FOOD AND DRUGS AUTHORITY

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR COLD STORAGE FACILITIES

Document No.: FDA/APBD/CP-CSF/2012/01
Date of First Adoption: 1st February 2013
Date of Issue: 1st March 2013
Version No.: 01

TABLE OF CONTENT

1. INTRODUCTION

In exercise of the powers conferred on the FDA by Public Health Act, 2012, Act 851, Part Seven, Section 148, Subsection (2g), this code of practice applies to the cold storage of meat and fish in order to ensure their safety and quality.

This code of practice is intended to aid cold storage facility operators comply with the requirements of the FDA in order to maintain their integrity for their intended purpose.

This code of practice is hereby promulgated for information, guidance and strict compliance by all concerned.

2. DEFINITIONS

"***Cold storage facility"*** means a structure which is approved, registered and/or listed by competent authority for the purpose of providing refrigerated atmosphere for the storage of perishable products.

"Good cold storage practices (GCSPs)" means all practices and measures necessary to ensure the suitability of a cold storage facility to prevent contamination of stored products.

"Inspection" means a visual process of observation with the aim of ascertaining the level of compliance to laid down guidelines

"Calibration" - procedure used for the comparison of a measuring instrument with a standard, under specific conditions, and adjustment of the instrument, if necessary.

"Cleaning" - means to remove visible contaminants from any surface.

"Contaminant" - any biological agent, chemical agent, foreign matter or other substance not intentionally added to food which may compromise product safety or suitability.

"Contamination" – means direct or indirect transmission of contaminants to a product.

"Equipment" - includes:
a. the whole or any part of any utensil, machine, fitting, device, instrument, stamp, apparatus, table, or article, that is used or available for use in or for preparing, marking, processing, packing, storing, carrying, or handling of any product, ingredient, additive, or processing aid; and
b. any utensil or machine used or capable of being used in the cleaning of any equipment or facilities.

"Label" - includes any wording, tag, brand, symbol, picture, or other descriptive matter written, printed, stencilled, marked, embossed, impressed on, appearing on, attached to, or enclosed within any product.

"Packaging material"
a. means any substance that is intended to protect and that comes into immediate contact with the product

b. includes rigid substances such as cartons and containers where the product is filled directly into the carton and container; and
c. includes any other substances contained with, in, or attached to, the product (such as labels, heat sensors).

"Potable water" - means water that is acceptable for human consumption.

"Protective clothing" - special outer wear garments intended to preclude the contamination of products

"Sanitize" means to apply heat or chemicals, heat and chemicals, or other processes, to a surface so that the number of micro-organisms on the surface is reduced to a level that –
(a) does not compromise the safety of food with which it may come into contact; and
(b) does not permit the transmission of infectious disease.

"Technically competent personnel" - a person who is skilled in a particular activity or task through training, experience, or qualifications.

"Waste" - includes, without limitation, all solids, liquids, and gases that is intended to be dispose of as being unwanted and that may become a source of contamination or attract pests.

3. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

3.1. LOCATION AND DESIGN

3.1.1. LOCATION

The location of the facility should pose no threat to the wholesomeness and hygiene of stored products. Premises must be located away from:

3.1.1.1. Environmentally polluted areas and industrial activities which pose a serious threat of contaminating product**s.**

3.1.1.2. Areas susceptible to flooding.

3.1.1.3. Areas prone to infestation of pests; and

3.1.1.4. Refuse dumps and large open drains.

3.1.2. DESIGN OF FACILITY

3.1.2.1 The facility should be designed to provide adequate space for equipment and product storage.

3.1.2.2 The facility should be designed in such a way as to minimize the contamination of stored products.

3.1.2.3 The facility should be designed to facilitate effective cleaning and, if necessary, sanitization.

3.2. STRUCTURE AND FABRIC

The facility should be suitable in size, construction, and design to facilitate maintenance and cleaning of all parts.

3.2.1. The construction should protect against the entrance and harbourage of rodents or other vermin, as well as the entry of contaminants such as smoke, dust, etc.

3.2.2. Floors should be of water-proof, non-absorbent, washable and non-slip materials, without crevices, and should be easy to clean and disinfect.

3.2.3. Walls should be of water proof, non-absorbent and should be easy to clean and disinfect.

3.2.4. Ceilings should be designed, constructed and finished as to prevent the accumulation of dirt and minimize condensation, mould development and flaking, and should be easy to clean.

3.2.5. Illumination should be adequate and all bulbs provided the illumination shielded with shatter proof materials.

3.2.6. Doors should close tightly and where applicable, gaskets should be in good state of repair.

3.3. ILLUMINATION

3.3.1. Adequate lighting should be provided throughout the facility. Light bulbs and fixtures should be of a safety type and shielded to prevent contamination of products in case of breakage.

3.4. TEMPERATURE REGIME MANAGEMENT

3.3.2. Coolers of appropriate capacity in relation to the size of the cold room should be installed.

3.3.3. Sensors of the thermostat that measures the temperature of the micro-environment of the cold room should be placed at mid-height on the wall far from doors and openings.

3.3.4. Where several coolers are used to refrigerate the cold room, sensors should be placed at an equal distance from the coolers on the opposite walls.

3.3.5. Thermometers used for temperature monitoring should be of good working condition and placed where temperature control is most necessary.

3.3.6. Temperature readings of cold room should be monitored and recorded at regular intervals of two hours from morning to evening daily.

3.5. EQUIPMENT/MAINTENANCE

3.5.1 EQUIPMENT

3.5.1.1 All cooling equipment should be made of material which does not transmit toxic substances.

3.5.1.2 All refrigerated spaces should be equipped with temperature measurement and recording devices.

3.5.1.3 Forklift (where applicable) should have a strong engine which does not give out emissions or fumes from the exhaust which could contaminate stored products

3.5.2 MAINTENANCE

3.5.2.1 Maintenance work on cooling equipment shall be done in a manner that prevents or minimises contamination of stored products.

3.5.2.2 Prior to any alteration, repair or maintenance work on building or equipment, a suitably skilled person shall assess its potential for contaminating stored products and put in place appropriate controls to minimise their exposure to contamination.

3.5.2.3 Alterations on the premises and maintenance of equipment that may affect hygienic operations or cause contamination of stored products or the immediate environment of the facility shall not be done while products are in storage.

3.5.2.4 Cleaning and maintenance tools should not be stored in the cold room.

3.6. CALIBRATION OF MEASURING DEVICES

Measuring devices (whether stand-alone or forming part of a piece of equipment) shall:

3.6.1 Have the accuracy, precision, and conditions of use appropriate to the task performed

3.6.2 Be calibrated against a reference standard showing traceability of calibration to a national or international standard of measurement (where available), or (if no such standard exists) be calibrated on a basis that is documented.

3.6.3 Be uniquely identified (e.g. by using serial numbers, indelible tags or other permanent means of identification) to enable traceability of the calibrations and to identify calibration status.

3.7 PEST CONTROL

3.7.1 There should be an effective and continuous programme for the control of rodents or other vermin.

3.7.2 The facility and surrounding areas should be regularly examined for evidence of infestation. Control measures involving treatment with chemical, physical or biological agents should only be undertaken by or under direct supervision of personnel who have a thorough understanding of the potential hazards to

health resulting from the use of these agents, including those which may arise from residues retained in the product.

3.8 SANITARY FACILITIES

3.8.1 An ample supply of potable water under adequate pressure should be available with adequate facilities for its storage, where necessary, and distribution, and with adequate protection against contamination.

3.8.2 Establishments should have an efficient effluent and waste disposal system. All effluent lines (including sewer systems) should be large enough to carry peak loads and should be constructed in such a manner as to avoid contamination of potable water supplies.

3.8.3 Facilities should be provided for the storage of waste and inedible material prior to removal from the establishment. These facilities should be designed to prevent access to waste or inedible material by pests and to avoid contamination of food, potable water, equipment or buildings on the premises.

3.8.4 Adequate, suitable, and conveniently located changing facilities and toilets should be provided in all establishments. Toilets should be so designed as to ensure hygienic removal of waste matter. These areas should be lit, well ventilated and should not open directly into food handling areas.

3.9 PERSONNEL HYGIENE AND FOOD HANDLING

3.9.1 MEDICAL EXAMINATION

3.9.1.1 Persons who handle food should have a medical examination prior to their employment if the official agency having jurisdiction, acting on medical advice, considers that this is necessary, whether because of epidemiological considerations, the nature of the meat product in a particular establishment or the medical history of the prospective meat or meat product handler. Medical examination of food handler should be carried out at other times when clinically or epidemiologically indicated.

3.9.2 PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

3.9.2.1 All personnel who enter the cold storage area must wear suitable, clean protective clothing and footwear.

3.9.2.2 Personnel assigned to work in areas where materials for animal consumption or waste are handled must remove their outer clothing, footwear or coverings; and change to clean protective clothing before entering cold storage areas.

3.9.2.3 Personal effects and clothing should not be deposited in food handling areas.

3.9.3 PERSONNEL CLEANLINESS

3.9.3.1 Every person engaged in the cold room should maintain a high degree of personal cleanliness while on duty, and should at all times while so engaged wear suitable protective clothing including head and footwear, all of which should be washable unless designed to be disposed off and which should be maintained in a clean condition consistent with the nature of the work in which the person is engaged.

3.9.3.2 Hands should always be washed before commencing work, immediately after using the toilet, after handling contaminated material, and whenever else necessary. After handling diseased or suspect materials hands should be washed and disinfected immediately. Notices requiring hand-washing should be displayed.

3.9.3.3 Any person who has a cut or a wound should discontinue work. Until he is suitably bandaged should not engage in the handling, packaging or transportation of stored products. No person working in any establishment should wear exposed bandage unless the bandage is completely protected by a waterproof covering which is conspicuous in colour and is of such a nature that it cannot become accidentally detached. Adequate first-aid facilities should be provided for this purpose.

3.9.3.4 Spitting, eating, chewing and the use of tobacco should be prohibited in food handling areas.

3.9.3.5 Gloves used in food handling should be maintained in a sound, clean and sanitary condition.

3.10 RECORD KEEPING AND DOCUMENTATION

The establishment shall maintain accurate records on all day-to-day activities of the facility critical to the safety of products. Records shall be kept on the following:

i. Food Handlers Test
ii. Pest control activities
iii. Cleaning activities
iv. Waste management
v. List of distributors
vi. Calibration of equipment
vii. Temperature monitoring
viii. Complaint Records
ix. Training of Workers

3.11 MISCELLANEOUS

These provisions relating to cold storage facilities are in addition to and not substitute for all other applicable laws or regulations relating to this type of business operation. The FDA shall at any time, when necessary, take other procedures or steps to ensure that fresh or frozen meat handled, processed, stored, offered for sale for human or animal consumption, is wholesome.

4. SANCTIONS

Failure on three counts of caution on non-adherence to this code of practice will result in suspension or revocation of license.

5. PENALTIES

Where non-adherence to this code of practice results in exposure of consumers to a food safety hazard, the FDA will impose an administrative fine in accordance with Public Health Act, 2012, Act 851, Section 148, Subsection 4 and 5.