

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

---

---

# FSIS NOTICE

50-17

9/19/17

---

---

## VERIFICATION OF ADEQUATE CONTROLS AT ESTABLISHMENTS IN AREAS AFFECTED BY RECENT HURRICANES

### I. PURPOSE

This notice provides instructions to inspection program personnel (IPP) assigned to establishments in areas affected by recent hurricanes. Under this notice, IPP are to inform affected establishments that they are required to reassess their HACCP plans and are to verify that establishments take appropriate actions to produce wholesome and unadulterated product.

### II. BACKGROUND

A. Review of FSIS data and published research indicates the potential for an increase in *Salmonella* incidence in regulated food products following flood events. In addition, a review of noncompliance records has shown a spiked increase in sanitation and HACCP noncompliance 1-90 days after heavy rain periods in certain circuits.

B. Under the regulations, every establishment is to reassess the adequacy of the HACCP plan whenever any changes occur that could affect the hazard analysis or alter the HACCP plan. A hurricane or related event is a "change" that could affect the hazard analysis or alter the HACCP plan. If an establishment's hazard analysis documents that a hazard is not reasonably likely to occur based on a prerequisite program, the reassessment of the HACCP plan must also include consideration of whether that prerequisite program needs modification to mitigate any effects of the hurricane in affected areas.

### III. NOTIFICATION TO INDUSTRY

After receipt of this notice, IPP assigned to establishments in areas affected by the hurricanes are to inform establishment management that:

1. Under the regulations (9 CFR 417.4), the establishment is required to reassess its HACCP plans, in light of the hurricane, to determine whether the HACCP plans, including supporting prerequisite programs, are still effective or need to be changed to address new hazards, such as higher levels of pathogens or sanitation issues;
2. IPP will verify whether the establishment's Sanitation SOPs and any cleaning and related monitoring are adequate to address any additional sanitation problems related to the hurricanes;
3. IPP will review the establishment's testing data to identify any adverse trends that may indicate problems with microbial contamination; and

---

**DISTRIBUTION:** Electronic

**NOTICE EXPIRES:** 10/1/18

**OPI:** OPPD

4. In establishments producing ready-to-eat (RTE) products that were affected by service failures including flooding, prolonged electric service failure, and boil water orders (as opposed to closure for non-facility reasons such as road conditions or employee absences) FSIS may schedule risk-based *Listeria monocytogenes* (RLm) sampling to verify restoration of sanitary conditions upon re-starting operations.

#### **IV. IPP RESPONSIBILITIES**

A. IPP are to identify whether the establishment has conducted or intends to conduct a reassessment of its HACCP plans. If the establishment has conducted a reassessment, IPP are to verify that the establishment documented the reasons for any changes to the HACCP plan or reasons for not changing the HACCP plan (9 CFR 417.4(a)(3)(ii)).

B. IPP are to verify that establishments maintain sanitary conditions in accordance with the sanitation performance standards (9 CFR 416.1-416.6) and Sanitation SOP requirements (9 CFR 416.11-416.17) by following the instructions in [FSIS Directive 5000.1](#), *Verifying an Establishment's Food Safety System*.

C. IPP in establishments that produce RTE products are to alert the District Office (DO) through their supervisory chain if those establishments were directly affected by flooding, electrical service failure, boil water orders, or physical damage to production areas of the facility.

D. IPP are to review establishment testing data following the instructions in [FSIS Directive 5000.2](#), *Review of Establishment Data by Inspection Program Personnel*, and determine whether any adverse trends exist indicating any contamination problems. IPP in slaughter establishments in the affected areas are to pay particular attention to any trends in establishment sampling results (e.g., *Salmonella*, generic *E. coli*) that may indicate increasing contamination of carcasses with microbial pathogens. IPP are to be aware that these trends may become apparent up to 3 months or more after the hurricane. If IPP identify such trends, they are to alert the DO through their supervisory chain.

E. When IPP determine that the establishment has not reassessed its HACCP plans or if IPP have any enforcement related questions, they are to contact their immediate supervisor.

#### **V. DISTRICT OFFICE RESPONSIBILITIES**

A. DO personnel are to initiate single-unit RLm sampling in RTE establishments that were directly affected by flooding, prolonged electric service failure, boil water orders, or other hurricane impacts. They are to prioritize establishments using Alternative 3 (9 CFR 430.4(b)(3), use of sanitation procedures only) to prevent *Listeria* contamination and to those establishments producing shelf-stable products.

B. DO personnel are to assign appropriate personnel to verify HACCP reassessment and subsequent actions by establishments where establishment or FSIS sampling results indicate a trend of increasing contamination with microbial pathogens in the period following the hurricane.

## VI. QUESTIONS

Refer questions regarding this notice to the Policy Development Staff through [askFSIS](#). When submitting a question, use the Submit a Question tab, and enter the following information in the fields provided.

Subject Field: Enter **Notice 50-17**  
Question Field: **Enter your question with as much detail as possible.**  
Product Field: Select **General Inspection Policy** from the drop-down menu.  
Category Field: Select from the drop-down menu.  
Policy Arena: Select **Domestic (U.S.) Only** or **International (Import/Export)** from the drop-down menu.

When all fields are complete, press **Continue** and at the next screen press **Finish Submitting Question**

**NOTE:** Refer to [FSIS Directive 5620.1](#), *Using askFSIS*, for additional information on submitting questions.



Assistant Administrator  
Office of Policy and Program Development