Date Marking Guidelines

POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS, READY-TO-EAT (RTE) FOODS Prepared in a Food Establishment
OR
Commercially Prepared in a Food Processing Plant and opened at the Food Establishment

Going to be used within 24 hours.
No Date Marking is required.

Food is placed in freezer.

Going to be held in refrigeration at 41°F or below for more than 24 hours.

DATE MARK PRODUCT

RTE Food is placed under refrigeration at 41°F or below. RTE Food shall be labeled to indicate that the food shall be consumed, sold or discarded within 7 days.*

RTE Food is consumed or sold within 7 days or discarded.

If RTE Food is to be held for more than 24 hours under refrigeration at 41°F or below, it must be labeled to indicate 7 days minus the time held at refrigeration before freezing to indicate when the RTE Food is consumed, sold or discarded.

If RTE Food is unlabeled it must be used within 24 hours. No date marking is required.

If RTE Food is removed from freezer.

RTE Food is placed in the freezer before the end of the 7 days.

RTE Food is placed in the freezer before the end of the 4 days.

RTE Food is consumed or sold within 4 days or discarded.

If RTE Food is to be held for more than 24 hours under refrigeration between 41°F - 45°F, it must be labeled to indicate 4 days minus the time held at refrigeration before freezing to indicate when the RTE Food is consumed, sold or discarded.

Date marking exemptions:
- Some deli salads, preserved fish, salt-cured products, sausage (pg. 87 2009 FDA Food Code)
- Some cheese (pg. 417 2009 FDA Food Code annex)
- Cultured dairy (e.g. yogurt, sour cream)

* Time starts with the day of preparation
OR
The day the container is opened.

Thawed and is to be used within 24 hours, No date marking is required.