Cumulative 2-hour / 4-hour record

Track every period a batch spends out of refrigeration, including preparation, transport and display.

1. Use a consistent product and batch identifier. Carry forward all earlier exposure for that same batch; refrigeration does not reset elapsed time.

2. Enter full start and end dates and times, including overnight events. Enter prior cumulative minutes explicitly, including zero for a new batch with no prior exposure.

3. Add the latest interval to prior exposure. The Excel file calculates interval and cumulative minutes when all inputs are numeric and valid; the paper form is completed manually.

4. Follow the applicable time-control procedure and record the actual disposition, time and responsible person. The workbook never automatically releases food.

FSANZ's guide allows re-refrigeration before two hours of cumulative exposure between 5°C and 60°C. From two hours, use or sell within the four-hour limit rather than re-refrigerating for later. Set a discard deadline at four hours in your procedure; discard if exposure is uncertain. Do not use this record instead of two-stage cooling.

Adapt these supporting records to your products, processes and approved food safety plan. They are not HACCP certification or a complete site-specific food safety program. Establish and validate limits with a competent person before use. Examples are fictional and are not prescribed limits.

Sources checked 18 September 2026

FSANZ: 2-hour / 4-hour rule

Cumulative exposure

Full timestamps prevent midnight ambiguity. Prior minutes belong to the same batch; verify the carried-forward amount.

Business / site: _____ Record period: _____ Responsible person: _____

Site setup / approved procedure / limits / frequency / escalation contact: _____

Product / batch	Start date and time	End date and time	Prior minutes	Interval minutes	Total minutes	Disposition / time / initials

Review date / time: _____ Reviewed by: _____ Follow-up / linked action: _____

Worked example - Cumulative exposure

Full timestamps prevent midnight ambiguity. Prior minutes belong to the same batch; verify the carried-forward amount.

Fictional example only. Replace with your own approved process and actual observations.

Site setup / approved procedure / limits / frequency / escalation contact: _____

Product / batch	Start date and time	End date and time	Prior minutes	Interval minutes	Total minutes	Disposition / time / initials
Salad / S18	18/09/2026 11:30	18/09/2026 12:00	90	30	120	Serve during current service before deadline; AS

Review date / time: _____ Reviewed by: _____ Follow-up / linked action: _____

Reading this example

The example illustrates how to identify a record, document observations and retain a decision or follow-up. Pending work stays pending; a completed row is not itself evidence that a process is safe.

FSANZ's guide allows re-refrigeration before two hours of cumulative exposure between 5°C and 60°C. From two hours, use or sell within the four-hour limit rather than re-refrigerating for later. Set a discard deadline at four hours in your procedure; discard if exposure is uncertain. Do not use this record instead of two-stage cooling.