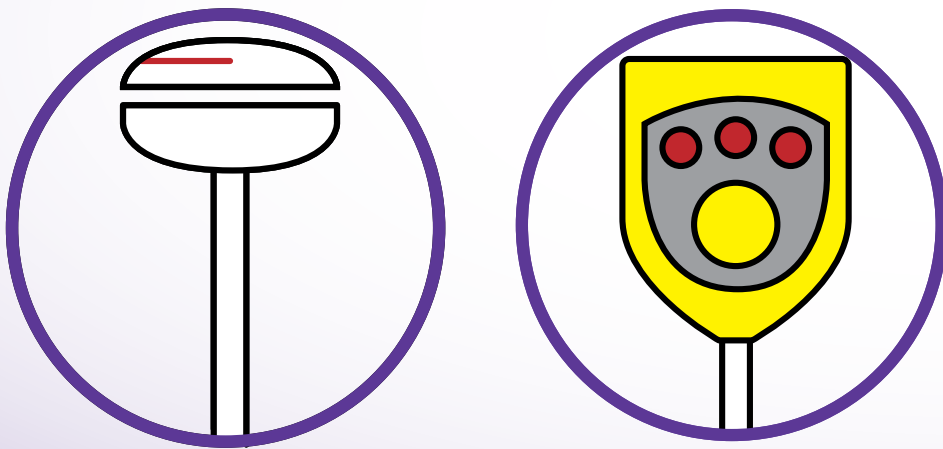# Thermometers and Calibrations

Thermometers can lose their accuracy when bumped, dropped or go through severe temperature changes.

Calibrate at least once weekly.

Definition-
Thermometers are used to determine the temperature in coolers, freezers, ovens, warewashing machines, etc. But perhaps the most important use is to measure the temperature of food. Thermometers should be calibrated weekly, after being dropped or after being used to check very hot or cold foods.

Information-
Thermometers are essential for keeping food out of the temperature danger zone (41°-135°). The most common type used in food service the bi-metallic stemmed thermometer, which measures temperature from 0°F to 220°F. These thermometers are accurate to with +/- 2° degrees. They can be calibrated by two methods: Ice Point and Boiling Point.

Process for Ice Point Method Calibration-
1. Fill a large container with crushed ice. Add clean tap water until the container is full.
2. Put the thermometer stem or probe into the ice water so the sensing area is completely submerged.
3. Wait 30 seconds, or until the indicator stops moving.
4. Hold the calibration nut securely with a wrench or other tool and rotate the head of the thermometer until it reads 32°F.

Process for Boiling Point Method Calibration-
1. Bring clean tap water to a boil in a deep pan.
2. Put the thermometer stem or probe into the boiling water so the sensing area is completely submerged.
3. Wait 30 seconds, or until the indicator stops moving.
4. Hold the calibration nut securely with a wrench or other tool and rotate the head of the thermometer until it reads 212°F, or the appropriate boiling point for your elevation.

You Should Know
1. What is the temperature danger zone?

*Note: The Temperature Danger Zone in the current FDA Food Code is 41°F to 135°F. Some jurisdictions are on older versions of the Food Code and use 41°F to 140°F. Use the temperature that is in the version of the Food Code followed by your jurisdiction.