

## Using a Stem Thermometer

Food temperatures must be checked throughout the food preparation process (ex. holding, cooking, cooling and storage). The best tool to check temperatures is a probe thermometer. A probe thermometer can be either dial or digital, but it must have an accuracy of 2F. When thin foods are served, like a hamburger, a thermometer with a thin probe tip must be used to ensure it is properly sensing the temperature of the food.

The accuracy of the thermometer is vital to make certain the temperature of the food is safe. But, how do you know a thermometer is accurate? Calibrating the thermometer will determine if the thermometer is reading the correct temperature. Plus, thermometers are sensitive and can lose calibration easily, especially if dropped. There are two methods to calibrate a thermometer:

### Ice Water

1. Fill a container with ice and add water to the top.
2. Stir and let sit for a minute.
3. Place thermometer in the container so the sensing area is submerged (don't let it touch the sides or bottom).
4. Let thermometer stay in the ice water until the dial stops moving or when the digital readout stops at one temperature.
5. If the reading is not 32F, adjust the hex nut under the dial head until it reads 32F. When calibrating digital thermometers refer to the the manufacturer's instructions.

### Boiling Water

1. Fill saucepan or pot with water and bring to a rolling boil.
2. Place thermometer in the pot or saucepan so the sensing area is submerged (don't let it touch the sides or bottom).
3. Let thermometer stay in the boiling water until the dial stops moving or when the digital readout stops at one temperature.
4. If the reading is not 212, adjust the hex nut under the dial head until it reads 212F. When calibrating a digital thermometer refer to the manufacturer's instructions.

### Remember:

- When checking food temperatures always place the probe into the thickest portion of the food or in the center of the pan or container.
- Sanitize the thermometer in sanitizing solution before use to prevent cross-contamination.
- Calibrate thermometers routinely.
- Keep several thermometers on hand in case of breakage, loss or damage.