FSIS PROGRAM PERSONNEL HYGIENE AND BIOSECURITY PRACTICES

I. PURPOSE

This notice provides instructions to FSIS 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 egg products plant, or an official import inspection establishment that these facilities also require of all of their employees.

II. BACKGROUND

A. As a food safety agency, FSIS ensures that regulations pertaining to sanitary operations and proper food handling practices are strictly adhered to so that the potential contamination of meat, poultry or egg products with any food safety hazards of public health concern, does not occur. FSIS personnel are to ensure that their activities in the establishment are not resulting in the creation of an insanitary condition.

B. FSIS personnel are to follow the specific employee hygiene practices (e.g., hair net, beard net, foot coverings, smock, etc.) established in an official meat, poultry or import establishment or an egg products plant, 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. FSIS PERSONNEL RESPONSIBILITIES

A. FSIS personnel are to follow the same hygiene requirements in 9 CFR 416.5, 354.243(k) or 9 CFR 590.560(d) regarding their personal cleanliness, clothing and health in the performance of FSIS duties. This includes how FSIS personnel handle edible products and their sanitary hygienic practices.

B. FSIS personnel are to adhere to the same employee hygiene regulations or practices, or any biosecurity measures put in place in meat and poultry establishments, import inspection establishments and egg products plants that these facilities require of all their own employees.

C. FSIS personnel are to follow an establishment’s procedures designed for employee traffic patterns or product flow between rooms or processes.
D. FSIS personnel are to be mindful of livestock or avian diseases that might be spread from one official establishment or egg products plant to another by their clothing, equipment, footwear or vehicle. If FSIS 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 FSIS 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. FSIS 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 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 operation and entering an RTE operation); and
4. Wash hands upon entering an exposed product production area.

F. FSIS personnel assigned to an egg products plant are to ensure sanitary conditions are maintained when transitioning from the shell egg area (transfer room) to the egg breaking area. Examples of practices to follow to prevent cross contamination include but are not limited to:

1. Change outer clothing after conducting inspection of shell eggs, the egg wash unit and candling equipment prior to entering a breaking room production area;
2. Use the boot dip/wash prior to entering a raw or RTE production area (when provided);
3. Adhere to the plant’s guidelines for outer garments use (e.g., change smock when leaving a breaking operation and entering a dehydrated packaging operation); and
4. Wash hands upon entering any production area.

G. FSIS 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.

H. FSIS 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 OFO personnel that supervise inspection program personnel (IPP) or import inspection personnel who conduct any verification activities in an FSIS inspected establishment or egg products plant.

B. A supervisor plays a key role in ensuring that the activities conducted by FSIS personnel are consistent with FSIS 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 FSIS 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 FSIS 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, clothing, disease control, product handling and equipment handling) of FSIS 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 FSIS personnel employee hygiene practices or biosecurity measures.

V. QUESTIONS

Refer questions regarding this notice through supervisory channels.

[Signature]
Assistant Administrator
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