

SAFE HANDLING OF GYROS AND SHAWARMAS

- ♦ **Gyro** - a blend of raw minced meats, often lamb and beef, that is mixed with various spices and seasonings and formed into a cone or loaf.
- ♦ **Shawarma** - thin pieces or slices of raw marinated meat such as lamb, chicken, beef and goat, often stacked into a cone or loaf shape



Figure 1 – Shawarmas/Gyros cone on spits in vertical broiler.

Preparation and Handling

Gyro cones and shawarma meat are cooked in a vertical broiler where the product is slowly rotated while heating. As the meat is cooked, the outer layer is sliced off while the interior and under layers of the cone are still raw.

It can be difficult to control the depth of the slice, and raw juices from the inside of the cone may contaminate the outer layer during slicing. For this reason, all sliced gyro/shawarma meat must receive a secondary cook (by grilling, frying, etc.) to ensure proper cooking temperatures. If the minimum cooking temperatures are not reached, the establishment must have a written consumer advisory for the product to inform customers that the meat is raw or undercooked.

Health Risks

The risk of foodborne illness is higher than for other meat products because the cooking method used is often based more on how it looks (color of meat and juices), rather than on specific time and temperature measurements. Research has shown that both *Clostridium perfringens* and *Staphylococcus aureus* can grow in larger cones during the cooling process.

The types of germs that can grow in these cones, if not handled properly, can produce toxins (poisons). These toxins cannot be destroyed by normal cooking processes or freezing. They cannot be detected by sight, smell or taste.

Requirements

Cooking must be continuous

- ◆ The entire cone must be cooked and sliced within **4 hours**.
- ◆ Heat cannot be turned on and off.
- ◆ Rotisserie may not be stopped except when slicing meat from the cone.
- ◆ If cooking is not continuous, a written plan for Time as a Public Health Control must be in place.

Cook to the proper temperature

Unless a consumer advisory is provided, sliced meat must be cooked to the following temperatures before serving:

- ◆ **145°F** - sliced and stacked whole meats
- ◆ **155°F** - mixed, ground, minced, or tenderized meats
- ◆ **165°F** - poultry



Figure 2—Gyro cone on spit in vertical broiler.

Sliced product may be hot held at 135°F or above

Sliced product may properly cooled for later use

- ◆ Cool in uncovered, shallow pans no more than 2" to 4" deep to allow for proper cooling.
- ◆ Cool from 135°F to 70°F within 2 hours and then from 135°F to 41°F within an additional 4 hours.

For more information:

Cuyahoga County Board of Health
www.ccbh.net

US Food & Drug Administration
www.fda.gov/food

Leftover cones cannot be cooled or reused once removed from the vertical broiler.

- ◆ Leftover cones must be discarded once removed from the heated broiler
- ◆ Best practice would be to avoid having leftovers.
- ◆ Estimate the size of cone needed so it can be fully cooked and sliced by the end of business.