

# Food Code Fact Sheet #13

What you should know about the Code

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## Probe Thermometers

### OAR 333-150-0000, CHAPTER 4-302.12

(A) Food temperature measuring devices shall be provided and readily accessible for use in ensuring attainment and maintenance of food temperatures as specified under Chapter 3. <sup>PF</sup>

(B) A temperature measuring device with a suitable small-diameter probe that is designed to measure the temperature of thin masses shall be provided and readily accessible to accurately measure the temperature in thin foods such as meat patties and fish filets. <sup>PF</sup>

### PUBLIC HEALTH REASONS:

The presence and accessibility of food temperature measuring devices is critical to the effective monitoring of food temperatures. Proper use of such devices provides the operator or person in charge with important information with which to determine if temperatures should be adjusted or if foods should be discarded.

Bimetal thermometers are not suitable for accurately measuring the temperature of thin foods such as hamburger patties because of the large diameter and the inability to accurately sense the temperature at the tip of the probe. However, temperature measurements in thin foods can be accurately determined using a small-diameter probe 1.5 mm (0.059 inch), or less, connected to a device such as thermocouple thermometer.

Alcohol wipes are considered GRAS (Generally Recognized as Safe) when used as intended and are not a concern if a small amount were to get into a food product.

In the Oregon Food Sanitation Rules, restaurants serving thin foods such as hamburger patties, pork chops, chicken breasts and fish filets must have a small-diameter probe thermometer to check these foods.

An example of a small-diameter probe is a thermocouple, as shown in the top picture to the right.

Bi-metal thermometers (as shown below) are not designed to measure the temperatures of thin foods, and can only be used for foods like soups, roasts and tuna salad.



### Cleaning Between Uses

Food thermometers should be cleaned between uses with individual alcohol wipes or with a clean, wiping cloth from your sanitizer bucket. Every four hours your thermometer should be cleaned with soapy water, rinsed and sanitized, just like you would with any food contact surface. When using either an alcohol wipe or the clean sanitizer wipe cloth between uses, it is important to let the probe air dry completely before use. Alcohol evaporates quickly, but you may need to wait a little longer if you are using a wiping cloth.

### Calibrating a Thermometer

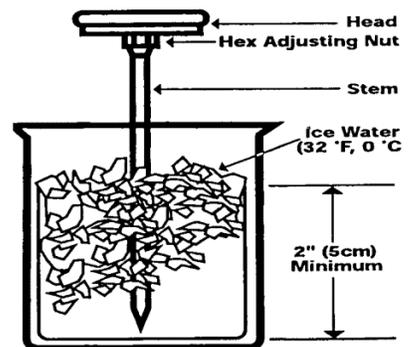
Thermometers should be calibrated if they are dropped, seem inaccurate or at a frequency according to manufacturer.



### There are many types of probe thermometers with small tips

The most common method to check the accuracy of a food thermometer is using ice water:

- Pack a large cup to the top with crushed ice and water
- Put the thermometer at least 2 inches into the ice slurry.
- After 30 seconds (or less) it should read 32F (0C).



If the thermometer is not reading 32F (0C), then adjust according to manufacturer's directions.

Some thermocouples may need to be returned to the factory periodically for recalibration.