In-service- Proper Thawing and Cooling Procedures

- **Thawing**
  - There are four proper thawing methods
    - In the refrigerator
    - Completely submerged under running water at a water temperature of 70°F or below for no more than **two hours**
    - In the microwave
    - During the cooking process
  - Things to keep in mind
    - Thawing in the refrigerator can take some time, so plan ahead. A 15 pound turkey takes over 3 ½ days to defrost!
    - If you are using running water to thaw, make sure the water is running at an adequate flow to keep the water moving in the container your food is in.
    - When thawing in the microwave, food must be cooked immediately afterward. Also be careful when thawing in the microwave as foods can often become cooked on the outside, but remain frozen on the inside. Always check your temperatures!
  - When it comes to choosing a method, thaw foods in the refrigerator is the preferred method. This is the most energy and water efficient way, along with being the safest.

- **Cooling**
  - There are two methods for cooling.
    - The two-stage method: The first step is to get the food cooled below 70°F within two hours. The second step is to get the food cooled below 41°F within an additional four hours.
    - The one-stage method: Food must be cooled below 41°F within four hours.
      - The two stage method has an additional two hours as the extreme danger temperature zone is 70-135°F, and by making sure the food leaves this temperature zone faster, the cooling process can be extended.
  - Methods to cool food faster
    - Shallow pans
    - Dividing up foods
    - Using blast chillers/ice wands
    - Stirring food
    - Using metal pans
  - Do not assume that just sticking a hot food item in the fridge will get it cold. Heat loss takes time, and putting hot food items in the fridge can actually put other food in the fridge at risk as the temperature of the whole fridge rises.