

Date Marking

FOOD SAFETY

Food must be date marked if it is:

- Prepared on-site and refrigerated or commercially prepared,
- Potentially hazardous,
- Ready-to-eat, and
- Held for more than 24 hours.

Mark with the date to be consumed by or discarded.

Allow seven days if held at 41°F or less, or four days if held between 41°F and 45°F.

Day food was prepared on site or, if commercially prepared, day container was opened counts as “day one.”

If potentially hazardous, ready-to-eat food is frozen,

- Mark that it is to be consumed within 24 hours of removal from freezer
- or*
- Mark the length of time it is refrigerated before being frozen, when it is placed in a freezer.

When food is removed from the freezer, mark it with a “consume by” date that is seven days (or four if holding at 45°F) minus the length the food was refrigerated before being frozen.

For example: If you hold meatballs in the refrigerator for two days at 41°F or below and then freeze them, the “consume by” date would be seven minus two — or five days from when they are removed from the freezer.

These guidelines also apply to commercially processed foods after the original container is opened.

For more information, contact the Springfield-Greene County Health Department at 417-864-1424.