Food Cooling Log

Start a row the moment cooked food passes 135°F. Read the food **before** each checkpoint, not after it.

Stage 1 — the one that fails
135°F → 70°F within 2 hours
Food Code 2026 § 3-501.14(A)(1)

Stage 2
Down to 41°F within 6 hours total, counted from 135°F — not 6 hours after stage 1.
§ 3-501.14(A)(2)

Room-temperature prep
Food made from ambient ingredients (canned tuna, reconstituted mixes): **41°F within 4 hours**.
§ 3-501.14(B)

Date	Food / batch and cooling method used	Time at 135°F	+1 hr temp	+2 hr — must be 70°F or below	+3 hr temp	+4 hr temp	+6 hr — must be 41°F or below	Corrective action (what and when)	Init.	Ver.
1 Jun	Beef chili, 4 gal — 4 shallow pans, 2 in deep, uncovered	2:10 pm	3:10 pm 84°F	4:10 pm 62°F ✓	5:10 pm 55°F	6:10 pm 47°F	8:10 pm 39°F ✓	None needed — covered and dated 8:10 pm	L.P.	S.N.

Cooling method used — tick what you did (one or more)

- ☐ Shallow pans
- ☐ Smaller or thinner portions
- ☐ Rapid cooling equipment
- ☐ Stirred in an ice water bath
- ☐ Heat-transfer containers (metal)
- ☐ Ice added as an ingredient
- ☐ Depth of 2 in or less (new in 2026)
- ☐ Other effective method

What to do when a batch misses a checkpoint

The Food Code sets the limits but does not name a corrective action, so **your health department decides**. The rules below are the Minneapolis Health Department's, printed on its own cooling log — a common version worth confirming against yours before you need it.

Above 70°F, still under 2 hours
May be **reheated to 165°F** — only if the reheating is done **before** the 2-hour mark. Then cool again, using a **different** method than the one that just failed.

Above 70°F after 2 hours
Discard. Spore-forming bacteria such as *Clostridium perfringens* and *Bacillus cereus* survive cooking and multiply in this range.

Not at 41°F by 6 hours
Discard. The 6 hours is a total from 135°F; it is not extended because stage 1 was quick.

If reheating is permitted where you are: § 3-403.11(A) requires all parts of the food to reach **165°F for 15 seconds**, and § 3-403.11(D) requires it to be done rapidly — no more than 2 hours between 41°F and 165°F. Record the reheat time and temperature in the corrective action column.

The cooling rules, as the Code writes them

Section	Requirement	Applies to
§ 3-501.14(A)(1)	**Within two hours from 57°C (135°F) to 21°C (70°F)**	Cooked TCS food
§ 3-501.14(A)(2)	**Within a total of six hours from 57°C (135°F) to 5°C (41°F) or less**	Cooked TCS food
§ 3-501.14(B)	Cooled within four hours to 41°F or less	Food prepared from ingredients at ambient temperature, such as reconstituted foods and canned tuna
§ 3-501.14(C)	Cooled within four hours to 41°F or less	Food received warm under a shipping allowance from the supplier
§ 3-501.15(B)	Containers arranged for maximum heat transfer; **loosely covered, or uncovered if protected from overhead contamination**	All food being cooled
§ 3-501.15(C) NEW 2026	An **approved** alternative: filled no more than **two inches deep**, held **uncovered**, in a unit holding **ambient 41°F or less** with an **electronic system continuously monitoring time and ambient air temperature**	Cooked TCS food — not permitted with non-continuous cooking (§ 3-401.14), ROP without a variance (§ 3-502.12) or time as a public health control (§ 3-501.19)

How to use this log
1. Print one sheet per week, or one per cook-ahead day.
2. Clip it inside the walk-in door with a pen on a string.
3. Start a row at 135°F, not when the pot leaves the stove.
4. Probe the thickest part, and the same place each time.
5. Have a second person initial the sheet at the end of the day.

Keep them how long?
Keep logs where the inspection happens. Oregon requires mobile food units that cool on board to keep cooling logs **on the unit for 90 days**. Where no period is set, 90 days is a sensible floor and 6 months is common practice.

Your binder, built for you
AuditBinder turns your answers into a complete HACCP binder — flow diagram, hazard analysis, CCP limits and the monitoring logs that match them, cooling included. **audit-binder.com/pricing** — one-time purchase, no subscription.

Sources: FDA Food Code 2026 §§ 3-501.14, 3-501.15, 3-403.11 and Annex 3 (fda.gov/food/fda-food-code/food-code-2026) · Minneapolis Health Department Cooling Log (minneapolismn.gov/foodsafety) · Oregon Health Authority Food Code Fact Sheet 31, January 2026. Checked November 2026. AuditBinder provides documentation tools, not consulting, legal advice or certification.