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GUIDELINES FOR DOOR-TO-DOOR SALES OF FOOD

Door-to-door retail sales of all food products are regulated in accordance with the Illinois Department of Public Health Retail Food Store Sanitation Code (77 Ill. Adm. Code 760). If meat and poultry products are sold, an Illinois Department of Agriculture Broker's License is also required. This summary of the minimum requirements is provided for your information. Generally, a truck cannot be considered a "temporary retail food store" unless it operates at a fixed location for not more than 14 consecutive days in conjunction with a single event or celebration. Consequently, all vehicles used for door-to-door sales of food must comply with all applicable retail food store requirements.

A pre-operational inspection of the delivery vehicle, equipment and food products involved in the door-to-door sales is required. An inspection shall be conducted while in operation to determine whether the equipment can maintain the required food storage temperatures.

I. FOOD SOURCE

- A. Only meat and poultry inspected by USDA or the Illinois Department of Agriculture with an inspection legend on each package or piece may be sold.
- B. Other food products must meet applicable laws:
 - 1. inspected eggs
 - 2. certified shellfish, shrimp
 - 3. pasteurized, processed dairy products
 - 4. no home canned, processed, or prepared foods
 - 5. commercial sources of all foods (except fresh produce)
- C. No damaged, broken containers of packaged products may be sold unless the operator has an Illinois Department of Public Health Salvage license.

II. EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

- A. Food must be protected from potential contamination by insects, dust and other factors at all times during storage and display. All food must be held in an enclosed building or an enclosed delivery vehicle. Canvas or a tarp thrown over the freezer does not provide adequate protection and may in fact add to unsanitary conditions.
- B. Mechanical refrigeration is required. However, ice may be used for shrimp and produce only. When ice is used as a cooling medium:
 - 1. only commercial ice manufactured from potable water can be used.
 - 2. ice must be drained when used to cool food products.
 - 3. all equipment and materials must be non-absorbent, easily cleanable, corrosion resistant, and durable – no raw wood, rusty surfaces, or cracked/broken liners or refrigeration/freezer units are allowed.
 - 4. all equipment, materials and single service items must be constructed of food-grade materials.
 - 5. if unpackaged food products are handled (i.e., iced shrimp, produce) hand washing facilities including running water, soap, and paper towels must be provided.

III. TEMPERATURE CONTROL

- A. There must be an adequate number and capacity of mechanical refrigeration units (or effectively insulated units used with wet ice for shrimp and produce) to maintain food at required temperatures.
- B. Frozen foods must be held at an ambient temperature of 0°F or less.
- C. Refrigerated products must be maintained at a product temperature of 45°F or less.

IV. CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE

- A. All surfaces that come in direct contact with food or ice must be cleaned and sanitized at least daily or more frequently if necessary (scales, cutting boards, etc.).

- B. Cleaners and sanitizers must be available wherever food is stored, sold or handled.

V. LABELING

- A. Meat and poultry products must bear a USDA or IDA inspection legend.
- B. If the food product is pre-packaged, it must bear the common or usual name, company name and address, weight and list of ingredients in descending order.
- C. If the product was previously frozen then thawed, a statement to that effect must be made.

VI. REQUIREMENTS FOR BROKERS LICENSE

- A. The holder of a Broker's license is restricted to selling packaged meat or poultry that bears labeling and an official mark of inspection from either USDA or IDA. If boxes are broken open, labeling and legend must be present on each individual package.
- B. Sanitation of storage coolers/freezers and facilities, trucks, etc. must be maintained (cleanliness, pest control, etc.).
- C. Condition and repair of chest freezers and vehicles used to transport meat and poultry must be maintained.
- D. Invoices where meat or poultry products were purchased must be available.
- E. Sales tickets for individual sales to customers must be available to show whether meat or poultry products were sold by the case or by the piece.
- F. Frozen meat or poultry products should show no evidence of thawing and refreezing (stained boxes, melt water that has been refrozen in the bottom of the box, etc.).
- G. Proper temperature must be maintained for all meat and poultry products (45°F or below chilled, 0°F or below frozen product).

(These are the requirements to apply for a Brokers License. Refer to IDA at (217) 782-6684 if an apparent problem exists.)

VII. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- A. “Bait and Switch” is a fraudulent practice where more expensive products are advertised then less expensive products are substituted.
- B. “Species Substitution” occurs when a less expensive species that looks like a more expensive species is fraudulently labeled/named and sold as the more expensive product.
- C. “Excess Over glazing” is the application of excess amounts of water to products when they are flash frozen. Over glazing is normally applied to protect food products when they are flash frozen; however, excess over glazing most frequently occurs with lobster or other sea foods.
- D. “Short Weighting” occurs when scales are not calibrated or light-weighted, so the consumer receives less than the expected weight.

Complaints about meat or poultry should be referred to IDA at (217) 785-4709. Complaints about other food products should be referred to the Illinois Attorney General’s Office at (217) 782-1090.