REV: 05/12/22

Specialized Meat Processing at Retail Food Establishments Variance Request Instructions

The Food Code requires all firms submitting variance requests to explain how the potential public health hazard and/or nuisance addressed by the relevant Food Code section will be addressed by your proposal. By completing the application, you are providing the information specified in section §8-201.14 and required for MDARD to grant your variance.

By submitting this application, you are committing to and agreeing that you will keep your approved plan documents on premises, ensure employees responsible for implementing the plan are familiar with the plan and appropriately trained. You also affirm that your firm has adequate space and proper equipment to conduct these processes safely.

Completed applications should be saved to your computer before submitting to MDARD.

Submit applications by e-mail to: MDA-FoodDairyInfo@michigan.gov. E-mail submissions preferred.
Mail to: MI Dept. of Agriculture and Rural Development, Food and Dairy Division, PO Box 30017, Lansing, MI 48909

Visit: https://www.michigan.gov/mdard/food-dairy/industry-resources/specialized-retail-meat-processing-in-michigan for more information.

Note to applicant:

- Ingredients, formulations, recipes, and pre-approved cure/cooking HACCP plans do not have to be submitted but must be made available in writing at the licensed establishment, when requested.
- The more closely your operation follows the accepted industry practices described in this application, the easier and faster it will be for your application to be approved.
- Industry standard practices listed often follow USDA standards to allow a retail meat operation to voluntarily become USDA inspected with as little change in practices as possible, should a firm desire to wholesale in the future.
- Approval of this application does not automatically provide approval for an extended shelf life beyond the 7 days allowed in the Food Code.

Completing the application:

- Your application will not be approved if all sections are not completed. This includes standard operating procedures (SOP's), critical control points (CCP's), facility diagram, product flowchart(s), training plan and records.
- This application package has been developed to assist most smaller businesses complete the required plan without needing to hire a consultant.
- This application contains the following sections:
  1. SOP's and CCP's.
  2. Facility Layout Diagram Instructions.
  3. Product Flowchart.
  4. Supervisory and Employee Training Plan.
  5. Proposed Documentation Forms

NOTE: DO NOT SUBMIT ADDITIONAL MATERIALS NOT REQUEST IN THE APPLICATION. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE APPLICATION OR WHAT TO INCLUDE CONTACT THE PROCESSING SENIOR INSPECTOR FOR CLARIFICATION.

*** SUBMITTING EXTRA MATERIALS MAY SLOW DOWN THE REVIEW PROCESS. ***

Section 1
Establishment Information

- Basic Establishment Information for the business location where operations are conducted.

Section 2
Product and Process Information

- Product categorization and information about what cured meat products are made at your facility.
- Do not list products that you do not add cure to, this form is ONLY for cured products.
- If you make fermented products, please indicate that they are fermented.
- If you have questions regarding additives, contact the food processing senior inspector for your area beforecompleting this section.
- Critical Limit Group I products are typically products such as: jerky that does not require refrigeration, summer sausage that does not require refrigeration, and other cured meat products that do not require refrigeration.
- Critical Limit Group II products are typically products like jerky that does require refrigeration, summer sausage that does require refrigeration, bologna, ham, etc.
- Critical Limit Group III products are typically products that are refrigerated and require further cooking such as bacon.

Section 3
Food Code Section Information

- The food code requires that the section of the code be in the variance request. This is the section for which a variance is being granted.
- Check the boxes that apply.

Section 4
Model Good Manufacturing Practices for Buildings and Equipment

- Information about your facility and general sanitary controls.
- Read the numbered items, if your establishment does things differently than listed, then give the item number and explain how your establishment does this differently.
- Use position descriptions rather than names of individuals in the bottom section.

Section 5
Model Good Manufacturing Practices for Equipment and Utensils

- How are equipment and utensils cleaned and maintained in sanitary condition.
- Read the numbered items, if your establishment does things differently than listed, then give the item number and explain how your establishment does this differently.
- Use position descriptions rather than names of individuals in the bottom section.

Section 6
Model Good Manufacturing Practices for Personnel

-Personnel hygiene information and general sanitary practices.
- Read the numbered items, if your establishment does things differently than listed, then give the item number and explain how your establishment does this differently.
- Use position descriptions rather than names of individuals in the bottom section.

Section 7
Model Good Manufacturing Practices for Production and Process Controls

- In plant practices to ensure safe, wholesome product, general sanitary practice information.
- Read the numbered items, if your establishment does things differently than listed, then give the item number and explain how your establishment does this differently.
Use position descriptions rather than names of individuals in the bottom section.

Section 8
Model Good Manufacturing Practices for Purchasing Meats

- Ensuring meat products are from USDA inspected sources.
- Read the numbered items, if your establishment does things differently than listed, then give the item number and explain how your establishment does this differently.
- Use position descriptions rather than names of individuals in the bottom section.

Section 9
Model Operational - SSOP

- Meat plant specific cleaning, sanitation, and best practice information.
- Read the numbered items, if your establishment does things differently than listed, then give the item number and explain how your establishment does this differently.
- Use position descriptions rather than names of individuals in the bottom section.

Section 10
Model Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)'s for Products Containing Allergens

- Information to help ensure product containing allergens does not contaminate other products and that proper labeling occurs.
- Read the numbered items, if your establishment does things differently than listed, then give the item number and explain how your establishment does this differently.
- Use position descriptions rather than names of individuals in the bottom section.

Section 11
Model Cure SOP/CCP

- Information about how cures are used in these products.
- You will need to do the calculations to determine the amount of nitrite/nitrate added to the products, there is not a space on the form for this. Retain the calculations so you can explain how you arrived at the concentrations (ppm).
- List the method of curing the necessary amounts of product used during cure process, and the concentration of cure used. The concentration or % Nitrite can be found on the cure packaging.
- **Each product you produce must be listed on the chart that was listed in Section 2 must be included in this section.**

Section 12
Model Additive and Antimicrobial Ingredient SOP/CCP

- Information about how these restricted ingredients are handled and used in the establishment.
-You will need to do the calculations to determine the amount of additive and or antimicrobial ingredient used in the products, there is not a space on the form for this calculation. Retain the calculations so you can explain how you arrived at the concentrations (ppm or %).
- Read the numbered items, if your establishment does things differently than listed you can provide this information in the box for scale calibration.

Section 13
Model Cooking SOP/CCP

- This section is used to provide information about how each Critical Limit group of products is adequately cooked or processed to kill any pathogens on the product. For jerky products humidity must be addressed, see the appendix "Humidity Guidelines" for more information pertaining to humidity control in jerky.
- Cooking processes will be evaluated to see that they provide adequate control of pathogens.
- The "Critical Limit Groups" are what you filled out in Section 2.
- **Each product you produce must be listed on the chart that was listed in Section 2 must be included in this section.**

Section 14
Model Cooling SOP/CCP

- Information about how products are safely cooled within either the food code cooling times or the cooling times in USDA Appendix B.
- See the section description on the variance application for more information and specific cooling parameters.
- Cooling processes will be evaluated to see that they provide adequate control of pathogens.
- The USDA/FSIS large meat cooling process should not be used for cooling items that are not large meats (jerky, hunter sticks, hot dogs…).
- The "Critical Limit Groups" are what you filled out in Section 2.
- **Each product you produce must be listed on the chart that was listed in Section 2 must be included in this section.**

Section 15
Model SOP for Post-Cook Step Pathogen Control in Ready-to-Eat (RTE) Foods

- How is product protected from being contaminated after being cooked and how is listeria controlled?
- Read the numbered items, if your establishment does things differently than listed, then give the item number and explain how your establishment does this differently.
- Use position descriptions rather than names of individuals in the bottom section.

Section 16
Model SOP for Vacuum Packaging/Reduced Oxygen Packaging (ROP) Cured Products

- Requirements for ROP packaging.
- Read the numbered items, if your establishment does things differently than listed, then give the item number and explain how your establishment does this differently.
- Use position descriptions rather than names of individuals in the bottom section.

Section 17
Facility Layout

- Provide a scale drawing of the facility.
- Ensure that the details required in items 1-9 and the paragraph at the end are provided.

Section 18
Process Flow Diagram

- Review the process flow diagram provided, consider your operation, and determine if it is the same, if it is not, then use the same format and provide your process flow.

Section 19
Training Plans

- Fill in information related to training activities for the facility supervisors and operational employees.
- The training plan should address specific training on Reduced Oxygen Packing (vac pack) food safety issues, the contents of this application in regard to SOP's, CCP's and why they are important, prohibiting bare hand contact with ready to eat foods, designated work areas, minimizing cross contamination, and the employee health policy for restriction and exclusion of ill employees.
- Onsite, offsite, and web-based training are all appropriate training methods that can be reflected here.

Section 20
Required Records

- If you are going to use MDARD model logs, simply click the box and make sure to use these records for monitoring the required control points, (Cure, Cook, Cool, & Thermometer Verification).
- You may use your own logs; however, they must reflect the data necessary to provide assurance that you are meeting your critical control parameters for curing, cooking, cooling, and thermometer verification.
- CCP monitoring equipment calibration records or logs must be maintained also. These will likely be records of calibration for your thermometers and scales used to monitor curing, cooking, & cooling processes.
- Doing regular thermometer and scale accuracy checks is a good way to ensure that your equipment is giving you accurate information in between calibration frequency.
- Additionally, employee training records may be maintained to show adequate employee training over time.