



# Food Safety – Proper Thawing Methods

Safety Management System 2007

SEMS 4-13

As a part of the continuing reviewing of correct food service sanitation principles, make sure your operation is following the methods of properly thawing foods.

It is necessary to use the correct thawing methods to prevent the increased growth of harmful bacteria that cause foodborne illness. While foods are frozen, this bacteria is dormant because freezing does not kill bacteria, it only slows or stops the growth process. Once the food reaches a certain temperature level, 40 degrees F. and up to 140 degrees F, known as the **TEMPERATURE DANGER ZONE**, the bacteria will start to grow rapidly. Therefore it is necessary to thaw food at the correct temperature level prior to preparation.

Some food items are designed to be cooked from frozen temperatures, such as frozen vegetables, hamburger patties, and pie shells. They are cooked (a longer time than normal) from frozen temperatures all the way through to the proper end-serving temperature, passing through the temperature danger zone quickly and harmlessly. But for other food items have to be thawed differently to minimize the time spent in the temperature danger zone:

## **THAW:**

### **In a refrigerator/cooler at temperatures of 38 degrees F. or less.**

- Store raw foods on the lowest shelves to prevent them from dripping or splashing on other foods.
- Allow a day **or more** for large items, such as turkeys and roasts to thaw.
- Make sure items are thawed evenly, middle to outside.

### **Under running potable (drinking) water at a temperature of 70 degrees F. or lower. The product should be thawed within two (2) hours, then prepped and cooked.**

- Use a large cleaned and sanitized sink only used for thawing.
- Use a stream of water strong enough to wash off loose particles of skin or dirt. Do not let water splash on other food or food-contact surfaces.
- Remove the food from the sink as soon as it is thawed. Sanitize the sink and all utensils used in the thawing process.
- This method will not work for large cuts of meat, or turkeys.