



January 12, 2012

Administrative Order
No. 06
Series of 2012.

SUBJECT: RULES AND REGULATIONS ON HYGIENIC HANDLING OF
CHILLED, FROZEN AND THAWED MEAT IN MEAT MARKETS

WHEREAS, frozen meat previously destined for supermarkets, hotels and restaurants where refrigeration facilities exist, ended up in large quantities in wet markets where there are no similar facilities and where meat vendors have no experience in handling frozen meats, thus creating food safety risks due to product thawing and mishandling;

WHEREAS, the Codex Code of Hygienic Practice for Meat (CAC/RCP 58-2005) recommends guidelines for the adequacy of facilities and equipment for the chilling and/or freezing and storage of meat;

WHEREAS, there are no specific product standards for chilled, frozen and thawed foods at Codex and likewise no specific local standards for the handling of these foods in meat markets;

WHEREAS, regulations exist for the temperature control of frozen, thawed and chilled foods and meats in certain developed countries and have been implemented by these countries for a considerable period of time.

WHEREAS, the Philippines as a precautionary measure has decided to base its regulations for the handling of chilled, frozen and thawed meats on the regulations of these countries.

WHEREAS, there is a need to increase the awareness of meat traders, meat market owners/administrators, meat vendors and the consuming public on conditions for the safe handling of meat and the implementation of meat safety standards to avoid food-borne diseases;

WHEREAS, the Consumer Act of the Philippines (RA No 7394) requires the Department of Agriculture to provide safety and quality standards for consumer products related to agriculture to assure the protection of the public against unreasonable risks of injury and hazards to health; the Local Government Code (RA No 7160) requires the provincial, municipal and city governments to regulate the preparation and sale of foodstuff such as meat for public consumption and the Code of Sanitation of the Philippines (Presidential Decree No 856) provides for the sanitary requirements in the operation of markets;

WHEREAS, the Meat Inspection Code of the Philippines (RA No 9296) requires NMIS to provide regulations to ensure the safety, quality and wholesomeness of meat and meat products sold in local markets.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, PROCESO J ALCALA, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture do hereby issue this Order on Rules and Regulations on Hygienic Handling of Chilled, Frozen and Thawed Meat in Meat Markets.

Section 1 SCOPE

This Order covers the hygienic handling of chilled, frozen and thawed meat when sold in meat markets. Meat markets shall include, but shall not be limited to the following:

- 1.1 Meat Shops
- 1.2 Supermarkets and grocery stores
- 1.3 Wet Markets
 - 1.3.1 public markets
 - 1.3.2 private markets
 - 1.3.3 satellite market/flea markets ("talipapa")

Section 2 DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms as used in this Order shall mean:

1. Controlling Authority - the official authority charged by the government with the control of meat hygiene and meat inspection.
2. Foreign Meat Establishments - DA accredited facilities in foreign country engaged in slaughtering and dressing of food animals, and processing, cutting, packing and storing of meat and meat products, and recognized by the National Veterinary Administration (NVA) of that country to export meat and meat products.
3. Locally Registered Meat Establishments - slaughterhouses, meat processing plants, poultry dressing plants, meat cutting plants and cold

storages that are allowed to operate by the city/municipal government but are not accredited by the NMIS.

4. Market Administrator/Master – person in charge of the overall operations of the market which shall include ensuring the maintenance of hygiene and sanitation of the facilities.
5. Meat – refers to the edible part of the carcass including offal derived from food animal.
 - 5.1 Chilled meat – is meat derived from newly slaughtered animals the temperature of which is brought down to a minimum product temperature higher than 0°C or at a temperature at which it is not frozen. The maximum product temperature for chilled meat shall be 10°C. Chilled meat is held at these temperatures during cutting, processing, handling, transport, storage, distribution and retail sale.
 - 5.2 Frozen Meat - is meat derived from newly slaughtered animals brought down to a maximum product center temperature of 0°C during which most of the water in the meat is converted to ice. The meat is stored and held at a room temperature of -18°C or lower to maintain a product center temperature of 0°C (maximum). The product temperature is maintained during cutting, processing, handling, transport, storage, distribution and retail sale.
 - 5.3 Thawed Meat – is meat obtained from frozen meat and where the product temperature is allowed to rise to a level higher than 0°C but no higher than 5°C under temperature controlled conditions. During thawing, ice crystals in the previously frozen meat are reconverted to water starting from the outer surface to the inner core resulting in the formation of liquid called “drip”. Thawed meat because it was previously frozen, is not the same product as “newly slaughtered meat” or “chilled meat”.
 - 5.4 Newly Slaughtered Meat – refers to meat obtained from animals slaughtered within the day, and sold to the consumer within a specified time from slaughter established by NMIS, during which it retains its fresh-like character in terms of odor, color and texture and with no signs of spoilage. It is traditionally not refrigerated at any stage of meat handling or at the point of sale.
6. Meat Cold Storage Warehouse – meat establishment that is accredited by the Controlling Authority, which is being used for the storage of local and/or imported frozen meat.
7. Meat Cutting Plant – meat establishments, existing as stand alone or an integral part of a bigger facility accredited by NMIS or registered by LGU to cut, fabricate or comminute and package meat for retail distribution.
8. Meat Establishments – premises such as slaughterhouses, poultry dressing plants, meat cutting plants, meat processing plants and cold storage warehouses wherein food animals are slaughtered and meat is prepared, cut or processed, pre-packaged, handled and/or stored and

accredited by the NMIS or registered by the LGU's to conduct the indicated meat handling activity.

9. Meat Handler – a person directly handling meat during its slaughter, preparation, cutting, pre-packaging, processing, transport, storage, distribution and similar activities, until the sale of the meat to the consumer.
10. Meat Inspection Certificate – is an official document issued by NMIS or LGU's at meat establishments, to indicate that the meat inspected at a specified date and time was found to be safe and wholesome.
11. Meat Importer – person, company/business entity, duly authorized by NMIS to import meat for trading purposes.
12. Meat Markets – refers to the following premises where meat is sold directly to consumers.
 - 12.1 Wet Market – a market where most of the food commodities for sale are generally unprocessed and perishable. It may be either of the following:
 - 12.1.1 Public market – a market owned, operated and/or managed by the government intended to serve the general public.
 - 12.1.2 Private market – a market owned, operated and/or managed by private individuals or entities, cooperatives, institution or corporation intended to serve the general public.
 - 12.2 Meat Shop – is a facility or a place independent of a wet market authorized to sell meat and/or meat products.
 - 12.3 Supermarket and grocery stores – a market distinct from a wet market in which shoppers select meat from refrigerated shelves or display chillers maintaining the required product temperature.
13. Meat trader – any person, firm or corporation engaged in the business of buying or selling meat and meat products as carcasses, parts of carcasses or meat of food animals, on commission, or otherwise negotiating purchases or sales of such articles other than for his own account or as an employee of another person, firm or corporation. Usually sells in bulk and may conduct business from meat establishments.
14. Meat transport vehicles - an enclosed conveyance preferably refrigerated used for the transfer of meat and meat products from meat establishment to the point of destination in a hygienic manner.
15. Meat vendor – any person who sells meat directly to the consumer from a meat stall in a meat market and who is licensed to carry out this activity by the LGU's.
16. Potable water – water suitable (both health and aesthetic considerations) for drinking, preparation and cooking purposes.
17. Pre-packaged meat – refers to chilled, frozen and thawed meat enclosed in a primary packaging material, prepared in advance and ready for retail sale to the consumer.

18. Primary packaging material– refers to the first layer food grade wrapping materials in direct contact with the product to protect it from contamination.
19. Spoilage – any chemical or microbiological changes in meat or carcass evidenced by deteriorating sensory characteristics like sliminess, color, odor, off color, etc.
20. Vermin – a collective term for insects such as flies, mosquitoes, cockroaches, lice, mites, ticks, bedbugs, or small animal such as mice and rats that are vectors of diseases.

Section 3

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEAT TRADERS, VENDORS, HANDLERS AND MARKET ADMINISTRATORS

Meat Traders, Vendors and Handlers involved in the business of providing, delivering and/or selling meat and meat products for meat markets are responsible for the safety and quality of the meat and meat products which they trade, slaughter, prepare, cut, process, pre-package, chill, transport, sell, or handle in any other way related to this Guideline.

Meat Traders and Vendors

- 3.1 Meat Traders and Vendors shall ensure:
 - 3.1.1 that the meat they handle, distribute and sell is sold within the prescribed time from production date.
 - 3.1.2 that traceability is maintained by keeping appropriate records of transactions
- 3.2 Meat Traders and Vendors who are owners of meat stalls, meat shops, supermarkets and other meat markets must be licensed and shall meet all the requirements of the LGU (eg Mayor's Permit, Sanitary Permit etc).
- 3.3 Meat Traders and Vendors shall ensure that the Meat Inspection Certificate issued by the controlling authorities is displayed conspicuously in meat markets.

Meat Handlers:

- 3.4 Meat handlers shall handle meat and meat products in a hygienic manner and shall comply with the requirements for personnel hygiene in the handling of meat found in Section 9 of this Guideline.
- 3.5 They shall have a Certificate of Attendance to a Training course on Hygienic Handling of Meat in Meat Markets conducted by the NMIS or by LGUs.
- 3.6 They shall be licensed by the LGU's and shall possess an Annual Health Certificate.

Market Administrator:

- 3.7 The Market Administrator shall ensure that
 - 3.7.1 meat handlers are licensed

3.7.2 that market facilities required for the hygienic and sanitary handling of meat are kept in good condition

3.8 They shall assist the controlling authority in the enforcement of this Guideline.

Section 4 MEAT SOURCE AND CERTIFICATION

All meat being offered for sale in any meat market shall have passed inspection and certified fit for human consumption by a controlling authority. It must conform to the following:

- 4.1 The meat shall come from an accredited or locally registered meat cold storage or meat cutting plant. When frozen meat is already in retail packages, it shall come from accredited cold storage warehouses.
- 4.2 All frozen meat intended for retail sale shall be accompanied by a meat inspection certificate from the meat establishment.
- 4.3 If meat is inadvertently exposed to adverse temperature conditions or sources of contamination that may affect safety and suitability, an inspection should be carried out by a competent person and a meat inspection certificate issued before further transport, distribution or sale is allowed.

Section 5 MEAT PACKAGING AND LABELING

When meat is pre-cut and/or pre-packaged and labelled the following shall apply:

- 5.1 Pre-cutting and pre-packaging shall take place in a designated area of an accredited/registered meat establishment.
- 5.2 The product must maintain the required product temperature during pre-cutting and packaging.
- 5.3 The pre-cutting and packaging area must be kept under good hygienic condition and should comply with Section 8 of this Guideline and personnel should apply good hygienic practices and comply with Section 9 of this Guideline.
- 5.4 Primary packaging materials for pre-package meat shall be:
 - 5.4.1 food grade
 - 5.4.2 of acceptable barrier properties
 - 5.4.3 free from any form of impurities or contaminants
 - 5.4.4 without defects or pinholes
 - 5.4.5 properly handled and kept clean.
- 5.5 Pre-packaged chilled, frozen or thawed meat shall be labelled with the following information:

- 5.5.1 Name and type of the product
- 5.5.2 Net quantity
- 5.5.3 Name and address of the meat cutting plant / repacker
- 5.5.4 Repacking date
- 5.5.5 Lot identification code
- 5.5.6 Expiry Date for (for frozen meat)

Section 6
MEAT TRANSPORT TO MEAT MARKETS

All meat shall be transported in accordance with the following requirements:

- 6.1 Meat shall be transported in an accredited vehicle that shall always be kept clean and regularly disinfected. The vehicle should not have been used for transporting live animals or any other cargo which may adversely affect the safety and quality of the meat to be transported.
- 6.2 Transport vehicles, and crates used should be cleaned and if necessary sanitized as soon as practicable after meat has been unloaded.
- 6.3 Meat transport vehicle should be used for transporting meat from the cold storage warehouse and cutting plant to the market. Meat transport vehicles should be washed and disinfected prior to loading.
- 6.4 To prevent the deleterious effects of airborne contaminants, the transport vehicle should be closed, and/or have provisions for covering/protecting the meat.
- 6.5 Chilled, frozen and thawed meat shall be transported in refrigerated vehicles and/or insulated containers that are able to maintain the required product temperature.
- 6.6 The product compartment of transport vehicle should not carry tires, personal effects and other materials that may contaminate the meat and meat products.

Section 7
**HANDLING OF CHILLED MEAT, FROZEN MEAT AND THAWED MEAT
AT MEAT MARKETS**

7.1. General considerations:

The following rules and regulations shall be observed in the handling of chilled meat frozen meat and thawed meat:

- 7.1.1 Chilled meat shall not be frozen and shall be maintained at a minimum product temperature higher than 0°C and a maximum of 10 °C. Frozen meat should be maintained at a maximum product temperature of 0°C and should be stored in a meat cold storage at

less than -18°C. Thawed meat should be maintained at a maximum product temperature of 5°C.

- 7.1.2 All persons and entities engaged in the handling and sale of meat in meat markets shall be accredited by NMIS or licensed/registered by LGUs.
- 7.1.3 There shall be no mixing or intermingling of different types of meat. Each type of meat (chilled, frozen, thawed) shall be handled according to requirements indicated in Sections 7.1, 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4.
- 7.1.4 Facilities used to handle the product should be of a size and design that ensures the maintenance of product temperature, facilitates the proper handling of the meat and allows regular cleaning of the facility.
- 7.1.5 Meat shall be hygienically handled throughout distribution and sale and every effort taken to prevent contamination at all times. During sale, customers and vendors shall use tongs to handle the meat. Due care should be taken to prevent meat from falling to the floor;
- 7.1.6 Areas where the meat is handled and sold shall be maintained in sanitary condition and in good repair at all times.
- 7.1.7 The sales and display areas shall be kept orderly and free of clutter. Stacking of boxes of meat intended for later sale shall not be allowed except when receiving deliveries or when storage containers are being cleaned.
- 7.1.8 Meat remaining unsold after the expected or prescribed selling time and which has lost some of its original quality such as on the basis of color and texture, shall be withdrawn from the sales area. If showing no sign of spoilage it can be further utilized for other purposes.
- 7.1.9 Meat showing signs of spoilage shall be immediately removed from the sales area, properly disposed and not further utilized for human consumption. Controlling Authority shall ensure this.
- 7.1.10 Requirements of RA No 7394 otherwise known as the Consumer Act of the Philippines (ie Title III Protection Against Deceptive, Unfair and Unconscionable Sales Acts or Practices) should be followed such as:
 - i. prohibition on the use of color enhancing lights, mats and other materials as a means to deceive the consumers as to the freshness/wholesomeness of the goods; and
 - ii. prohibition on the use of dyes/colorant and other unapproved substances.

7.2. Chilled Meat

The following shall be observed in the handling of chilled meat at meat markets:

- 9
- 7.2.1 Chilled meat should be kept at a minimum product temperature higher than 0°C or that prevents freezing and a maximum product temperature of 10°C during its handling, distribution and sale;
 - 7.2.2 The product shall be displayed in supermarkets or other meat markets whole or cut and/or pre-packaged in refrigerated display chillers and/or insulated chest coolers with ice or frozen gel packs, and other similar devices for chilling product. Chilled cut poultry can be displayed either packed or unpacked over a bed of ice.
 - 7.2.3 Chilled meat can also be cut or sliced from its original form in supermarkets and other meat markets, provided tools (as meat knives), facilities (as chillers), and adequate areas are available in said markets to carry out this activity in a sanitary manner.
 - 7.2.4 The cutting and slicing and pre-packaging and labelling of chilled meat shall take place in an accredited or registered meat establishment. The cutting and slicing of chilled meat in supermarkets and other meat markets shall also be carried out in areas accredited or registered for this purpose.
 - 7.2.5 When ice is used to maintain product temperature, it shall be potable.
 - 7.2.6 The length of time chilled meat can be sold varies with its original quality and several factors such as the maintenance of product temperature. Chilled meat held in ice rather than under refrigeration has a more limited selling time.
 - 7.2.7 Chilled Meat unsold at the end of its selling time because of a slight loss in its fresh-like character shall be removed from the sales area. If showing no signs of spoilage, it can be used for purposes traditionally applied for the utilization of this type of meat and handled in the same manner.

7.3. Frozen Meat

The following rules and regulations shall be observed in the handling of frozen meat at meat markets:

- 7.3.1 Frozen meat shall be kept at a product temperature no higher than 0°C during its handling, storage, distribution and sale.
- 7.3.2 Frozen meat shall be sold from display freezers and/or chest freezers that maintain product temperature at a maximum of 0°C or lower.
- 7.3.3 When frozen meat is cut into smaller blocks for retail sale, the cutting shall take place under temperature controlled conditions in an accredited/registered meat establishment or in a central cutting facility in the market.
- 7.3.4 Frozen meat can continue to be sold provided its original quality and product temperature are maintained.

7.4 Thawed Meat

The following rules and regulations shall be observed in the handling of thawed meat:

- 7.4.1 Thawing and cutting shall take place in an NMIS accredited/LGU registered meat establishment.
- 7.4.2 Thawing of frozen meat shall take place under a temperature controlled environment that maintains product temperature at 5°C.
- 7.4.3 Thawing medium such as air and water may be used provided frozen meat is completely sealed in a packaging material and or its original bulk packaging.
- 7.4.4 Product temperature shall be maintained at a maximum of 5°C during cutting to prevent the formation of drip. In the absence of proper cutting facilities under temperature controlled conditions, meat handlers may cut the meat for retail buyers outside its storage container and quickly return the unsold portion into the same container. Keeping any unsold portion exposed to ambient temperature while not under the process of cutting for immediate sale shall not be allowed.
- 7.4.5 The thawed meat shall be kept in freezers, chillers or insulated containers with ice gel packs in meat markets to ensure that product temperature is maintained at no higher than 5°C.
- 7.4.6 Thawed meat shall not be refrozen.
- 7.4.7 Thawed Meat unsold at the end of its selling time because of a slight loss in its original quality characteristics shall be removed from the sales area. If showing no signs of spoilage it can be used for other purposes.

Section 8

HYGIENE, SANITATION AND VERMIN CONTROL REQUIREMENTS FOR MEAT MARKETS

1. Stray animals must not be allowed in any meat market.
2. Infestations of insects or rodents must be reported immediately to the Market Administrators/Master.
3. The meat stall, its surroundings and equipment or tools should be kept clean, free of litter and odors, in good repair and condition and free from vermin at all times.
4. The meat stalls shall be free from personal belongings, such as clothes, footwear, blankets, tobacco and other forms of contaminants.
5. Meat markets should be cleaned and disinfected regularly.
6. Vermin Abatement Program shall be regularly implemented.
7. Meat stall including floor and surrounding areas should be properly cleaned and disinfected before and after use.
8. The sales area or counter should be built of solid, resistant and impermeable material and should be sufficiently high to be easily sanitized.
9. Cutting and chopping blocks for meat shall be made of even, impervious, non-fibrous, and easily cleaned materials and free of cracks and crevices.

10. Knives, tables and meat hooks should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
11. Disposal/Trash containers should be emptied at the end of sale period, and cleaned properly.
12. Proper drainage system should be installed and maintained.
13. Potable water should be made readily available.

Section 9
REQUIREMENTS FOR PERSONNEL HYGIENE

- 9.1 Persons known or suspected to be suffering from, or to be carriers of illness/es likely to be transmitted through meat and/or person to person, shall not be allowed to handle (eg. sell, cut) meat;
- 9.2 Meat handlers must take all necessary steps to prevent the contamination of meat by maintaining a high degree of personal cleanliness that include, but not limited to the following:
 - a. Taking a bath before going to work;
 - b. Wearing clean apron and hairnet during work;
 - c. Keeping nails trimmed, clean and without nail polish;
 - d. Not wearing of jewelries, accessories and perfumes;
 - e. Using suitable protective clothing which shall be changed everyday or as often as necessary.
- 9.3 Meat Handlers shall be aware and adopt the proper hand washing practices:
 - a. Steps in hand washing:
 - i. Wet hands with potable water
 - ii. Soap, lather, and scrub all parts of the hands, fingers and wrists
 - iii. Rinse and dry with clean cloth or towel
 - b. Wash hands frequently to prevent contamination of the meat, including but not limited to the following:
 - i. before, during and after work;
 - ii. immediately after using the toilet;
 - iii. after coughing and sneezing;
 - iv. after contact with dirty objects and materials;
 - v. before and after eating.
- 9.4 To prevent contamination of meat, the following but not limited to, shall be strictly prohibited, while at work:
 - a. smoking;
 - b. taking alcoholic drinks
 - c. spitting;
 - d. chewing or eating;
 - e. sneezing or coughing over meat and meat products;
 - f. handling of unpacked meat, money, and receipts at the same time; and
 - g. grooming (eg. combing, nail trimming).

Section 10
IMPLEMENTING AGENCY

- 10.1 Pursuant to Section 10 of RA 9296, the Local Government Units (LGUs) being the principal implementing authority on the regulation of meat and meat products within their territorial jurisdiction as mandated under RA 7160 and EO 137, shall implement and monitor the compliance with this Order.
- 10.2 The Department shall coordinate with the Department of Interior and Local Government in order to ensure the effective implementation of this Order by the LGUs.
- 10.3 The National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS) shall assist the LGUs in the implementation of this regulation.
- 10.4 The National Consumer Affairs Council (NCAC) shall support the LGUs and NMIS in the advocacy program relative to the implementation of this Order.

Section 11
PENALTY PROVISION

All persons or corporations, found guilty of directly or indirectly violating any provisions of this Order shall be subject to sanctions prescribed in Republic Act 9296, otherwise known as the "Meat Inspection Code of the Philippines" without prejudice to prosecution for violation of the Consumer Act of the Philippines and other applicable laws.

Section 12
SEPARABILITY CLAUSE

In the event one or more of such provisions are held unconstitutional, the validity of other provisions shall not be affected thereby.

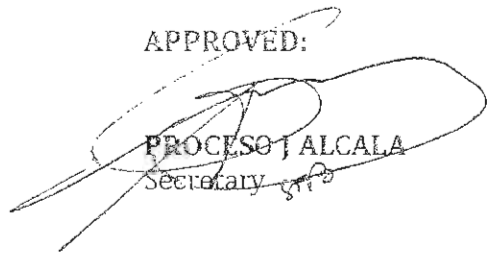
Section 13
REPEALING CLAUSE

Department Administrative Order No. 22, series of 2010, is hereby repealed, and provisions of Department Administrative Orders, Memorandum Circulars, and other issuances that are inconsistent with the provisions of this Order are hereby modified, revoked or repealed accordingly.

Section 14
EFFECTIVITY

This Administrative Order shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in a newspaper of national circulation or in the Official Gazette or its filing with the Office of the National Administrative Register.

APPROVED:




PROCESO J. ALCALA
Secretary

RECOMMENDED BY:



ATTY JANE C BACAYO, DVM, MPA
Executive Director
National Meat Inspection Service

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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