

Thermometer Calibration

South Dakota Office of Health Protection

Food Code Fact Sheet #1

- Thermometers should be calibrated whenever they are dropped, before first used, and weekly if not check for reasons above.
- Temperature is a critical measurement of ensuring the safety and quality of many food products. Whether monitoring temperatures at receiving, throughout production or final product storage and distribution, thermometer calibration is essential.
- Sanitize thermometers before using and in between using.
- The simple and quick way to sanitize is with an alcohol swab. Otherwise sanitize the same as other kitchen utensils.

Ice Point Method

- Fill an insulated cup with crushed ice and water.
 - The cup must have enough crushed ice to provide an environment of 32° F, so you may need to pack more ice into the cup during the process.
 - When the mixture of the water has stabilized in about four or five minutes, insert the thermometer to be calibrated to the appropriate immersion depth.
 - Be sure to hold the stem of the instrument away from the bottom and sides of the container (preferably one inch) to avoid error.
- If your thermometer is not accurate within $\pm 2^{\circ}$ F, adjust the thermometer accordingly. The ice point method permits calibration to within $.1^{\circ}$ F.
 - Without removing the stem from the ice, hold the adjusting nut under the head of the thermometer with a suitable tool and turn the dial head so pointer reads 32° F.

