

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE
WASHINGTON, DC

FSIS DIRECTIVE	5420.2	6/18/2003
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Homeland Security

Handling of FSIS Laboratory Samples under Declared Heightened Threat Conditions

I. PURPOSE

A. This directive outlines the steps that FSIS laboratories will initiate in the event that FSIS laboratory samples must be handled under heightened threat conditions. If a threat condition Orange or Red is declared by the Department of Homeland Security, FSIS program personnel will follow the instructions in this directive for the duration of the declared heightened threat condition.

B. This directive also :

- defines how threat condition declarations will be communicated to laboratory personnel,
- provides instructions to laboratory personnel on how to respond to the threat condition declarations,
- outlines the actions laboratory management will take in response to the threat condition declarations, and
- establishes how and to whom the results of samples generated under heightened threat conditions will be reported.

II. [RESERVED]

III. [RESERVED]

DISTRIBUTION: Inspection Offices; T/A Inspectors; Plant Mgt; T/A Plant Mgt; TRA; ABB; TSC; Import Offices **OPI:** OPPD

IV. REFERENCES

FSIS Directive 5420.1 Homeland Security Threat Condition Response - Food Security Monitoring Procedures

FSIS Directive 7355.1 Use of Sample Seals for Laboratory Samples and Other Applications

V. DEFINITIONS

Emergency Response Conditions: The conditions that apply when a threat to the food supply has been identified. Generally, emergency response conditions apply in FSIS laboratories when a threat condition Orange or Red with a specific threat to the agricultural sector or the food supply has been declared by the Department of Homeland Security. Emergency response conditions may also be instituted by the Deputy Administrator of OPHS in response to a threat identified by one of the FSIS laboratories.

Emergency Response Plan: The set of procedures that FSIS laboratory personnel will follow when handling laboratory samples under emergency response conditions. These procedures are detailed in laboratory standard operating procedures. Further instructions will be provided as appropriate by the Assistant Deputy Administrator (ADA) for Laboratory Operations in OPHS.

Food Safety Samples: Samples of meat, poultry, or egg products routinely analyzed by one or more of the FSIS laboratories to determine whether chemical, biological, or physical hazards are present. Sample types include rinses, sponges, and meat, poultry and pasteurized egg products.

Food Security Monitoring Procedures: The procedures outlined in FSIS Directive 5420.1 that may result in additional sampling of meat, poultry and egg products under an officially declared threat condition issued by the Department of Homeland Security.

Food Security Samples: Laboratory samples screened or otherwise analyzed by one or more of the FSIS laboratories for intentional contamination with biological, chemical, radiological, or physical agents.

FSIS Laboratories: The three FSIS field services laboratories located in Athens, Georgia, St. Louis, Missouri and Alameda, California and the Microbial Outbreaks and Special Projects Branch (MOSPB) in Athens, Georgia.

Threat Condition Orange: When declared by the Department of Homeland Security, a threat condition Orange indicates that the risk of a terrorist event is high.

Threat Condition Red: When declared by the Department of Homeland Security, a threat condition Red indicates that a terrorist event has occurred or is deemed imminent.

VI. BACKGROUND

In 2002, the White House Office of Homeland Security established a Homeland Security Advisory System based on color to provide a comprehensive and effective means to disseminate information regarding the risk of terrorist acts to Federal, State, and local authorities and to the American people.

VII. PROCEDURES

A. In the event of a declaration of a threat condition Orange or Red by the Department of Homeland Security, the Office of Food Security and Emergency Preparedness will issue notice by e-mail to all FSIS employees on the heightened threat condition. Laboratory personnel will also be notified of the declarations by the OPHS ADA for Laboratory Operations. Specific threat information (such as information concerning the magnitude of increased sampling, type of sampling to be completed, or country of origin of suspect products, etc.) will be communicated to the FSIS laboratories from the Office of Food Security and Emergency Preparedness through the OPHS ADA for Laboratory Operations.

B. The following are actions to be taken in the event of a declaration of:

1. Threat condition Orange or Red with **no threat to the agricultural sector or food supply**: The laboratories will continue to monitor in-bound samples for evidence of tampering that may be related to food safety. The Laboratory Directors will notify laboratory employees of the heightened threat condition and will ensure that acceptable methods and adequate supplies are readily available to laboratory personnel to implement the Emergency Response Plan if needed. No further action will be taken unless directed by OPHS. However, laboratory personnel should report any unusual observations related to food security to the Laboratory Director/Director of the MOSPB, or designee.

2. Threat condition Orange with a **specific threat to food supply or a particular product or process**: The laboratories will activate the Emergency Response Plan and test up to 50% of all food safety samples for possible food security risks. Laboratories will receive specific instructions from the OPHS ADA for Laboratory Operations on what additional measures should be taken in addition to those in the Emergency Response Plan.

3. Threat condition Red with a **specific threat to food supply or a particular product or process**: The laboratories will activate the Emergency Response Plan and test up to 100% of all food safety samples for possible food security risks. Laboratories will receive specific instructions from the OPHS ADA for Laboratory Operations on what measures should be taken in addition to the Emergency Response Plan.

C. In the event that a food security threat is identified through routine testing of meat, poultry or egg products, the Deputy Administrator for OPHS may activate the Emergency Response Plan. The plan may be activated **before** a declaration of threat level has been issued by the Department of Homeland Security to ensure that adequate safety and security measures are in place to effectively respond to the threat identified.

D. OPHS may request that food security samples be taken from specific establishments. When food security samples are taken, the establishment is to be notified that its product has been sampled, and the establishment is to be given the opportunity to hold the sampled lots pending notification of the results of the analysis.

VIII. LABORATORY SAMPLE SECURITY PROCEDURES

A. Safety Measures to Protect Laboratory Personnel

When a threat condition Orange or Red has been declared with **a specific threat to the agricultural sector or food supply**, all samples received by the FSIS laboratories will be subjected to intensified screening procedures upon delivery. Any shipping containers with evidence of tampering or any with compromised seals shall be opened within the confines of a fume hood or (if available) a laminar flow hood by appropriately trained laboratory personnel using personal protective clothing and devices. In the event of an imminent threat to the safety of laboratory personnel, the Laboratory Director should immediately take safety measures to remove the affected laboratory staff from the threatening situation, and notify building security, appropriate local authorities, and the OPHS ADA for Laboratory Operations.

B. Sample Security/Special Transport of Samples

1. All outbound and inbound sample boxes will be sealed for security and handled according to FSIS Directive 7355.1. The laboratories will continue to supply sample boxes, sampling material, and FSIS Form 7355-1 2A/2B for use during a declaration of threat condition Orange or Red with no specific threat to the agricultural sector or food supply. The laboratories will provide inspection program personnel with a supply of appropriate shipping containers, sampling supplies, and shipping instructions in the event of an Orange or Red declaration with a specific threat to the agricultural sector or food supply.

2. The FSIS laboratories ship overnight priority on a daily basis. In the event that air transportation is disrupted, the laboratories have the accounts and equipment to ship via ground transport. If normal land travel is disrupted, the laboratories have the accounts set up to ship by alternate methods.

3. If disruption of commercial carrier service occurs, the Office of Program Evaluation, Enforcement, and Review's Compliance and Investigation Division (PEER CID), upon request by OPHS, will facilitate the delivery of food security samples to the appropriate laboratories to the maximum extent possible for analysis. PEER CID will coordinate delivery by CID field personnel to the laboratories using assigned GSA cars or privately owned vehicles. If partial commercial carrier service exists, CID field personnel will be requested to deliver the samples to operating common carriers and to pick up samples at a destination for delivery to the laboratory. If no means of delivery is available, samples will be held securely under FSIS control in a frozen condition until delivery is possible. In all instances, food security samples will be handled in an expeditious manner while maintaining the integrity of the sample from collection to delivery.

C. Communication with Field Employees

Inspection program personnel requesting additional sample handling information, or sampling supplies should contact one of the three FSIS laboratories at one of the following Outlook addresses:

Sampling Supplies - Eastern Laboratory
Sampling Supplies - Midwestern Laboratory
Sampling Supplies - Western Laboratory

In the event that Outlook is not available, inspection program personnel should contact the appropriate laboratory through their District Office. Laboratory personnel will respond to the requests by the most expedient mode available.

D. Sample Overflow/Rerouting of Samples to Other Laboratories

1. If the sample capacity of any of the FSIS laboratories is exceeded, overflow samples will be routed to appropriate laboratories.

2. Food security samples received by a FSIS laboratory that does not have the capability or expertise to do the testing required, will be directed to an appropriate laboratory that does have the expertise, equipment and facilities to perform the necessary analyses.

3. The Director of the FSIS laboratory rerouting the overflow or special samples will communicate with the OPHS ADA for Laboratory Operations to obtain specific repackaging and rerouting instructions.

E. Reporting of Results

Results of food security monitoring samples will be entered into, and maintained, in the Laboratory Information Management System. Any positive results will be reported to the OPHS ADA for Laboratory Operations. In the absence of the ADA for Laboratory Operations, positive results will be brought directly to the attention of the Deputy Administrator of OPHS to assist with proper and timely notification of law enforcement and public health authorities.

F. Sample Disposal

Samples that test negative are considered nonhazardous. Sample reserves and products resulting from analysis of negative samples are to be treated according to established laboratory protocol. Samples testing positive for a select agent may require shipping to a select agent registered laboratory. The FSIS laboratory will contact the MOSPB, the

Environmental Health and Safety Division, and OPHS ADA for Laboratory Operations for shipping/disposal instructions of such samples.

All questions related to this directive should be directed through normal supervisory channels.

/s/ Philip S. Derfler □

Deputy Administrator
Office of Policy and Program Development