Thawing Food

Food should be thawed safely to minimize the time that it is in the temperature danger zone (41°F to 135°F) and to prevent cross-contamination. Thawing at room temperature on the counter is unsafe. At room temperature, thawed portions of potentially hazardous foods can support bacterial growth. There are four ways to safely thaw food.

**Thaw in the Refrigerator**
- Thaw in a refrigerator that maintains a temperature of 41°F or below.
- Place food in a pan to prevent dripping.
- Plan ahead! Large items can take a long time (days) to thaw.
- The safest method for thawing!

**Thaw in the Microwave**
- Thaw in a microwave only if the food is to be cooked immediately afterward.
- Works well for small amounts of food and single servings.

**Thaw Under (Drinkable) Running Water**
- Place the food in a clean, sanitized sink or pot that will allow the food product to be submerged.
- The water should constantly run, have a temperature of 70°F or less, and enough water velocity to agitate and float off loose particles in an overflow.
- The period of time under running water should not allow thawed portions of food to rise above 41°F.

**Thaw as Part of the Cooking Process**
- Always cook food to a safe internal temperature.
- Works well for small amounts of food.
- When thawing already cooked foods by this method, always reheat to 165°F.