

# Managing the two hour/ four hour guide

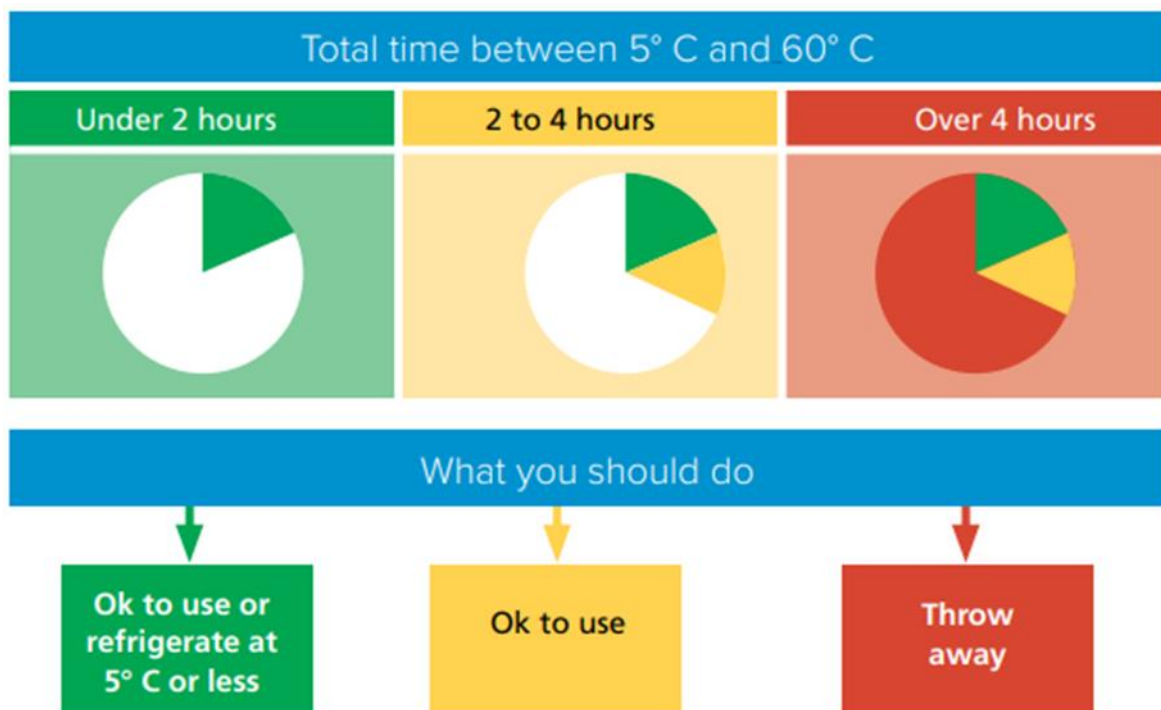
## Fact sheet

Everyday, Council's Environmental Health Officers (EHO's) work with residents and local businesses to help make our city what it is today with a long term vision for the future.

## Two hour/ four hour guide

The 2 Hour / 4 Hour guide below tells you how long freshly prepared potentially hazardous foods\*, foods like cooked meat and foods containing meat, dairy products, prepared fruits and vegetables, cooked rice and pasta, and cooked or processed foods containing eggs, can be safely held at temperatures in the danger zone; that is between 5°C and 60°C. It takes time for food poisoning bacteria to grow to unsafe levels.

Whenever possible, ready-to-eat potentially hazardous foods should be kept outside of the temperature danger zone of 5°C to 60°C. The two hour/four hour guide applies when it is within this temperature range whether it be for preparation purposes, or less than optimal storage conditions.



The time between 5°C and 60°C is cumulative — that means you need to add up every time the food has been out of the fridge, including during preparation, storage, transport and display. If the total time is:

- Less than 2 hours, the food can be used or put back in the refrigerator for later use,
- Between 2 and 4 hours, the food can still be used, but can't be put back in the refrigerator, and
- 4 hours or longer, the food must be thrown out.

## Using the 2-hour / 4-hour rule correctly

If a food business decides to use the 2-hour / 4-hour rule, there are certain Food Standards Code requirements that must be met. The business must be able to demonstrate compliance with these requirements if asked by a council Environmental Health Officer.

To demonstrate the 2-hour / 4-hour rule is being applied correctly, food businesses must:

- Ensure the requirements for potentially hazardous food (PHF) and ingredients are followed during:
  - receipt
  - storage
  - preparation.
- Implement a documented system for:
  - monitoring the length of time food is displayed out of temperature control
  - ensuring the food is appropriately identified
  - ensuring food is disposed of appropriately after 4 hours.

The documented system can take the form of:

- A set of work instructions on how the 2-hour / 4-hour rule is applied by the business, OR
- Keeping records that demonstrate adherence to the time temperature.

If a food business decides to use the 2-hour / 4-hour rule for temperature control but are not able to satisfactorily demonstrate they are applying the 2-hour / 4-hour rule correctly, the business may be found to be in breach of the Food Standards Code.

It is the responsibility of food businesses to make sure all food handlers understand the use of the 2-hour / 4-hour rule and complete the appropriate records

## Further information

For further information on Food Safety visit <https://www.coorong.sa.gov.au/council-services/environmental-and-public-health/food-safety>

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