

**GUIDELINES FOR USE OF MICROWAVE OVENS**

A microwave oven heats, cooks, or thaws food by means of short energy waves called microwaves. Oven-proof glass, paper, oven-proof dinnerware and plastic are transparent to microwaves and will permit microwaves to pass through them with little or no absorption. It is recommended that food be placed inside the microwave oven on a plate or container made of one of these materials. AVOID heating or cooking foods in metal or metallic containers and the use of metallic covers such as aluminum foil. Do not use melamine plastic tableware as a cooking/heating container in the microwave oven. Melamine tableware absorbs microwave energy. It becomes dangerously hot and could explode.

Cooking, heating or thawing time in a microwave oven depends on the amount of food, its density, shape, initial temperature (i. e. , frozen, thawed), desired final temperature and the power level of the oven. Time and portion control are important. Because of microwave cooking speed, greater care must be taken to prevent over-cooking/heating. A general rule is to underestimate cooking/heating time, then add time if necessary. As with conventional methods, there is often some temperature rise (additional cooking) after food is removed from the oven, and this should be taken into consideration. The manufacturer's operating manual for cooking guidelines should be followed for approximate cooking times.

**SAFETY PRECAUTIONS:** Microwave ovens will not emit dangerous levels of microwave energy if properly used and maintained. The manufacturer's operating manual should be thoroughly read and guidelines followed for safe and efficient use of the microwave oven. If not available, follow these general guidelines:

- a. DO NOT operate oven with the door open. Open-door operation can result in harmful exposure to microwave energy. Do not break or tamper with the safety interlocks.
- b. Never close the oven door on utensils, cloths and other objects, or allow soil or cleaner residue to accumulate on the sealing surfaces.

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- c. DO NOT operate oven with an empty cavity. Keep all metal utensils out of the oven cavity at all times.
- d. DO NOT obstruct cooling vents in the oven housing.
- e. DO NOT operate the oven if it is damaged. It is particularly important that the oven door close properly and that there is no damage to the (1) door (bent) (2) hinges and latches (broken or loosened) (3) door seals and sealing surfaces.

The oven should not be adjusted or repaired by anyone except properly qualified personnel. The oven shall be inspected at least quarterly for radiation leakage or as required by each service. Any repairs involving the oven door or exterior housing should be followed by recertification for microwave leakage.

**GENERAL OPERATION:** Operating instructions may differ depending on the manufacturer and model of the microwave oven. The manufacturer's operating manual should be consulted for instructions on the particular make/model of microwave oven. If not available, follow these general instructions:

- a. Place food on a suitable container (oven-proof glass or dinnerware or paper). DO NOT use metal or metallic containers or aluminum foil.
- b. Most food item(s) should be covered with a suitable cover (glass, china, or paper) for faster heating/cooking and to prevent spattering the oven. DO NOT cover bakery items, sandwiches or breaded products. These products become soggy when covered.
- c. Place item in center of microwave oven. Close oven door securely; select proper time setting.

**CLEANING:** A buildup of food and grease on the interior oven surfaces can result in damage to the materials and surfaces as well as a loss in cooking power. To keep the microwave oven safe and operational, follow the manufacturer's operating manual.

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### **SANITARY PRECAUTIONS:**

**FRESH PORK:** Fresh pork (pork chops, pork sausage, diced pork, pork loin, pork spareribs, pork tenderloin, pork steaks) should not be cooked in a microwave oven.

Fresh pork should be cooked to a consistent internal temperature of 170°F. With rapid cooking methods such as microwaving, heat may not be evenly distributed resulting in "cold spots." "Cold spots" can harbor infectious trichinae organisms that might be present in fresh pork.

**MICROWAVE OVEN THAWING:** Frozen foods may be thawed in microwave ovens provided they are immediately cooked thereafter as a part of a continuous cooking process. Some microwave ovens may include a thawing or defrost setting. Consult the manufacturer's directions for use.

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