



# Wisconsin Food Code Fact Sheet



## Food Safety Practices for Handling Cheese & Cheddar Cheese Curd Displays

In addition to refrigeration, time may be used as a public health control for cheddar cheese curds. Refrigeration or time as a public health control cannot be intermingled. Cheddar cheese curds must either be held under refrigeration or held using time as a public health control.

### Fresh Cheddar Cheese Curds

Dairy plants and retail establishments may sell fresh cheddar cheese curds, held out of refrigeration, if:

- The cheddar cheese curds are not held for more than 24 hours from the time of manufacturing.
- The cheddar cheese curds are manufactured according to law.
- The cheddar cheese curds are packaged at a retail food establishment or processing plant.
- The cheddar cheese curds are labeled as specified in [Wis. Admin. Code § 3-602.11](#) with the date or time of manufacture. Cheddar cheese curds marked only with the date must be discarded no later than midnight on the day of manufacture if held at ambient temperature. Those marked with the date *and* time may be held up to 24 hours prior to being discarded if held at ambient temperature.
- If a facility chooses to store cheddar cheese curds at ambient air temperatures using time as a public health control, the cheddar cheese

curds may not at any time be placed back under refrigeration.

- The establishment maintains records indicating the amount of product displayed and the amount of the product discarded for each day that cheese curds are displayed for sale at ambient temperature.
- The cheddar cheese curds in unmarked containers or packages that exceed the 24-hour limit are discarded.



### Retail Cheese

Cheese is defined as hard, semi-soft or pasteurized process in [21 CFR](#).

- **Hard Cheese:** manufactured with a moisture content not exceeding 39%. Hard cheeses are exempt from date marking and refrigeration requirements but must be labeled properly.
- **Semi-Soft Cheese:** contains more than 39% and less than 50% moisture. Semi-soft cheeses must be held at 41°F or below. Some semi-soft cheeses are exempt from date marking requirements.

## Hard Cheese Examples

- Parmesan
- Gruyere
- Reggiano
- Romano
- Sap
- Sago
- Asiago (old and medium)
- Aged Cheddar (packaged in wax coating)
- Ultra-pasteurized cheese and aseptically packaged milk products
- Pasteurized process cheese foods and spreads, (manufactured according to 21 CFR 133.169 and labeled as containing an acidifying agent which inhibits the growth of *Listeria monocytogenes*) that have met Tanaka study or challenge study criteria.

## Semi-Soft Cheese Examples (exempt from date marking, refrigeration required)

- Asiago (fresh and soft)
- Blue
- Caciocavallo

- Siciliano
- Brick
- Gouda
- Muenster
- Roquefort
- Gorgonzola
- Monterey Jack
- Provolone
- Monterey
- Edam
- Swiss
- Limburger
- Pasteurized Process Cheese
- Low Moisture Part-Skim Mozzarella

## Additional Examples (date marking and refrigeration required)

- Brie
- Camembert
- Cottage
- Ricotta
- Teleme
- Mozzarella (full flat)
- Cream Cheese
- Cold pack cheese and cheese spreads

Need more information? Check out the [Wisconsin Food Code](#) and DATCP's full listing of [Food Code Fact Sheets](#).