

SOP - Thawing

Food Safety & Quality Template · Provided by GIFSQ

Thawing on the counter overnight is one of those habits everyone knows is wrong and plenty still do. This SOP gives your team the approved methods and time limits, so there's no excuse and no guesswork.

SOPs only work if people actually read them. Train each operator, get the read-and-understood signature, and keep the language as plain as the job allows - this isn't the place to show off vocabulary.

1. Document control

Field	Details
Document title	SOP - Thawing
Document no.	[QA-SOP-004]
Version	[1.0]
Effective date	[YYYY-MM-DD]
Prepared by	[Name / Title / Date]
Approved by	[Name / Title / Date]
Review date	[YYYY-MM-DD]

2. Purpose

To thaw frozen food safely without allowing pathogen growth.

3. Scope

Applies to all frozen food thawed at [site name], including meat, poultry, fish and prepared items.

4. Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Kitchen / production staff	Thaw per this SOP; label and record.
Supervisor	Verifies methods and time limits are followed.

5. Materials and equipment

- Dedicated thawing trays with rims
- Date and thawing labels
- Probe thermometer
- Refrigerator space reserved for thawing

6. Safety precautions

- Never thaw food in hot water or at ambient room temperature.
- Wash hands after handling thawing raw meat packaging and drip.

7. Procedure

Follow the steps in order. Steps marked [CHECK] are the ones people skip under pressure - don't.

1. Plan ahead: move food from freezer to chiller ($\leq 5^{\circ}\text{C}$) in time for a full thaw - allow [guidance, e.g., 24 h per 2.5 kg for large joints].
2. Label the item with product name, thaw start date/time, and use-by date (typically [thaw date + 2 days] unless the spec says otherwise). [CHECK]
3. Place on a rimmed tray on the lowest chiller shelf to catch drip; keep raw away from RTE.
4. For faster thawing use only approved methods: under cold running water ($\leq 21^{\circ}\text{C}$), or in the microwave followed by immediate cooking.
5. Check the item is fully thawed before cooking - no ice crystals in the thickest part. [CHECK]
6. Cook thawed food promptly; never refreeze thawed raw food unless it has been cooked first.
7. Record thawing on the thawing log; discard anything that exceeded the time limits.

8. Records

- Thawing log

- Discard records for out-of-limit product

9. Revision history

Version	Date	Change description	Changed by
1.0	[YYYY-MM-DD]	Initial issue	[Name]

Approval and control

Role	Name	Signature	Date
Prepared by	[Name]	[Signature]	[Date]
Reviewed by (QA)	[Name]	[Signature]	[Date]
Approved by	[Name]	[Signature]	[Date]

Keep completed forms for [Define retention period, e.g., 2 years beyond shelf life] at [defined location] - and make sure someone besides you knows where that is.

General use: This template contains no country-specific laws or regulator names and suits any food business — restaurant, catering, food manufacturing, retail, or food service. Adapt temperature limits, legal references, and record-retention periods to your local regulations. Provided by GIFSQ · v1.0 · September 2026