

Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry  
Division of Quality Assurance and Regulations  
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**Small Enterprise less than 20,000 Bird Exemption** - A small enterprise may slaughter and process poultry without an inspector being present during processing, when the following nine criteria are met.

Grower/Producers who do not meet these criteria must register as Grower Producer <1,000 bird Exemption, or seek State or USDA inspection of poultry product intended to be sold.

1. The Small Enterprise is licensed as a Commercial Food Processor and subject to Chapter 343: Food Processing and Manufacturing

2. The Small Enterprise facilities conform to Chapter 343: Food Processing and Manufacturing, and include:

- a separate area within the processing facility for slaughter/bleed/defeather;
- a separate area within the processing facility for evisceration/cooling (processing room should be thoroughly cleaned before cut-up operations)
- water supply tested 2x/ year for Coliforms and Nitrates
- Safe Handling Instructions for raw product on package
- slaughter healthy poultry only
- produce whole or cut-up poultry that is not adulterated

3. The Small Enterprise may choose any of the categories below singly or in combination:

- raise, slaughter and dress poultry
- purchase live poultry to slaughter and dress
- purchase dressed poultry

The Small Enterprise's further processing is limited to whole poultry and cut-ups only.

4. The Small Enterprise slaughters, dresses or cuts up a combination of no more than 20,000 birds in a calendar year. Records must show numbers of birds raised, purchased or purchased as dressed. Businesses without accurate recordkeeping will be denied the Small Enterprise Exemption.

5. The facility cannot be used to slaughter or process poultry by any other person or business.

6. The Small Enterprise may not engage in internet or interstate sales.

7. The Small Enterprise may slaughter or cut-up poultry with the intent to sell poultry products, with the appropriate licenses:

- Retail to the household consumer
- Wholesale to retailers for resale - as prepackaged only, not intended for further processing by retailer; must stay in original packaging and retain label of small enterprise
- Wholesale to hotels
- Wholesale to restaurants
- Wholesale to institutions.

8. The Small Enterprise may not cut up and distribute poultry products to a business operating under a Producer/Grower Exemption, or a Producer/Grower Other Person Exemption, or a Retail Store Exemption

9. The immediate containers of the poultry bear the following labeling:

Retail

- a. Processed By: Small Enterprise's name, address and zip code
- b. common name of product
- c. net weight
- d. lot number - shall be the number of the day of the year on which the poultry was slaughtered or a coded number
- e. safe handling instructions (see below)
- f. **the statement, "Processed by a Licensed Commercial Food Processor/Small Enterprise Exempt from State or USDA continuous bird-by bird inspection"**

Wholesale (on outside of shipping container)

- a) Processed By: Small Enterprise's name, address and zip code
- b) common name of product
- c) weight of shipping container
- d) lot number - shall be the number of the day of the year on which the poultry was slaughtered or a coded number
- e) safe handling instructions (see below)
- f) the statement, "Processed by a Licensed Commercial Food Processor/Small Enterprise Exempt from State or USDA continuous bird-by bird inspection"

Invoices (provided to HRI and retailers)

- a) Small Enterprise's name, address and zip code
- b) common name of product
- c) lot number - shall be the number of the day of the year on which the poultry was slaughtered or a coded number
- d) weight of product in shipping box
- e) safe handling instructions (see below)
- f) **the statement, "Processed by a Licensed Commercial Food Processor/Small Enterprise Exempt from State or USDA continuous bird-by bird inspection"**

Label example:(To be placed on all pkgs)

<i><b>JOE SCHMOE's</b></i>	
<b><u>POULTRY</u></b>	
<i>East Podunkett, Maine 01234</i>	
207-555-4836	
	
<i><b>Broiler</b></i>	
Net weight _____	Price _____
<b>Safe Handling Instructions:</b> 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	
<b>Processed by a Licensed Commercial Food Processor/Small Enterprise. Exempt from State or USDA continuous bird-by bird inspection</b>	

- ❖ Retail = selling directly to household consumers; need a Retail Meat Sales license
- ❖ Wholesale = selling to retail stores for re-sale, selling to hotels, restaurants or institutions (HRI); need a Wholesale Distributor of Meat and Poultry Products license

# Pre-Operational Checklist

Item checked	Clean	Notes
<b>Outside Premises</b>		
<b>Ice Machine</b>		
<b>Floors, walls, windows, screens, doors</b>		
<b>Lighting/Ceiling</b>		
<b>Ventilation</b>		
<b>Bleeding cones, scalding, plucker</b>		
<b>Drains</b>		
<b>Tables tops</b>		
<b>Offal tubs</b>		
<b>Ice tubs</b>		
<b>Knives</b>		
<b>Band Saw</b>		
<b>Scales</b>		
<b>Package material</b>		
<b>Personnel – clean clothes, boots, hair restraint, clean hands</b>		
<b>Paper towels, soap at sink; toilet paper</b>		

Sanitize all food contact surfaces with Sanitizer just before start of operations. Let stand to air dry for 1 minute.

# Operational Checklist

Item checked	Notes
<b>Area maintained in sanitary condition.</b>	
<b>Personnel – clean clothes, boots, hair restraint, clean hands</b>	
<b>Hands washed when entering process area and after contamination.</b>	
<b>Wash/sanitize equipment at least every 4 hrs during operation.</b>	
<b>Wash/sanitize after contamination.</b>	
<b>Poultry contaminated with fecal or ingesta washed with lots of water inside and outside of the carcass.</b>	
<b>Trim visible blood clots, bruises, etc.</b>	
<b>Each lot of poultry requires fresh ice.</b>	
<b>Ice contaminated with fecal or ingesta discarded and carcasses re-washed before returned to new ice.</b>	
<b>Allow carcasses to drain a little after cooling.</b>	
<b>Optional 2.5% vinegar spray inside/outside carcass.</b>	
<b>Mid-shift wash down. Poultry in temporary cold storage.</b>	
<b>Packaging of wholes or cut-ups</b>	
<b>Return to cold storage; refrigerator or freezer</b>	
<b>Paper towels, soap at sink; toilet paper.</b>	

Sanitize all food contact surfaces with sanitizer during operations. Let stand to air dry for 1 minute.

**ALL Employees are  
required to**

**WASH**

**HANDS**

**after using toilet facilities**

- before beginning or returning to work
- **immediately after sneezing, coughing or contact with face**
- **after handling uncooked or before handling cooked food**
- **after handling garbage containers**

***Dirty hands transmit disease***