

VERMONT AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS  
FOOD SAFETY CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION  
MONTPELIER, VT  
Anson Tebbetts, Secretary



# MIS NOTICE

Adopted from FSIS Notice 17-15, dated 3/13/15

VT1-17

11/28/2017

## PROGRAM PERSONNEL HYGIENE AND BIOSECURITY PRACTICES

### I. PURPOSE

This notice provides instructions to program personnel to fully comply with the same sanitation and hygiene regulations that the establishment or plant personnel must adhere to, and to fully comply with the sanitary and hygiene procedures and biosecurity measures put in place by an official meat or poultry establishment, an import inspection establishment, a retail establishment, a custom establishment, or any other food producing establishment that personnel visit in the performance of their inspection duties, that these facilities also require of all of their employees. Program personnel should be prepared to meet the requirements of the establishments they cover.

### II. BACKGROUND

A. As a food safety division, the Food Safety Consumer Protection Division, Meat and Poultry Inspection Section of VAAFM ensures that regulations pertaining to sanitary operations and proper food handling practices are strictly adhered to so that the potential contamination of meat or poultry products with any food safety hazards of public health concern, does not occur. Personnel are to ensure that their activities in the establishment are not resulting in the creation of an insanitary condition.

B. VAAFM personnel are to follow the specific employee hygiene practices (e.g., hair net, beard net, foot coverings, smock, etc.), clothing, or biosecurity measures established in an official meat or poultry establishment, an import inspection establishment, a retail establishment, a custom establishment, or any other food producing establishment that personnel visit in the performance of their inspection duties, to ensure insanitary conditions do not occur.

C. Biosecurity procedures protect agricultural animals from any type of infectious agent (e.g., viral, bacterial, fungal, or parasitic). People can spread diseases as they move within a facility and from one facility to another. Animals or equipment introduced into a facility can bring infectious agents with them. Among the many biosecurity procedures that can prevent these types of disease transmission are such measures as use of protective clothing, waiting periods for new animals and visitors, and cleaning. Occasionally, special emergency procedures may be necessary in serious outbreaks of animal diseases.

### III. VAAFM PERSONNEL RESPONSIBILITIES

A. VAAFM personnel are to follow the same hygiene requirements in 9 CFR 416.5, and 354.243(k) ([Attachment 1](#)) regarding their personal cleanliness, clothing and health in the performance of official duties, including how personnel handle edible products and their sanitary hygienic practices.

B. VAAFM personnel are to adhere to the same employee hygiene regulations or practices, clothing, or any biosecurity measures put in place in an official meat or poultry establishment, an import inspection establishment, a retail establishment, a custom establishment, or any other food producing establishment that personnel visit in the performance of their inspection duties, that these facilities require of all their own employees. Clothing that covers the entire legs should be worn for safety, biosecurity and sanitation in the above establishments (i.e. no shorts, knickers, skirts).

If establishments that employ specific employee hygiene practices (e.g., hair net, beard net, foot coverings, foot wash, etc.), do not provide inspection staff with needed implements, please notify the office.

C. VAAFM personnel are to follow an establishment's procedures designed for employee traffic patterns or product flow between rooms or processes.

D. VAAFM personnel are to be mindful of livestock or avian diseases that might be spread from one official establishment to another by their clothing, equipment, footwear or vehicle. If VAAFM personnel have concerns about any procedure the establishment or plant wants them to follow that appears to be overly restrictive (e.g., a procedure that only applies to VAAFM personnel, treatments that require special purchase of cleaning materials, or questions about personnel domiciles or activities while in non-duty status) to prevent transmission of animal or avian diseases and foodborne disease, those concerns are to be discussed with their immediate supervisor.

E. VAAFM personnel performing ante-mortem and post-mortem inspection are to ensure sanitary conditions are maintained. When performing these duties IPP are to ensure they do not directly or indirectly, cross contaminate products when traveling to or from other production areas within a facility. Examples of practices to follow to prevent cross contamination include but are not limited to:

1. Change outer clothing after conducting ante-mortem inspection and entering a production area;
2. Use the provided boot dip/wash or change to Ready to Eat (RTE) designated footwear prior to entering a raw or RTE production area (when provided);
3. Adhere to the establishment's guidelines for outer garment use (e.g., change smock when leaving a raw products operations and entering an RTE operation); and
4. Wash hands upon entering an exposed product production area.

F. VAAFM personnel may encounter biosecurity measures an establishment or plant may require that include but are not limited to:

1. Thoroughly wash hands with soap and water or antibacterial wipes or gel before entering and after leaving an establishment or plant;
2. Wear protective clothing or footwear supplied by the establishment or plant; or
3. Wash or sanitize vehicle tires.

G. There may be instances where, for safety, health, and biosecurity, VAAFM may furnish and require inspection staff to wear additional personal protective equipment. VAAFM personnel will be notified of this with as much advanced notice as possible.

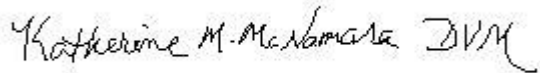
H. VAAFM personnel are to follow any local/state/Federal (e.g. APHIS) guidance, quarantines, or restrictions that apply to the general population in specific geographical locations.

#### **IV. SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. "Supervisory personnel" refers to any personnel that supervise inspection program personnel (IPP).
- B. A supervisor plays a key role in ensuring that the activities conducted by VAAFM personnel are consistent with statutory authority and Agency policy, and that duties are performed in accordance with the instructions addressed in this notice.
- C. Supervisory personnel are to discuss this notice with VAAFM personnel to ensure that they understand their responsibilities. The supervisor would reiterate IPP's role in preventing the creation of an insanitary condition or the possible contamination or adulteration of inspected products within an inspected establishment or plant and preventing the spread of any livestock or avian diseases between establishments or plants.
- D. Supervisors are to discuss how the hygiene practices (e.g., personal cleanliness, appropriate clothing, disease control, product handling and equipment handling) of VAAFM personnel may affect the testing results related to pathogens. Supervisors are to emphasize that IPP in slaughter areas ensure that they perform their slaughter inspection duties in a manner that they do not, directly or indirectly, cross contaminate product or product contact surfaces.
- E. Supervisors are responsible for addressing any issues establishments or plants may bring to their attention related to VAAFM personnel employee hygiene practices or biosecurity measures.

## V. QUESTIONS

Refer questions regarding this notice to the Vermont Meat Inspection Section at 802-828-2426.



Katherine McNamara, DVM  
Assistant State Veterinarian  
VT Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

## Attachment 1

### § 416.5 - Employee hygiene.

(a) *Cleanliness.* All persons working in contact with product, food-contact surfaces, and product-packaging materials must adhere to hygienic practices while on duty to prevent adulteration of product and the creation of insanitary conditions.

(b) *Clothing.* Aprons, frocks, and other outer clothing worn by persons who handle product must be of material that is disposable or readily cleaned. Clean garments must be worn at the start of each working day and garments must be changed during the day as often as necessary to prevent adulteration of product and the creation of insanitary conditions.

(c) *Disease control.* Any person who has or appears to have an infectious disease, open lesion, including boils, sores, or infected wounds, or any other abnormal source of microbial contamination, must be excluded from any operations which could result in product adulteration and the creation of insanitary conditions until the condition is corrected.

### § 354.243 Operations and procedures

Operations and procedures involving the preparation, storing, or handling of any product shall be strictly in accord with clean and sanitary methods.

**(k)** Cleanliness and hygiene of personnel:

**(1)** All employees coming in contact with exposed edible products or edible products handling equipment shall wear clean garments and should wear caps or hair nets, and shall keep their hands clean at all times while thus engaged.

**(2)** Hands of employees handling edible products or edible products handling equipment shall be free of infected cuts, boils, and open sores at all times while thus engaged.

**(3)** Every person, after each use of toilet or change of garments, shall wash his hands thoroughly before returning to duties that require the handling of edible products or containers therefor or edible products handling equipment.

**(4)** Neither smoking nor chewing of tobacco shall be permitted in any room where exposed edible products are prepared, processed, or otherwise handled.