



Requirements for sous vide style cooking

Sous vide is a style of cooking under vacuum that allows slower and lower temperature preparation of foods in vacuum sealed bags. It requires very precise control steps and monitoring to minimize food safety hazards.

If you are considering sous vide style cooking of foods in your food service establishment, you will need to ensure that your process meets public health requirements, and that your facility is properly equipped to handle and monitor this process. Operators must consult with their Environmental Health Officer before offering sous vide style cooked foods on their menu.

A food service establishment intending to use sous vide must have a food safety plan prepared that outlines the following critical elements:

- Time & temperature settings of the immersion circulator
- Internal temperature of food for the sous vide cook step and duration of hold time
- Description of sous vide process in a food flow chart

A technical guidance document has been developed to help you understand the issues and equivalent cook process lethality (time and temperature) for the foods you choose to cook sous vide style.

[*“Guidelines for restaurant sous vide cooking safety in British Columbia”*](#).

Read over this document carefully and consult Table 3 for sous vide pasteurization requirements. **Every product can be unique, so you will be required to define and verify them in your food safety plan.**

The following checklist identifies some basic equipment and supplies you need and the key process steps you must address in your sous vide food safety plan.

I. EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

- Thermometer calibrated to $\pm 0.1^{\circ}\text{C}$ and cell foam tape
- Immersion circulator (water must circulate and be heated)
- Vacuum sealer capable of 95% pressure
- Sous vide grade vacuum food pouches (2mil or thicker polypropylene or polyethylene)
- Refrigerated storage capable of maintaining 3°C or lower

2. FOOD SAFETY CONTROL - CONTROL AND CRITICAL CONTROL POINT VERIFICATION

- Product heating and holding times are established for each product type
- Minimum acceptable temp for sous vide style cooking in meat= 55°C ; in poultry= 60°C
- Sous vide foods are monitored during the cooking process to ensure target times and temperatures are achieved
- Sous vide pouched foods are labelled with date, time, discard date and identity
- Fully cooked sous vide foods are cooled to below 3°C within 2 hours (in ice slurry) and stored at 3°C under refrigeration (in ice)
- Refrigerated fully cooked sous vide foods are used within 3 days