Sanitation Requirements in the Food Code for Processing Venison in a Retail Food Establishment

Use Approved Water System
- Verify your water supply is from a safe and approved source.
- Have well water tested annually, and keep a copy of the results on file.

Employee Health Requirements
- Prevent employees diagnosed with or having symptoms of an illness, wound, or other affliction that might contaminate product from processing carcasses.

Protect Equipment and Utensil Food Contact Surfaces
- Check the condition of all food contact surfaces before and after processing venison, including cutting boards, knives, grinder, gloves, and outer garments.
- Schedule routine cleaning and sanitizing of all food contact surfaces before and after processing venison.
- Conduct routine cleaning and sanitizing every four hours unless the processing room is refrigerated.

Prevent Cross-Contamination
- Separate raw and ready-to-eat foods, and prevent overcrowding in freezers, coolers, processing, and storage areas.
- Implement safe handling procedures from the time the venison enters the store through processing and sales, to prevent cross-contamination.

Keep Food Safe and Unadulterated
- Protect food, food packaging materials, and food contact surfaces from adulteration resulting from microbiological, chemical, and physical contamination.
- Keep carcasses stored at 41°F to prevent decomposition and limit the growth of pathogenic bacteria found on raw meat carcasses.
- Protect exposed food from contamination:
  1. Condensation and floor splash (microbiological contamination)
  2. Fuels and lubricants (chemical contamination)
  3. Metal shavings from a grinder blade (physical contamination)

Protect, Label, Store, and Use Toxic Compounds Properly
- Improper use of a toxic compound is a frequent cause of product adulteration.

Control Pests
- Exclude all pests from the storage and carcass processing areas.

How and When to Wash Your Hands
- Wash hands by vigorously rubbing together the surfaces of lathered hands and arms for at least 20 seconds and thoroughly rinse with clean warm water.
- Wash hands before and after working with venison; and after eating, drinking, smoking, using the restroom, handling raw meat, touching hair, mouth, nose, or face; or wash any time your hands are unclean.

Hand Washing Facilities
- Provide hand washing sinks in both the processing and restroom areas.
- Supply hand washing sinks with hand soap and paper towels.
- Keep restrooms clean and in good repair.

For More Information:
For more information on Bovine Tuberculosis and Chronic Wasting Disease, visit www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases.

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Lead Fragments in Venison and Processing of the Carcass

Recent studies have found tiny lead fragments in venison from deer shot with lead ammunition. Some of the fragments have been found far from the wound channel in the meat, and are too small to be seen during processing. There is currently no evidence linking venison consumption to lead poisoning in humans; however, lead is a neurotoxin, meaning it affects the brain and the rest of the central nervous system. The risk depends on how much lead is consumed and how often. It can affect the nervous system even at levels too low to cause outward signs of illness. Care should be taken to minimize any contamination.

You can take steps to keep lead contamination in venison to a minimum by following a few guidelines:

1. Use care when selecting meat for grinding.
2. Do not use deer with excessive shot damage.
3. Trim a generous distance away from the bullet wound channel and discard any meat that is bruised, discolored, or contains hair, dirt, bone fragments or grass.

Venison Product Storage

- Processors must implement procedures to maintain the identity of venison products so as not to confuse them with commercial meat.
- Processed hunter-owned venison should be wrapped and each package identified with the name of the owner. Packages should be stamped, “Not for Sale.”
- Venison held for further processing (jerky, sausage, etc.) should be stored in covered containers, separated from commercial foods by a physical barrier and properly identified.

**Hunters harvesting a deer or elk from Colorado, Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, South Dakota, Utah, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Alberta, Saskatchewan, or other CWD positive areas, are restricted to bringing into Michigan only deboned meat, antlers, antlers attached to a skull cap cleaned of all brain and muscle tissue, hides cleaned of excess tissue or blood, upper canine teeth, or a finished taxidermic mount.**