	STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE	Issue: 1	Ref No:
		Issued by:	
HACCPEuropa.com	**Date Marking Ready-to-Eat, Potentially Hazardous Food**	Approved by:	
		Issue date:	
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SCOPE: This procedure applies to foodservice employees who prepare, store, or serve food.

PURPOSE: To ensure appropriate rotation of ready-to-eat food to prevent or reduce foodborne illness from *Listeria monocytogenes.*

RESPONSIBILITY: It is the responsibility of the management to ensure that the following procedures are adhered to and understood by all relevant personnel and the personnel follow State or local health department requirements.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The best practice for a date marking system would be to include a label with the product name, the day or date, and time it is prepared or opened. Examples of how to indicate when the food is prepared or opened include:
    - Labeling food with a calendar date, such as "cut product, 06/02/09, 8:00 a.m.,"
    - Identifying the day of the week, such as "cut product, Monday, 8:00 a.m.," or
    - Using color-coded marks or tags, such as cut product, blue dot, 8:00 a.m. means "cut on Monday at 8:00 a.m."
2. Label ready-to-eat, potentially hazardous foods that are prepared on-site and held for more than 24 hours.
3. Label any processed, ready-to-eat, potentially hazardous foods when opened, if they are to be held for more than 24 hours.
4. Refrigerate all ready-to-eat, potentially hazardous foods at 5 ºC or below.
5. Serve or discard refrigerated, ready-to-eat, potentially hazardous foods within 7 days.
6. Indicate with a separate label the date prepared, the date frozen, and the date thawed of any refrigerated, ready-to-eat, potentially hazardous foods.
7. Calculate the 7-day time period by counting only the days that the food is under refrigeration. For example:
    - On Monday, 07/03/09, product is cooked, properly cooled, and refrigerated with a label that reads, "Product, Cooked, 07/03/09."

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- On Tuesday, 08/03/09, the product is frozen with a second label that reads, "Frozen, 08/03/09." Two labels now appear on the product. Since the product was held under refrigeration from Monday, 07/03/09– Tuesday, 08/03/09, only 1 day is counted towards the 7-day time period.
- On Tuesday 15/03/09 the product is pulled out of the freezer. A third label is placed on the product that reads, "Thawed, 15/03/09." All three labels now appear on the product. The product must be served or discarded within 6 days.

MONITORING:
A designated employee will check refrigerators daily to verify that foods are date marked and that foods exceeding the 7-day time period are not being used or stored.

CORRECTIVE ACTION:
1. Retrain any employee found not following the procedures in this SOP.
2. Foods that are not date marked or that exceed the 7-day time period will be discarded.

VERIFICATION AND RECORD KEEPING:
The manager will complete the Food Safety Checklist daily.

RECORDS APPLIED TO THIS PROCEDURE:
- Food Safety Checklist

DOCUMENTATION RETENTION:
The records applied to this procedure are to be kept on file for a minimum of 3 years.