

Temperature Records – Why We Need Them And How We Use Them



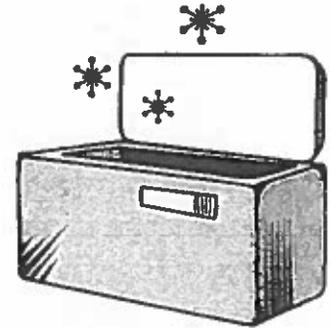
Temperature is a factor that affects most foods. Storing food at improper temperatures or exposing food to less than ideal temperatures can result in an array of problems.

Three areas where food may be stored are of great concern to us: freezers, refrigerators and dry storage areas.

Frozen foods should be kept at a temperature of 0° or below.

Refrigerated food should be kept at a temperature range of 35 to 42°.

Dry storage areas should be kept at 45-70°F.



Temperature should be measured by thermometers in all three of these areas and properly maintained. A simple log will help you keep track of temperature changes and should be logged in every 24 hours, or as often as possible.

One of the most important reasons to keep cold food cold and frozen food frozen is that bacteria will begin to grow and multiply rapidly at temperatures above 42°F. Even at subfreezing temperatures most bacteria survive, but multiplication of most bacteria is prevented.

Dry food storage demands temperature control too. Keep the areas at 70° or lower. Higher temperatures encourage growth of disease causing bacteria and permit insect contamination of dry cereals, meal and flour.



If an agency cannot control dry storage temperatures, especially in the warm months of the year, then care should be taken NOT to store perishable foods during these times. Once procured, they should be distributed quickly. Canned food will fare better and not be affected much by moderately warm temperatures, but grains will be greatly and negatively affected by periods of exposure to temperatures greater than 70°.



Food banks and agencies alike must be accountable for storing food within these guidelines to insure that it leaves us in good condition.