shown in the picture to the left) are not designed to measure the temperatures of thin foods, and can only be used for foods like soups, roasts, or tuna salad.

Temperature Ranges: use thermometers with a range appropriate for the food being tested.

Thermometer Care: food thermometers must be cleaned between uses with individual alcohol wipes or cleaned with soapy water, rinsed and sanitized like you would with any food contact surface.

Calibrating a Thermometer: thermometers must be calibrated if they are dropped, seem inaccurate, or at a frequency according to manufacturer's directions. The most common method to check the accuracy of a food thermometer is using ice water:

- Pack a large cup to the top with crushed ice and top with water.
- Put the thermometer at least 2 inches into the ice thick slurry.
- After 30 seconds (or less) it should read 32°F (0°C).

If the thermometer is not reading 32°F (0°C), then adjust according to manufacturer's directions.



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