The temperature danger zone is between 5°C and 60°C, when it is easiest for harmful bacteria to grow in food.

- Minimise the time that food spends at these temperatures in order to keep food safe.
- Refrigerated food needs to be kept at 5°C or below.
- Hot food needs to be kept at 60°C or above.

**Temperature danger zone**

- **Hot food zone**: Bacteria are destroyed at 100°C.
- **60°C**: Bacteria grow quickly.
- **5°C**: Bacteria don’t grow.
- **0°C**: Frozen food zone.

**4-hour/2-hour rule**

If a refrigerated food (e.g., dairy, cut fruit, sandwiches, salad) or a hot food (e.g., casserole, pie, lasagne, meatballs) has been in the temperature danger zone for a total time of:

- **0 to 2 hours**: Use immediately, or keep at or below 5°C, or at or above 60°C.
- **2 to 4 hours**: Use immediately.
- **More than 4 hours**: Throw away.

If you intend to use the 4-hour/2-hour rule, you will need to demonstrate that the food is safe. See the guideline on the 4-hour/2-hour rule on the Authority’s website.