

01-001 DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

DIVISION OF REGULATIONS

Chapter 358: RULES FOR MANUFACTURING OF POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS FOODS

Summary: The purpose of this chapter is to set forth rules for the processing and manufacture, and home food manufacturing of potentially hazardous foods, with particular emphasis on crabmeat processing. Compliance with existing Food Processing and Home Food Manufacturing regulations is also required.

1. Definitions

For the purposes of this chapter and unless the context otherwise indicates, the following words shall have the following meanings:

- A. "Corrosion resistant material" means those materials that maintain acceptable sanitary surface characteristics under prolonged influence of the food to be contacted, the normal use of cleaning compounds and sanitizing solutions, and other conditions of the use environment.
- B. "Department" means the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry.
- C. "Easily cleanable" means readily accessible and of such material and finish and so fabricated that residue be effectively removed by normal cleaning methods.
- D. "Food-contact surfaces" means those surfaces of equipment and utensils with which food normally comes into contact, and those surfaces from which food may drain, drip, or splash back onto surfaces normally in contact with food.
- E. "Potentially hazardous food" means any food that consists in whole or in part of milk or milk products, eggs, meat, poultry, fish, shellfish, edible crustaceans, or other ingredients, including synthetic ingredients, and which is in a form capable of supporting rapid and progressive growth of infectious or toxigenic microorganisms.
- F. "Sanitization" means effective bactericidal treatment of food contact surfaces by a process that is effective in destroying vegetative cells of pathogenic bacteria and in substantially reducing other microorganisms. Such treatment shall not adversely affect the product and shall be safe for the consumer.

2. Processes and Controls

- A. Potentially hazardous foods shall be cooked to such time/temperature that effectively destroys pathogenic microorganisms.

- B. Potentially hazardous foods shall be handled in such a manner as to preclude contamination with and the growth of pathogenic microorganisms after heat processing.

Examples

1. Potentially hazardous foods shall not remain in the temperature "danger zone", between 40 degrees F. and 140 degrees F. internal temperature, for a total of more than 4 hours. From the time that crabs are cooked until the time packaged crabmeat is stored under refrigeration or in potable, drained ice, such cooked crab/crabmeat shall not have remained between 40 degrees F. and 140 degrees F. for more than a total of 4 hours.
 2. Means shall be provided to transfer cooked crabs from cooking vessels to picking tables without contamination. Backed crabs shall be washed only under running water and immediately placed in sanitized receptacles of approved design. These sanitized receptacles may not be exposed to splash from the wash. Backs and waste may not be allowed to accumulate on the washing table. Crabmeat should be picked directly into the final container where at all feasible.
- C. Accurate thermometers of types appropriate to operations shall be provided and used.
- D. There shall be no cross contamination between raw and cooked products, and equipment, utensil, work surfaces, vessels, hands, clothing, ice or any other article that could result in transfer of microorganisms from raw to cooked product. Separate coolers should be provided for raw and cooked potentially hazardous foods. Raw products shall be maintained and handled separately from in-process or finished product at all times. Cross contamination must be prevented through proper sanitization of all product contact surfaces including portable equipment, and proper handling practices by individuals.
- E. No animals or live plants shall be allowed in any area of the food establishment.
- F. Single service containers shall be stored and handled in a sanitary manner.
- G. Repacking of crabmeat which has been picked or processed in another plant is not allowed by the Department.
- H. Traceability of product shall be maintained.
- Example:** "C" numbers on containers of crabmeat that indicate the processing facility. Lot coding is recommended to prevent loss of an entire lot in the event of a product recall.
- I. All facilities and equipment employed in handling and/or preparing ice for use should be used for no other purpose and should be cleaned each day the plant is in operation. Shovels should be hung or stored in a protected manner when not in use.

3. Cleaning and Sanitization of Food Contact Surfaces

- A. Before beginning operations, all equipment shall be retreated with a sanitizer of strength as specified in Food Processing/Home Food Manufacturing regulation.
- B. Equipment (including sinks), utensils, food contact surfaces must be cleaned and sanitized after any interruption in operations where such utensils and contact surfaces may have become contaminated and at a minimum of every four hours.
- C. Refrigerators shall be cleaned and sanitized at least weekly, and at any time contamination may have occurred.

4. Sanitary Operations and Controls

- A. Unauthorized persons shall not at any time be permitted in the processing areas of the plant.

5. Equipment and Utensils

- A. Equipment and utensils shall be designed and constructed of durable, easily cleanable, noncorrosive, impervious materials. Example: Metal receptacles shall be constructed of non-corrosive metal, seamless and with no rolled edges.

6. Personnel

- A. Shall wash hands thoroughly in an adequate handwashing facility and sanitize hands by immersion in a hand dip solution supplying 100 parts per million active chlorine or equivalent before starting work, after each absence from work station, and after any other time when the hands have become soiled or contaminated.
- B. Food handlers, for example crabmeat pickers and packers, shall wear clean aprons which cover the front and sides of the body, and caps or nets which cover the hair. Arms should be bare to the elbow.
- C. There shall be no eating, gum chewing, use of tobacco in any form in food processing or packaging areas.
- D. Personnel shall not be permitted to move freely between the raw product areas and cooked product areas (as in the case of raw crab areas to cooked crab areas) since foot traffic will spread bacteria. A chlorinated foot bath may be provided for personnel occasionally going directly from the raw to cooked product areas.

7. Plant Construction

- A. New plants constructed should have operations in natural sequence to eliminate potential contamination factors.
1. Sorting-grading rooms, where used.
 2. Cooker-cooking room.
 3. Cooling-storage area, adequately vented, and opening directly into refrigerated rooms used to store cooked crabs.
 4. Picking room. Exits shall be provided from this room so as to eliminate unessential traffic through other parts of the plant.
 5. Equipment washing-storage room. If an extra room is provided for washing and storing of utensils, a direct entrance shall be provided into the picking room.
 6. Weighing and packing room shall be so situated and arranged as to give the packing room personnel a full view of the picking room.
 7. All units shall be directly connected and under one roof so as to eliminate contamination potentials.
 8. Floors shall have at least 1/4 inch grade per foot.
 9. Walls shall be of smooth, nonporous, easily cleanable construction.
 10. Floor/wall joints should be covered.
 11. One handwash sink shall be provided for each ten pickers. A container for sanitizer shall be provided near the handwash facilities.
 12. A two-compartment sink with hot and cold running water. This unit shall be used for scrubbing utensils and rinsing in a bactericidal solution.

B. Violations

Any person who violates any provision of this rule may be punished in any manner authorized under Chapter 551 of Title 22 MRSA §§ 2151-2171).

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: 22 MRSA §§ 2151, 2153

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