

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



# MIS NOTICE

**Adopted from FSIS Notice 14-14**

2-23

6/1/23

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONDUCTING VERIFICATION TASKS ON MISSED INSPECTION VISITS OF PROCESSING ESTABLISHMENTS**

### **I. PURPOSE**

This notice reissues the contents in VT Notice 18-13 and 14-14, Instructions for Conducting Verification Tasks on Missed Inspection Visits of Processing Establishments. This notice provides instructions for inspection program personnel (IPP) on conducting inspection verification tasks on those very rare occasions when IPP have been unable to visit an official establishment within its approved operating hours. IPP very infrequently may be unable to visit a particular processing establishment during an operating shift because of emergencies or unforeseen events.

### **II. BACKGROUND**

A. The Federal Meat Inspection Act, and the Poultry Products Inspection Act, and Vermont State Statutes, require VAAFM to protect consumers by ensuring that meat and poultry are safe, wholesome, and accurately labeled for public consumption. Therefore, IPP visit processing establishments at least once per operating shift. The supervisor ensures that decisions made by IPP are consistent with regulations, and that IPP perform in accordance with prescribed inspection methods and procedures addressed per VT Directive 5000.1, *Verifying an Establishment's Food Safety System*

B. The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) evaluated FSIS's ability to accomplish its mission of making a once per shift visit to each processing establishment. The OIG found that IPP sometimes were not able to make these visits because of inclement weather, traffic delays, emergency inspection needs at other establishments on patrol assignments, or unscheduled or emergency leave by IPP. The same holds true for state inspection staff.

**NOTE:** VT maintains continuous inspection at slaughter establishments.

### **III. IPP RESPONSIBILITIES WHEN AN ESTABLISHMENT HAS OPERATED WITHOUT COVERAGE**

A. When IPP believe that they will be unable to provide inspection services at least once during a specific shift's operating hours at a processing establishment, IPP are to notify their immediate supervisor. The supervisor will provide instruction to IPP on how to proceed.

B. IPP are to mark the tasks as “Not Performed” on the day when the inspection for an assignment was missed in PHIS. When marking the tasks as “Not Performed” IPP are to select the option “plant not visited” from the drop down list as the most appropriate justification.

C. On the next inspection visit, IPP covering any missed establishment are to add and conduct additional directed tasks. During the next inspection, IPP are to perform one Pre-Op Sanitation Standard Operating Procedure (Sanitation SOP) Record Review task or one Operational Sanitation SOP Record Review task focusing on the previous days’ records. In addition, IPP are to perform the recordkeeping component for one HACCP Verification task on one product lot, that represents the highest risk category, as referenced in Attachment 2 of [FSIS Directive 13,000.1](#), *Scheduling In-Plant Inspection Tasks in the Public Health Information System (PHIS)*, of all product the establishment produced the previous day, to determine an establishment’s adherence to regulatory requirements.

D. When performing either the Pre-Op or Operational SSOP Record Review task, IPP are to review the previous day’s records to verify that:

1. The establishment conducted the monitoring activities at a minimum daily frequency [9 CFR 416.13](#);
2. If applicable, the establishment implemented necessary corrective actions [9 CFR 416.15](#); and
3. The responsible employee specified in the Sanitation SOP authenticated the records [9 CFR 416.16](#).

E. When performing the recordkeeping component of the HACCP Verification task, IPP are to verify that the establishment complies with all relevant HACCP regulatory requirements. IPP are to review records associated with the food safety system for a specific lot of production produced on the day IPP were not present. They are to review the records that document implementation of the HACCP system, including prerequisite or supporting programs and corrective actions, if appropriate.

F. As part of the verification of HACCP recordkeeping requirements, IPP are to review establishment pre-shipment review records for the specific lot of production produced from the previous day, consistent with the instructions in [VT Directive 5000.1](#).

#### **IV. DOCUMENTING COMPLIANCE OR NONCOMPLIANCE**

A. If the establishment’s HACCP and Sanitation SOP records demonstrate compliance with all applicable regulatory requirements, IPP are to document the compliance results in PHIS.

B. If IPP identify noncompliance, they are to document the observed noncompliances in PHIS in accordance with the instructions in [VT Directive 5000.1](#), Chapter V and discuss the noncompliance with their immediate supervisor to determine if additional action may be necessary.

C. If IPP are unable to determine whether their findings represent regulatory noncompliance, they are to discuss their concerns with their supervisor prior to making a determination.

#### **V. SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES**

A. After notification that IPP are unable to conduct inspection services during a specific shift’s operating hours at a processing establishment, supervisory personnel will attempt to have inspection visit coverage provided by other IPP personnel and provide instruction on how to proceed.

B. Supervisory personnel are to discuss the cause of the missed inspection visits at the processing establishment with IPP to develop a strategy to address the situation with the current workforce.

C. Supervisory personnel are to refer to Part I, Section X in [VT Directive 5000.1](#) to ensure that IPP's decisions during the performance of the tasks outlined under Part III, Section C of this notice are consistent with agency policies.

## VII. QUESTIONS

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

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Katherine McNamara, DVM  
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VT Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets