



# FOOD AND DRUGS AUTHORITY

## CODE OF PRACTICE FOR MEAT PROCESSING FACILITIES

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## 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 processing of fresh and frozen meat in order to ensure their safety and quality.

This code of practice is intended to aid meat processors comply with the requirements of the FDA and produce products that are safe and suitable for their intended purpose.

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

## 2. GLOSSARY

**“Establishment”** is a suitable building, area or surroundings in which fresh or frozen meat is processed and packaged.

**“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 meat.

**“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**

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

- 3.1.1. Environmentally polluted areas and industrial activities which pose a serious threat of contaminating products.
- 3.1.2. Areas subject to flooding unless sufficient safeguards are provided.
- 3.1.3. Areas prone to infestation of pests; and
- 3.1.4. Areas where waste, either solid or liquid, cannot be effectively removed.
- 3.1.5. The facility should be designed to provide adequate space for equipment and processing activities.
- 3.1.6. The facility should be designed in such a way as to minimize the contamination of fresh or frozen meat and meat product.
- 3.1.7. 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 insects, birds, rodents or other vermin, as well as the entry of contaminants such as smoke, dust, etc.
- 3.2.2. The facility should be designed to provide separation, by partition, location or other effective means, between those operations which may cause cross contamination.
- 3.2.3. Floors should be of water-proof, non-absorbent, washable and non-slip materials, without crevices, and should be easy to clean and disinfect.
- 3.2.4. Walls should be of water proof, non-absorbent and washable materials and should be light coloured. Up to a height appropriate for the operation they should be smooth and without crevices, and should be easy to clean and disinfect.
- 3.2.5. 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.

- 3.2.6. Ventilation should be adequate, have good lighting and be easy to clean. All construction material should be such that they do not transmit any undesirable substances to the meat or meat products.
- 3.2.7. Windows and other openings should be constructed so as to avoid accumulation of dirt and those which open should be fitted with insect-proof screens. Screens should be easily movable for cleaning and kept in good repair.
- 3.2.8. Doors should have smooth, non-absorbent surfaces and, where appropriate, be self-closing and close fitting.

### **3.3 ILLUMINATION AND VENTILATION**

- 3.3.1. Adequate natural or artificial lighting should be provided throughout the facility. Light bulbs and fixtures suspended over meat in any stage of production should be of a safety type and shielded to prevent contamination of meat and meat products in case of breakage.
- 3.3.2. Adequate ventilation should be provided to prevent excessive heat, steam condensation and dust and to remove contaminated air. The direction of the air flow should never be from a dirty area to a clean area. Ventilation openings should be provided with an insect screen or other protective enclosure of non-corrodible material. Screens should be easily removable for cleaning.

### **3.4 RAW MATERIAL**

- 3.4.1. The establishment should source its raw materials from companies/suppliers whom it has pre-approved through a Supplier Quality Assurance programme.
- 3.4.2. The establishment should document a safety protocol that specifies parameters as regards to the reception/rejection of raw materials.
- 3.4.3. The facility should possess adequate storage facilities for the storage of raw meat at -18°C.
- 3.4.4. Suppliers should be audited periodically to ensure the safety of raw materials received.

### **3.5 PROCESSING AND PACKAGING**

#### **3.5.1 PROCESSING**

- 3.5.1.1 Processing should be supervised by technically competent personnel. All steps in the production process, including packaging, should be performed without unnecessary delay and under conditions which will prevent the possibility of contamination, deterioration, or the development of pathogenic and spoilage microorganisms.

#### **3.5.2 PACKAGING**

- 3.5.2.1 Packaging material should be stored in a clean and sanitary manner and should not transmit to the product objectionable substances.
- 3.5.2.2 Packaging should be done under conditions that preclude the introduction of contamination.
- 3.5.2.3 The finished product should be stored and transported under such conditions that will preclude contamination, infestation or development of pathogenic or toxigenic microorganisms or infestation and protect against deterioration of the product or of the container.
- 3.5.2.4 In repackaging, it is important to transfer labelling information on the original package onto the repackaged units.



## **3.6 EQUIPMENT/MAINTENANCE**

### **3.6.1 EQUIPMENT**

- 3.6.1.1 All equipment and utensils used in meat handling areas and which may contact exposed meat and meat products should be made of material which does not transmit toxic substances, odour or taste, is non-absorbent, is resistant to corrosion and is capable of withstanding repeated cleaning and disinfection. Surfaces should be smooth and free from pits and crevices. The use of wood and other materials which cannot be adequately cleaned and disinfected should be avoided except when their use would clearly not be a source of contamination. The use of different materials in such a way that, contact corrosion can occur should be avoided.
- 3.6.1.2 All refrigerated spaces should be equipped with temperature measurement and recording devices.
- 3.6.1.3 Equipment and utensils used for inedible materials or waste should be identified and should not be used for edible products.

### **3.6.2 MAINTENANCE**

- 3.6.2.1 Maintenance work shall be done in a manner that minimises contamination of ingredients, products, packaging, equipment and the processing environment.
- 3.6.2.2 Prior to any alteration, repair or maintenance work on buildings, facilities or equipment, a suitably skilled person shall assess its potential for contaminating ingredients, products, packaging, equipment and the processing environment; and put in place appropriate controls to minimise their exposure to contamination.
- 3.6.2.3 Alterations on the premises and facilities, and maintenance of equipment that may affect hygienic operations or cause contamination of ingredients, products, packaging and the processing environment shall not be done during processing.
- 3.6.2.4 Cleaning and maintenance tools and products should not be stored in a food handling area.

### **3.7 CALIBRATION OF MEASURING DEVICES**

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

- 3.7.1 Have the accuracy, precision, and conditions of use appropriate to the task performed
- 3.7.2 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.
- 3.7.3 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.

### **3.8 PEST CONTROL**

- 3.8.1 There should be an effective and continuous programme for the control of insects, birds, rodents or other vermin.
- 3.8.2 Establishments 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.

### **3.9 SANITARY FACILITIES**

- 3.9.1 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. An adequate supply of hot potable water should be available at all times during working hours.
- 3.9.2 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.

- 3.9.3 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.
- 3.9.4 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, ventilated and where appropriate heated and should not open directly into food handling areas. Hand washing facilities with warm or hot and cold water, a suitable hand-cleaning preparation, and with suitable hygienic means of drying hands, should be provided adjacent to toilets and in such a position that the employee must pass them when returning to the processing area. Where hot and cold water are available mixing taps should be provided. Where paper towels are used, a sufficient number of the dispensers with paper towels and receptacles for used towels should be provided adjacent to each washing facility. Taps of a non-hand operable type are preferable. Notices should be posted directing personnel to wash their hands after using the toilet.
- 3.9.5 All rooms used for de-boning, preparing, packaging or other handling of meat and meat products should be equipped with adequate facilities for cleaning and disinfecting implements, conveniently located for the use of personnel during operations. These facilities are for use exclusively in the cleaning and disinfection of knives, steels, cleavers, saws and other implements.

### **3.10 PERSONNEL HYGIENE AND FOOD HANDLING**

- 3.10.1 Persons who come into contact with meat and meat products in the course of their work 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 a meat or a meat product handler should be carried out at other times when clinically or epidemiologically indicated.

- 3.10.2 All personnel who enter any processing or storage areas must wear suitable, clean protective clothing and footwear.
- 3.10.3 Hair restraints, for both head and facial hair, must be worn in processing areas.
- 3.10.4 Personnel who work in raw product areas must change their protective clothing, and clean or change their footwear, before entering areas where cooked product is produced.
- 3.10.5 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 processing areas.
- 3.10.6 Personal effects and clothing should not be deposited in food handling areas.
- 3.10.7 Persons engaged in an area in an establishment where meat and meat products are handled 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.
- 3.10.8 Every person engaged in a meat and meat products handling area should wash his hands frequently and thoroughly with a suitable hand cleaning preparation under running warm potable water while on duty. 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.

3.10.9 Any person who has a cut or a wound should discontinue working with meat and meat products until he is suitably bandaged should not engage in the preparation, handling, packaging or transportation of meat and meat 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.

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

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

### **3.11 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 suppliers
- vi. List of distributors
- vii. Calibration of equipment
- viii. Temperature monitoring
- ix. Complaint Records
- x. Standard Operative Procedures
- xi. Training of Workers
- xii. Product Registration

### **3.12 MISCELLANEOUS**

These provisions relating to meat processing 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 and unadulterated.

### **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.