

# Frequently Asked Questions: Date Marking

Guidance on date marking time/temperature control (TCS) foods

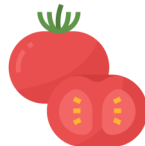


## Why Is Date Marking Important?

Date marking is a process to ensure food is thrown out before bacteria reaches unsafe levels that could cause food-borne illnesses.

## What Foods Must Be Date Marked?

- TCS foods cooked or prepared in a food establishment that are held for more than 24 hours.
- TCS foods commercially produced in food processing plant once opened and held for more than 24 hours.



## How Do I Date Mark Foods?

Food must be thrown out within seven (7) days, which means the day the food is prepared or opened plus six (6) days. Example: Food prepared on October 6 must be discarded on October 12.



## What If I Freeze The Food?

Freezing foods stops the date marking clock but does not reset it. So if a food is stored at 41°F for two days and then frozen at 0°F, it can still be stored at 41°F for five (5) more days after removal from the freezer. The freezer date and the thawing date must be put on the container.



## What If I Combine Food That Was Opened On Different Dates?

When different containers of foods are combined, the date of the oldest ingredient becomes the reference date that will be marked on the food.

## Are There Foods That Do Not Require Date Marking?

Some foods prepared and packaged in an inspected food processing plant may not require date marking. These foods include:

- Certain cheeses. See cheese chart on page 2.
- Cultured dairy products (i.e. yogurt, sour cream, and buttermilk).
- Preserved fish products (i.e. pickled herring, dried, or salted cod).
- Shelf-stable dry fermented sausage, pepperoni, and salami not labeled as “keep refrigerated.”



**When in doubt, date mark.**



United States Virgin Islands  
Department of Health  
Division of Environmental Health  
<https://doh.vi.gov/programs/environmental-health>

# Cheeses Exempt From Date Marking

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- Abertam
- Appenzeller
- Asadero
- Asiago (medium or old)
- Asiago soft
- Battelmatt
- Bellelay (blue veined)
- Blue
- Bra
- Brick
- Camosum
- Chantelle
- Cheddar
- Christalinna
- Colby
- Coon
- Cotija
- Cotija Anejo
- Derby
- Edam
- Emmentaler
- English Dairy
- Fontina
- Gex (blue veined)
- Gjetost
- Gloucester
- Gorgonzola (blue veined)
- Gouda
- Gruyere
- Havarti
- Herve
- Konigskase
- Lapland
- Limburger
- Lorraine
- Manchego
- Milano
- Monterey
- Muenster
- Oaxaca
- Oka
- Parmesan
- Pecorino
- Port du Salut Provolone
- Queso Anejo
- Queso Chihuahua
- Queso de Bola
- Queso de la
- Tierra
- Queso de Prensa
- Reggiano
- Robbiole
- Romanello
- Romano
- Roquefort (blue veined)
- Samsoe
- Sapsago
- Sassenage (blue veined)
- Stilton (blue veined)
- Swiss
- Tignard (blue veined)
- Tilsiter
- Trappist
- Vize
- Wensleydale (blue)

