

# Starting a Meat Business in Wisconsin

## How do I get started?

In order to obtain a license for a meat business, new processors must meet several standards. State of Wisconsin meat plants must meet the same standards as USDA inspected meat plants. In 2000, all plants were required to implement a food safety system called HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point). A licensed meat establishment is required to implement HACCP plans and have an SSOP (Sanitation Standard Operating Procedure).

Other requirements include meeting construction guidelines, having appropriate product labeling and approved formulations.

This brochure discusses basic requirements. Contact the Division of Food Safety regional office nearest you and speak with a meat consultant or inspection supervisor for more specific information about licensing.

## Construction

### What are the regulatory performance standards for construction?

Establishment buildings, including their structures, rooms, and compartments must be of sound construction, be kept in good repair, and be of sufficient size to allow for processing, handling, and storage of product in a manner that does not result in product adulteration or the creation of insanitary conditions.

Walls, floors, and ceilings within establishments must be built of durable materials impervious to moisture and be cleaned and sanitized as necessary to prevent

adulteration of product or the creation of insanitary conditions.

Walls, floors, ceilings, doors, windows, and other outside openings must be constructed and maintained to prevent the entrance of vermin, such as flies, rats, and mice.

Rooms or compartments in which edible product is processed, handled, or stored must be separate and distinct from rooms or compartments in which inedible product is processed, handled or stored, to the extent necessary to prevent product adulteration and the creation of insanitary conditions.

## HACCP

### What is the HACCP program?

HACCP is a risk-based approach to manufacturing food products. The goal behind the HACCP program is to identify the crucial steps in the manufacturing process and gain complete control over those places where there is a danger of causing or promoting microbiological, physical or chemical contamination. These control points can be included in the addition of ingredients, juncture between the pieces of equipment, change in temperature (heating, chilling), etc.

Through documentation, verification and monitoring, establishments keep control over their manufacturing processes, creating a safer process for production.

## SSOP

### What is a SSOP?

SSOP stands for *Sanitation Standard Operating Procedure*. It is a written plan that outlines the procedures followed to maintain your overall plant sanitation. It could encompass daily cleaning, regularly scheduled maintenance, food handling practices and employee hygiene. Regulatory performance standards for sanitary operations include:

All food-contact surfaces, including food-contact surfaces of utensils and equipment, must be cleaned and sanitized as frequently as necessary to prevent the creation of insanitary conditions and the adulteration of product.

Non-food-contact surfaces of facilities, equipment, and utensils used in the operation of the establishment must be cleaned and sanitized as frequently as necessary to prevent the creation of insanitary conditions and the adulteration of product.

Cleaning compounds, sanitizing agents, processing aids, and other chemicals used by an establishment must be safe and effective under the conditions of use. Such chemicals must be used, handled, and stored in a manner that will not adulterate product or create insanitary conditions. Documentation substantiating the safety of a chemical's use in a food-processing environment must be available to FSIS inspection program employees for review.

Product must be protected from adulteration during processing, handling, storage, loading, and unloading at and during transportation from official establishments.

## Labeling

### What are the labeling requirements?

Every meat or poultry product sold or offered for sale in packaged form as a consumer sized lot in any self-service sales facility must have an appropriate label. That label should show:

- the true name of the product
- an ingredients statement
- the net weight
- the name and address of the processor

If the product is perishable, one of the following

statements or a similar perishable warning statement: “Keep Refrigerated,” “Perishable,” “Keep Under Refrigeration” or “Keep Frozen.”

Meat products produced in a licensed meat plant and wholesaled (that is, sold commercially other than a retail sale) must also bear an inspection legend with their assigned plant number.

Product prepared and sold at a retail market and offered for sale at a *full service* counter does not need to be labeled as long as there is a posted counter card showing the name of the product and a listing of ingredients.

## Formulations

### What are formulations and why do we need them?

Formulations, or formulas, are intended to be a guide to the manufacture of an item consisting of more than one ingredient. In addition to meat, other ingredients could include, water, spices, cures, flavorings, binders or extenders. When you have finished developing a formula, it must be submitted to the department prior to manufacture to be reviewed for the following concerns:

- Are levels of restricted ingredients within regulatory requirements?
- Is the proper product name used? Will the name used create an unfair economic advantage?
- Are there any allergens in the product, and are they properly addressed in the label?
- Is the process used to create the products safe?

Once these questions have been addressed, the formula will be returned to you with correction or changes. You may then begin processing of the product.

**Call the Bureau of Meat Safety & Inspection consultants below for more information.**

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#### Northeast Regional Office, Green Bay

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From farm to table...

WISCONSIN DIVISION OF  
*Food Safety*