

Compliance Guidelines For Production Of Whole Poultry Product By A Grower/Producer Who Raises Less Than 1,000 Birds Annually

SUMMARY: The purpose of this document is to set forth guidelines for a Grower/Producer that wishes to sell whole poultry only. Slaughter of such whole poultry by a Grower/Producer is limited to < 1,000 birds annually that have been raised exclusively by the Grower/Producer on the Grower/Producer's farm. This guideline will be used by inspectors during periodic review of Grower/Producers who produce less than 1,000 birds annually. During the review, inspectors may require that changes be made to a Grower/Producer's operation in order to support adequate sanitation.

A Grower/Producer that wishes to produce other poultry products in addition to whole poultry, must obtain a license as a commercial food processor, maintain facilities consistent with 01-001 Chapter 343, and declare the < 20,000 Grower/Producer Exemption.

1. Definitions.

1. "Adequate" means that which is needed to accomplish the intended purpose in keeping with good public health practice.
2. "Adulteration" means the product bears or contains a substance that makes it potentially injurious to health, or that has been held, packed or produced under insanitary conditions.
3. "Building" means the building or buildings or parts thereof, or associated workspaces used for or in connection with, the slaughter, processing, packaging, labeling or holding of food intended for human consumption.
4. "Corrosion resistant material" means those materials that maintain their original surface characteristics under prolonged influenced of the food to be contacted, the normal use of cleaning compounds and bactericidal solutions, and other conditions of the environment.
5. "Commerce" means the exchange or transportation of products solely within the State.
6. "Cut-up" means that a whole poultry carcass would be sectioned into halves, quarters or other parts, or ground, without changing the character of the product through either cooking, curing, smoking, canning, salting, stuffing, rendering, combining with other ingredients, or otherwise being manufactured or processed.
7. "Easily cleanable" means readily accessible and of such material and finish and so fabricated, that residues may be completely removed by usual cleaning methods.

8. “Exempt” means that certain operations qualify to operate without mandatory, continuous bird-by-bird inspection, during slaughter, processing and packaging operations.
9. “Food” means any article used or intended to be used by human beings for food, drink, confection or condiment, whether simple or compound or any part or ingredient thereof or the preparation thereof.
10. “Food contact surfaces” means those surfaces of equipment and utensils with which food normally comes in contact.
11. “Grower/Producer Exempt Status” means a grower/producer of less than 1000 birds that meets registration requirements.
12. “Misbranded” means that poultry products that are transported or distributed in commerce do not bear a label with specific required identification and information.
13. “Processed or Processing” for purposes of this guideline, processing refers to operations in which the carcasses of slaughtered poultry are eviscerated, washed, rinsed, cooled, packaged and labeled. Processing does not include cut-up or further processing.
14. “Safe Handling Instructions” as applied to non-ready-to-eat poultry products should be a statement to include: *“Keep refrigerated or frozen. Thaw in refrigerator or microwave. Keep raw poultry separate from other foods. Wash working surfaces, including cutting boards, utensils, and hands after touching raw poultry. Cook thoroughly to an internal temperature of at least 165°F maintained for at least 15 seconds. Keep hot foods hot. Refrigerate leftovers immediately or discard.”*
15. “Sanitary” means that all buildings, associated workspaces, equipment, and utensils should be suitable for their intended use, and be so designated and of such material and workmanship as to be easily cleanable and properly maintained.
16. “Slaughter” refers to the act of killing and de-feathering poultry.
17. “Wholesome” means food in sound condition, clean, free from adulteration and otherwise suitable for human consumption.

2. Criteria for Grower/Producer <1,000 Bird Exempt Status

1. Grower/Producer exempt facilities slaughter no more than 1,000 birds in any calendar year that are birds of their own raising, on their own farm. Grower/Producer exempt facilities are not allowed to slaughter birds for others, or birds that are purchased and are not of their own raising. Grower/Producers may not purchase birds for resale that have been processed under another exemption.

2. Slaughter and processing must take place on the Grower/Producer's premises, using sanitary procedures, in a registered facility. Slaughter and processing may not take place in a home kitchen.
3. Only slaughter of healthy birds is allowed.
4. Grower/Producers may sell:
 - from the farm on which the poultry was raised
 - at a Farmers' Market
 - by delivery directly to a household customer
 - to a person who is a member of a community supported agriculture farm that has a direct marketing relationship with the poultry producer
 - local restaurant or local store (as defined in Title 22: Chapter 562-A §2517-C)
5. A grower producer may not engage in Interstate or Internet sales
6. A Retail Meat and Poultry Sales license is required for sales to household consumers, including sales to consumers through "community supported agriculture". A Mobile Vendor license is required for sales at a Farmers' Market. A Wholesale Distributor Of Meat And Poultry Products license is required for sales to local store or local restaurant.
7. Questions regarding the poultry exemptions and requirements in Maine's laws and regulations may be directed to the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, 28 State House Station, Augusta, Maine, 04333. 207-287-3841

3. Construction and Design

1. Floors, walls and ceilings should be constructed so as to be readily cleanable and should be kept clean and in good repair.
2. Fixtures, ducts, pipes should not be suspended over working areas in a manner whereby dripping may contaminate foods, raw materials or equipment.
3. Poultry slaughter/de-feathering areas should be separated from the processing area by walls with self closing doors or a pass through designed in such a way to prevent contamination from the slaughter area. Alternatively, poultry slaughter/de-feather area may be located outside provided it is located in an area that is well drained, blood is collected, operations are protected from overhead contamination, de-feathered poultry are placed in an easily cleanable, covered container before transport to processing facility, and sanitary conditions are maintained. For example, lean-to connected to the processing facility, a separate area covered by a sun shelter, a separate area covered by screened tent, etc.

4. Adequate lighting should be provided where poultry is slaughtered, de-feathered, eviscerated, and packaged.
5. Light bulbs, fixtures, skylights, or other glass suspended over exposed food in any step of preparation should be of the safety type or be otherwise protected to prevent food contamination in case of breakage.
6. Adequate ventilation should be provided to eliminate objectionable odors and vapors, including steam, and be constructed in such a manner as to avoid possible airborne contamination from poultry slaughter/de-feathering areas and processing areas.
7. Adequate screening of outer openings, where necessary, should be provided to exclude birds, pets, flies and other vermin and rodents.
8. Toilets, if provided, should have a hand wash sink with soap or detergent and disposable towels or other one-use drying devices available at all times. Hand washing and toilet facilities should be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition. Hand wash signs should be posted. Toilet rooms, if opening directly into any rooms used for processing or packaging, should be equipped with self-closing doors. Toilets should be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition. The toilet room should be ventilated to the outside, and be kept free of odors, clean and in good repair.

4. Equipment and Utensils

1. Equipment and utensils should be adequate for their intended use.
2. Equipment and utensils should be designed and constructed to enable easy cleaning and maintenance.
3. Equipment should not contaminate food with lubricants, fuel, metal fragments, contaminated water or other sources of possible contamination.

5. Cleaning and Sanitation of Food Contact Surfaces

1. All equipment and utensils should be maintained in sanitary condition by cleaning at frequent intervals to prevent contamination of food and food products.
2. Suitable facilities for cleaning equipment and utensils should be provided at convenient locations.
3. Food contact surfaces should be cleaned and sanitized prior to use and following any interruption during which such utensils and contact surfaces may have become contaminated. Where such equipment and utensils are used in a continuous

production operation, the contact surfaces of such equipment and utensils should be cleaned and sanitized on a predetermined schedule using adequate methods for cleaning and sanitizing. Sanitizing agents should be effective and safe under conditions of use.

4. Sanitization should be accomplished by one of the following methods;
 - A. Immersion for at least one-half (1/2) minute in clean, hot water at a temperature of at least 170° F
 - B. Immersion for at least one minute in a clean solution containing at least 50 parts per million of available chlorine as a hypochlorite and at a temperature of not more than 75° F
 - C. Immersion for at least one minute in a clean solution containing at least 12.5 parts per million of available iodine and having a pH not higher than 5.0 and at a temperature of at least 75° F
 - D. Any other sanitization method approved by a proper processing authority.
5. Sanitization should follow cleaning. Utensils and product contact surfaces of equipment, which cannot be immersed, should be sanitized by rinsing with one of the methods described in Section 5.4
6. All cleaned and sanitized portable equipment and utensils should be stored above the floor in a clean and dry location in such a manner that all food contact surfaces are protected from splash, dust or other contamination.

6. Sanitary Operations and Controls

1. The water supply should be ample for operations. Water may be drawn from a public or private supply. Private water supplies should be tested annually and conform to Maine drinking water quality standards.
2. Hot and cold running water under pressure should be provided in all areas where foods are processed and at all hand wash stations. Corrosion resistant material should be used for washing equipment and utensils.
3. If toilets are provided, human sewage disposal should be made into a public sewerage system or into an approved private sewerage system.
4. Adequate floor drains should be provided in areas where floors are subjected to flooding type of cleaning or where there is release or discharge of water and waste onto the floor.
5. Hand washing facilities should be designated for “hand washing only”, and be adequate and conveniently located in processing areas. Soap and disposable towels or other one-use drying devices, should be provided at all times.

6. Offal and rubbish should be conveyed, disposed of or stored in such a manner as to minimize the development of odor, prevent waste from becoming an attractant, harborage or breeding place for vermin and flies and prevent contamination of food, food contact surfaces and water supply.
7. Effective measures should be taken to protect against contamination of food in or on the premises by cats, dogs, birds, rodents or insects.
8. Buildings, fixtures and other physical facilities should be kept in good repair and maintained in an orderly, sanitary condition at all times
9. Cleaning operations should be conducted in such a manner as to minimize food contamination or the contamination of food contact surfaces.
10. Detergents, disinfectants and other cleaning supplies should be for use on food contact surfaces or for use in slaughter and processing facilities. Such detergents, disinfectants, and cleaning supplies should be used only for their approved purposes. Chemicals, poisonous or toxic materials, should be stored so they can not contaminate food, equipment or food contact surfaces.

7. Processes and Controls

1. All materials used in the processing operation should be stored under conditions which will protect against contamination and deterioration.
2. Containers and carriers of raw materials should be inspected on receipt to assure that their condition will not contribute to contamination or deterioration of product.
3. Any ice used in contact with the product must be made from potable water and be manufactured in accordance with all applicable food safety standards. It should be stored, transported and handled in a sanitary manner. Ice should not be re-used.
4. Food processing areas and equipment used for the processing of human food should not be used in the processing of animal feed or inedible products unless such use cannot result in the contamination of human food.
5. Processing equipment should be maintained in a sanitary condition through frequent cleaning and should be sanitized where necessary.
6. Chemical, microbiological or extraneous testing procedures can be utilized where necessary to identify sanitation failures or food adulterations.
7. Packaging processes or materials should not transmit contaminants or objectionable substance to the product.

8. Processors should keep records, so as to enable them to identify specific food lots affected by contamination, spoilage or insanitary conditions.
9. Finished products should be stored and transported under conditions which will preclude all contamination and protect against deterioration of the product and the container.
10. Poultry carcasses should be cooled. Methods to cool poultry carcasses could include, cavity of carcasses filled with and covered with potable ice in a clean container until cold, or carcasses cooled under cold running water in a clean container until cold, or carcasses bagged, labeled, immediately frozen at less than 10°F, or other acceptable, sanitary means of chilling carcasses in a timely manner. Poultry carcasses should be placed in cold storage until sold. Cold Storage can be part of the processing facility, adjacent to the processing facility, within the producer's house, or other areas, and should be dedicated to any food to be sold. Cross contamination from other commercial products kept in the cold storage should be eliminated.

8. Personnel

1. Employees should wear clean outer garments, maintain a high degree of personal cleanliness, and wear effective hair restraints in processing areas.
2. Employees should remove all jewelry, with the exception of wedding rings, to include wrist watches, during periods in which food components are manipulated by hand.
3. Nail polish present should be removed or covered with gloves during periods in which food components are manipulated by hand.
4. Employees should wash hands thoroughly in an adequate hand washing facility before starting work, after each absence from workstation, and after any other time when the hands may have become soiled or contaminated.
5. Gloves used in food handling should be maintained in an intact, clean and sanitary condition. Such gloves should be constructed of an impermeable material except where their usage would be inappropriate or incompatible with the work involved.
6. No person should use tobacco in any form in food processing, food handling and equipment/utensil washing areas.

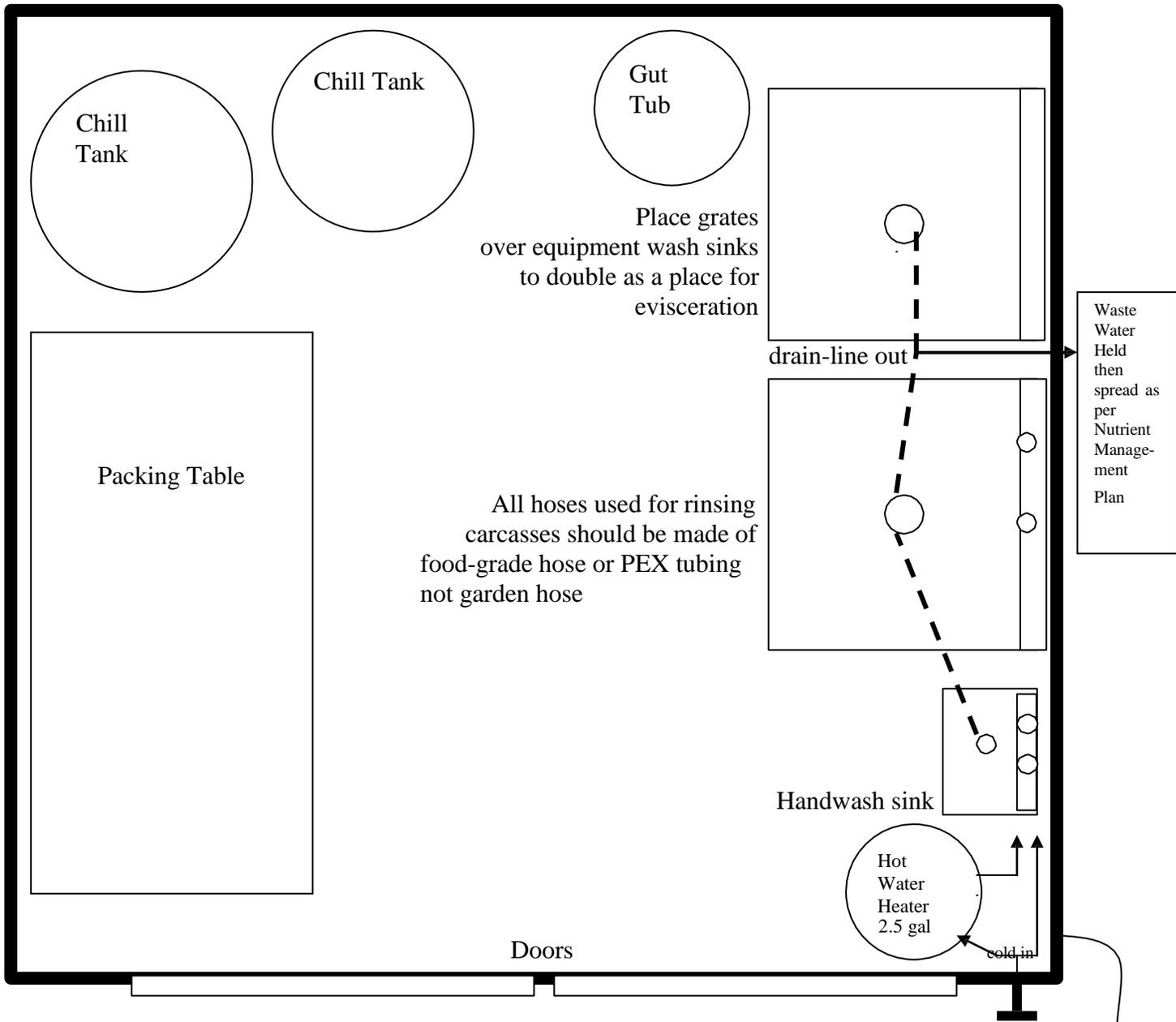
9. Labeling

1. Retail product sold directly to household consumers **must** bear a label with the following information on each individual package:
 - i. Name, address and zip code of Grower/Producer,
 - ii. Common name of the product
 - iii. Net weight
 - iv. Lot number
 - v. Safe handling instructions to include:

“Keep refrigerated or frozen. Thaw in refrigerator or microwave. Keep raw poultry separate from other foods. Wash working surfaces, including cutting boards, utensils, and hands after touching raw poultry. Cook thoroughly to an internal temperature of at least 165°F maintained for at least 15 seconds. Keep hot foods hot. Refrigerate leftovers immediately or discard.”
 - vi. A statement that says: “Exempt under 22 M.R.S. section 2517-C **NOT INSPECTED**”

10. Facility Reviews

1. Grower/Producer Exempt slaughter facilities will be reviewed at least annually and may be inspected more frequently. Risk Categories and requirements for follow-up inspections are as follows:
 - i. Category 1 – highest risk; production adulteration detected; follow-up within 5 business days.
 - ii. Category 2 – moderate risk; no adulterated product found however insanitary conditions exist so that there is a high risk for product adulteration; follow-up within 30 days.
 - iii. Category 3 – slight risk; there may be structural improvements to be made that will reduce the potential for insanitary conditions in the long term; follow-up within 6 months.
 - iv. Category 4 – no deficiencies exist; facilities reviewed at least annually.



AN EXAMPLE OF EVISCERATION BUILDING (7ftx7ft)

POULTRY SLAUGHTER AND PROCESSING WITH GROWER/PRODUCER EXEMPTION

Produce less than 1,000 birds per year, of own raising, on grower-producer's farm. Facility is on grower-producer farm and not to be used for processing other grower's birds.

Killing, bleeding and defeathering can be done outside in a suitable, well-drained area. Carcasses can be placed in covered tub, then transported to an enclosed area for evisceration, cleaning, cooling, and packaging. Once packaged, whole birds can be stored in a dedicated cold storage (located in house, garage, breeze-way, etc.) Dedicated cold storage cannot contain personal food items.

Whole birds only; no cut-ups. For sale at the farm, farmers' markets, or for delivery to Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) customers.

Potable Water in by RV food-grade hose or PEX tubing not garden hose

Electrical in by HD extension cord for hot water and lights