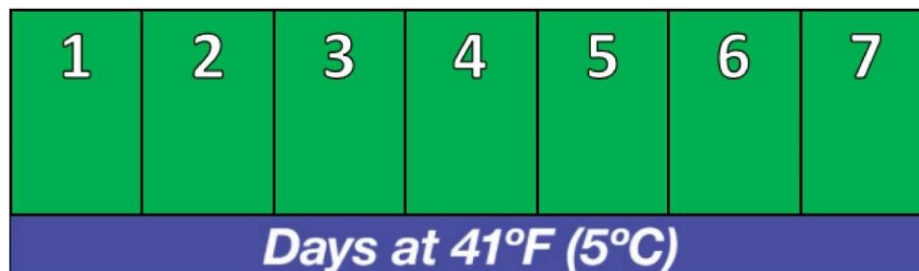


# Date Marking

Date marking is required for food products that are:

- (1) Ready-to-eat (RTE)
- (2) Time/Temperature Control for Safety (TCS)
- (3) Refrigerated for more than 24 hours after preparation/opening



(Use-by or Sell-by dates are not the same as date marking requirements)

## Per 2017 FDA Food Code Section 3-501.17

- RTE, TCS foods must be consumed, sold, or discarded within 7 days of opening/preparation
- This shelf-life helps to prevent the growth of *Listeria monocytogenes*
- A date marking system may use calendar dates, days of the week, color-coded marks, or other effective means
- Day 1 is the date the food was opened/prepared

### Frozen Tracking:

RTE, TCS food that is frozen after the initial date of preparation/opening, must have a system in place to track how many days remain before the products must be discarded once it is no longer frozen

### Foods Exempt from Date Marking:

- Hard and semi-soft cheeses
- Cultured dairy products (e.g., yogurt, sour cream, buttermilk)
- Commercially made deli salads (e.g., pasta salad, chicken salad, potato salad)
- Shellstock
- Preserved fish products
- Dry, fermented sausages (e.g., pepperoni, genoa)
- Salt-cured products (e.g., prosciutto)