



Food Safety and Inspection Service

Food Safety Handling Labels

Ms. Rosalyn Murphy-Jenkins
Director, Labeling and Program Delivery Staff
Office of Policy and Program Development
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Safe Handling Instructions (SHI) Background

- In 1993, a small team was tasked to identify information that would be included in a safe handling instruction statement.
- August 1993 FSIS issued an interim final rule on SHI.
- September 1993 Several Associations filed a complaint against FSIS for not following APA rules of notice and comment.
- November 1993 the interim final rule was withdrawn.
- A focus group study was performed prior to publishing a rule.
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 - A proposal was published November 1993
- March 1994 the final rule was published, effective May 1994.

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SHI – Background (continued)

- ❑ At that time there were many minimum internal temperature requirements in the regulations and in consumer publications. For example, in the regulations cured poultry had to be cooked to 155°F, uncured poultry to 160°F (9 CFR 381.150) and Beef to 145°F (9 CFR 318.17). FSIS regulations now provide lethality measures.
- ❑ In FSIS consumer publications and on labeling, consumers were given a variety of endpoint temperatures.
- ❑ The conclusion was that the only simple statement for SHI would be “cook thoroughly.”
- ❑ Consumer endpoint cooking temperature recommendations at the time are shown in the next slide in a consumer brochure developed as outreach material upon implementation of SHI, March 1994.

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Brochure for Consumer Endpoint Temperatures in 1993

HANDLING LABEL

Don't Spread Bacteria In the Kitchen!

Keep raw meat, poultry and their juices away from other food.

- For example, don't chop salad vegetables on a cutting board where you've just trimmed raw meat or poultry.
- At the grill, take a clean platter out to serve cooked meat, not the "bloody" platter you took them out to the grill on.

ALWAYS wash your cutting board, utensils, counter, sink and hands with hot, soapy water after contact with raw meat or poultry.

Product	Fahrenheit
Fresh Beef, Veal, Lamb	
Ground products like hamburger (Prepared as patties, meat loaf, meatballs, etc.)	160
Roasts, steaks and chops	
Medium Rare	145
Medium	160
Well done	170
Fresh Pork	
All cuts including ground product	160
Well done	170
Poultry	
Ground chicken, turkey	165
Whole chicken, turkey	170
Medium, unstuffed	180
Well done	180
Whole bird with stuffing (Stuffing must reach 165°)	170
Poultry breasts, roasts	170
Thighs, wings	Cook until juices run clear
Ham	
Fresh (raw)	160
Fully cooked, to reheat	140

140°

Handling Leftovers

Bacteria and other pathogens are always ready to endanger your food. Perishable food must be kept **HOT** (140° F and above) or **COLD** (40° F or lower) to keep them from taking over.

Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours after cooking or serving. Divide leftovers into small refrigerator dishes for safe, quick cooling. Discard anything left out too long.

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SHI – Final Rule Comments

- In comments to the proposal, six commenters stated that more explicit cooking instructions were needed.
- Some commenters recommended information on visual signs of doneness or final internal temperatures be required or at least permitted on SHI.
- One consumer group recommended visual keys over internal temperatures be included on SHI, as consumers may misunderstand internal temperatures to be cooking temperatures.

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SHI – Final Rule Comments

The FSIS response to these comments:

- FSIS does not believe it would be appropriate to add either an endpoint temperature or more comprehensive cooking directions because cooking temperatures and other visual indications of doneness vary by product; and

- SHI is not intended to replace comprehensive cooking statements that accompany many products.

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SHI – Final Rule

- ❑ FSIS concluded it was important to develop one SHI for all red meat and poultry products as opposed to different ones for different products.

- ❑ Given size limitations and the many varying endpoint temperatures depending on the product, “Cook Thoroughly” was the only simple, single statement that was appropriate.

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Current SHI

Label as described in Code of Federal Regulations, title 9, parts 317 and 381.



Actual size



Enlarged

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Current Recommended Cooking Temperatures for Consumers

- ❑ FSIS now recommends only 3 internal temperatures for consumers – 145°F and hold for 3 minutes for all whole muscle red meat, 160°F for ground red meat and 165°F for all poultry.

- ❑ With only 3 temperature recommendations, this information could be incorporated into the SHI requirements through rulemaking.

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SHI Changes Suggested

- ❑ Over the years FSIS has been approached by various organizations and consumer groups regarding the effectiveness of the current SHI.

- ❑ These organizations have recommended updates to the SHI to improve its effectiveness to consumers.

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Partnership for Food Safety Education

- ❑ In 2010 the Grocery Manufacturers Association, National Meat Association, and National Turkey Federation approached FSIS with a request for a waiver of the mandatory SHI label in order to conduct pilot testing that would utilize the Partnership for Food Safety Education's consumer tested Be Food Safe icon.

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Partnership for Food Safety Education

- ❑ The waiver was withdrawn with the intent to resubmit once new icons were developed and branded under USDA's new Food Safe Families campaign. The Food Safe Families campaign is a nationwide consumer food safety media campaign launched in 2011 as a collaborative effort the Ad Council, the Partnership for Food Safety Education, FDA, and CDC.

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Be Food Safe Icon for Use in Waiver

SAFE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS

THIS PRODUCT WAS PREPARED FROM INSPECTED AND PASSED MEAT AND/OR POULTRY, SOME FOOD PRODUCTS MAY CONTAIN BACTERIA THAT COULD CAUSE ILLNESS IF THE PRODUCT IS MISHANDLED OR COOKED IMPROPERLY. FOR YOUR PROTECTION FOLLOW THESE SAFE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS.



WASH WORKING SURFACES (INCLUDING CUTTING BOARDS, UTENSILS, AND HANDS AFTER TOUCHING RAW MEAT OR POULTRY.



KEEP RAW MEAT AND POULTRY SEPARATE FROM OTHER FOODS.



COOK THOROUGHLY. KEEP HOT FOODS HOT.



KEEP REFRIGERATED OR FROZEN. THAW IN REFRIGERATOR OR MICROWAVE. REFRIGERATE LEFTOVERS IMMEDIATELY OR DISCARD.

www.befoodsafe.org

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Proposal on Mechanically Tenderized Beef

On August 9, 2013 FSIS proposed to require validated cooking instructions on raw or partially cooked mechanically tenderized beef products.

- FSIS proposed to require that the validated cooking instructions include, at a minimum: (1) the method of cooking; (2) a minimum internal temperature validated to ensure that potential pathogens are destroyed throughout the product; (3) whether the product needs to be held for a specified time at that temperature or higher before consumption; and (4) instruction that the internal temperature should be measured by the use of a thermometer.

- FSIS is currently evaluating the comments on this proposal.

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Salmonella Action Plan

Focus the Agency's Education and Outreach Tools and Resources on Salmonella

- ❑ New approaches or routes for providing Salmonella-related food safety messages to the public could help decrease Salmonella illnesses. Therefore, FSIS will:
 - ✓ provide more detailed messages related to Salmonella, such as explaining why we recommend or require certain practices, and will clearly communicate why Salmonella is more challenging than some other pathogens (medium term);
 - ✓ provide easy to find information about Salmonella trends in easy to read formats (medium term); and
 - ✓ work with the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to provide audience-appropriate, multilingual, Salmonella-specific food safety information to consumers through FNS nutrition programs (long term).

Labeling is a means to reach consumers.

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Stakeholder Letter

- To gain feedback, on November 20, 2013, a letter was sent to consumer groups and other stakeholders posing questions about the current labels and how to revise.

- Nine comments were received, two from consumer groups, two from industry groups and five from universities.

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Comments Summary

- Comments stated that SHI needed to continue to be mandatory.
- Comments supported the need for consumer testing of any changes to SHI messages.
- Most suggested flexibility to add voluntary validated cooking instructions. But no consensus on what should be included in validated cooking instructions.
- Some wanted a stronger message about bacteria in food products.

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Additional Comments

- Some suggested more details while others wanted the SHI streamlined with less detail and larger fonts. (SHI was developed as a reminder to consumers of the importance of handling foods safely.)

- Some recommended web-links or QR codes be added to the SHI so consumers could easily obtain more information.

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Questions

- Should FSIS pursue changes to SHI? If so, what changes beyond those suggested by comments would you suggest?
- Should the SHI include validated cooking instructions?
- If FSIS required validated cooking instructions on specific products, is the general statement still necessary?
- Should SHI include instructions to use a thermometer to measure endpoint temperature?

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Questions

- How much flexibility should be built into the SHI if FSIS proposes changes?
- Should there be a variety of statements for different products?
- Should FSIS revisit the waiver submitted by industry to gather data on the proposed graphic included in the waiver?
- Should FSIS make changes to SHI to encourage use of food safety interventions?
- Should FSIS pursue measures beyond SHI for providing information to consumers on handling product safely? What off-label mechanisms would you suggest?