

THERMOMETER CALIBRATION GUIDE

Using a food thermometer is the only sure way of knowing your food is at the proper temperature – whether you are cooking, cooling, reheating or holding. Each type of food thermometer has its own individual characteristics. Choose the one that best fits the intended use within your establishment.

Digital Thermometers

The best thermometers to use for most foods are digital. They can measure food temperature quickly. Because temperature is measured at the tip of the thermometer's probe, digital thermometers can measure both thin and thick foods.



Dial Probe Thermometers



Although commonly used, it is harder to get a correct reading from a dial food thermometer because they take longer to measure the food temperature. The thermometer reading is averaged from the point to the dimple along several inches of the probe. This means dial probe thermometers cannot be used to measure the temperature of thin foods.

Checking for Accuracy

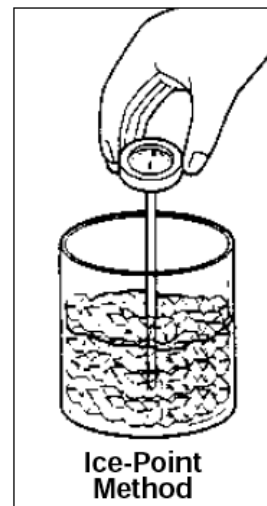
There are two ways to check the accuracy of a food thermometer. One method uses ice water, the other uses boiling water. Many probe food thermometers have a calibration nut under the dial that can be adjusted. Some digital stemmed thermometers cannot be calibrated or must be returned to the manufacturer. **Food thermometers should be checked regularly to ensure that they are working properly.**



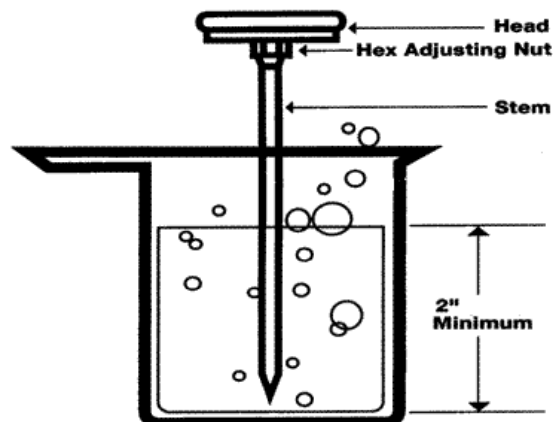
Calibrating Thermometers

Thermometers should be calibrated using either the ice-point or boiling-point method. The ice-point method is typically used because the boiling-point method may be less reliable due to variations in altitude or atmospheric pressure.

Ice-Point Method		
Step	Process	Notes
1	Fill a large glass with crushed ice. Add clean tap water until the glass is full.	Stir the mixture well.
2	Put the thermometer or probe stem into the ice water so that the sensing area is completely submerged. Wait 30 seconds.	Do not let the stem touch the bottom or sides of the glass. The thermometer stem or probe stem must remain in the ice water.
3	Hold the adjusting nut securely with a wrench or other tool and rotate the head of the thermometer until it reads 32°F.	Press the reset button on a digital thermometer to adjust the readout.



Boiling-Point Method		
Step	Process	Notes
1	Bring clean tap water to a boil in a deep pan.	
2	Put the thermometer or probe stem into the boiling water so that the sensing area is completely submerged. Wait 30 seconds.	Do not let the stem touch the bottom or sides of the pan. The thermometer stem or probe stem must remain in the boiling water.
3	Hold the adjusting nut securely with a wrench or other tool and rotate the head of the thermometer until it reads 212°F.	Press the reset button on a digital thermometer to adjust the readout.



Using a Thermometer



When taking food temperatures, the probe should be placed into the thickest portion of the food. This placement is especially important for a whole turkey or large roast. Digital thermometers should be used when taking temperatures of thin food like hamburgers or chicken breasts.

