In recent years there have been foodborne illness outbreaks and product recalls associated with cut leafy greens contaminated with pathogens (bacterial, viruses).

The Food Code has designated cut leafy greens as a potentially hazardous food that must be maintained at temperatures of 41ºF (5ºC) or less. “Cut leafy greens” means fresh leafy greens whose leaves have been cut, shredded, sliced, chopped, or torn.

Examples of leafy greens:
- all types of lettuce (iceberg, romaine, butter, leaf, and baby leaf)
- escarole
- endive
- spring mix
- spinach
- cabbage
- kale
- arugula
- chard

This applies to commercially processed cut leafy greens, such as bagged salad mixes and spinach, and to leafy greens that have been cut in the food establishment.

If fresh leafy greens are cut in the food establishment, the cut product must be date marked and discarded if not sold or served within 7 days.

Commercially processed salad mixes in bags or containers must also be discarded after opening if not sold or served within 7 days.

To verify proper cold holding of cut leafy greens, measure the product temperature with a thin probe thermometer by inserting the tip in the thicker stem portion of the leaf. For sealed bags of product, insert a thermometer probe between bagged products or fold the bag tightly around the probe to ensure adequate contact with the product.