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| **STORAGE PRINCIPLES** |

### Temperature

Temperature is very important when it comes to food storage, and you will often find lots of thermometers around the storerooms. The ideal storeroom temperature is between 10 and 20C. This applies to both non-perishable and semi-perishable storage areas. The cool room and freezer are of course different. Most cool rooms operate at between 2 and 4 C, and most freezers at between -18 to -24 C.

It's not usually necessary to have storerooms completely insulated or equipped with their own air-conditioning. You just need to know how to make best use of your storage space by being aware of how different commodities behave under varying conditions.

You must take special care to avoid extremes of temperature, because large fluctuations usually cause deterioration and spoilage. Apart from electrical and mechanical failures, lack of or malfunctions in ventilation can cause local hot spots which will raise the temperature too much in certain areas.

You also have to look after your own health. Working in the cool room or freezer for long periods of time puts a significant strain on your body and you can quite easily become ill. That is why we have a coat rack just outside the cool room door and recommend that you wear gloves when handling frozen food.

### Humidity

Humidity is another thing that needs to be considered in the storeroom. The humidity in the drystore areas should be between 50% and 60%. If the humidity gets too high, when the air cools it will release this excess moisture in the form of water droplets, which end up covering the walls and floor of dry store rooms. This can then lead to moisture damage.

### Rotation

Stock rotation is another important storage principle. Stock rotation is where you put all new stock to the rear or underneath already stored stock, so that existing stock is used first. This prevents stockpiling older supplies which may then deteriorate or exceed their used by date. This process is also known as the F.I.F.O 'First In, First Out' method.

### Position

Position is also important when storing stock, particularly when storing stock on shelves. Heavy items should be placed on the bottom shelves. Not only does this mean less lifting, but it also prevents the top shelves from becoming top heavy and unstable.

Raw and cooked ingredients should be stored separately, and never on the same tray. Do not place raw meats above raw or cooked foods or desserts as the meat juices may drip and contaminate food on the shelf below.

### Labelling

This may not sound too important, but it is. You need a good system of labelling for many of your stock items, particularly frozen items as many of these look the same. You should also label the shelves.

Labels not only allow you to identify what the commodity is but they also allow you to record information such as use by dates and supplie**r details.**

[**The General Food Law Regulation (EC) 178/2002**](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2002:031:0001:0024:EN:PDF) is directly applicable EU legislation and provides the general principles of food safety which include the requirement on food businesses to place safe food on the market, for traceability of food, for presentation of food, for the withdrawal or recall of unsafe food placed on the market and that food and feed imported into, and exported from, the EU shall comply with food law