

Minimum Standards for Retail Establishments Processing Wild Game

This document covers basic requirements and standards for retail establishments processing hunter-harvested wild game. These standards are not all-inclusive of the current retail or custom exempt processing requirements; however, they provide the foundation for inspections performed in retail establishments that process wild game for their customers. These standards are only intended to address wild game activities and do not apply to retail, Minnesota equal to processing, or other activities where product is processed for sale.

If you are licensed and inspected by the MDA Retail Inspection Program or a delegated agency and meet the MN Food Code requirements, then you already meet the minimum standards for wild game processing described in this document.

Equipment, Facilities, and Employee Hygiene

9 CFR 416.3-416.5, M.S. 31A.15

Employees processing wild game products must adhere to hygienic practices to prevent the contamination of products. This includes wearing clean and proper attire during processing and other operations. Equipment and facilities used for wild game processing must be clean and well maintained. Specific considerations include the following:

- Thorough cleaning and sanitizing of all facilities and equipment must take place after any wild game processing and before the equipment is used for preparing any products for sale, i.e., before it is used for inspected (USDA or MN equal to) or retail products.
- Equipment must be clean and sanitized prior to the start of daily meat production.
- If equipment is used for retail or inspected products in the beginning of the day and then used for wild game products at the end of the day, the equipment does not need to be cleaned prior to wild game processing.

Separating Wild Game Products and Processing Activities from Retail or Inspected Products

9 CFR 303.1(a)(2)(ii) & (iv), M.S. 31A.15

Wild game processing must be adequately separated from all other products for sale. This includes, at a minimum, the following:

- Keeping all wild game products separate from any retail and/or inspected product at all times, including processing and storage.
- Clearly identifying all wild game products during all stages of processing, cooling, packaging, freezing, storage, and shipment. Each batch of wild game product ground, chopped, mixed, or cut up must be identified with a tag or other approved device placed directly on the product or the container, table, shelf, or equipment holding the product.

Please note: Commingling of fat and meat trimmings from wild game for sausage production is allowed when disclosed to and accepted by the owners involved. The proportionate distribution of product from the commingled trimmings must also be acceptable to the owners of the wild game, as indicated on records. All commingled processed product must be clearly marked “Not for Sale.”

Identification and Recordkeeping for Wild Game Carcasses, Parts, and Products

9 CFR 303.1(a)(2)(ii) & (iii), 303.1(b)(3), 316.16, and 320; M.S. 31A.15, 97A.505.4

Wild game products must be accurately and legibly labeled and identified throughout the process. This includes, at a minimum, the following:

- Recording the name, address, and license number of the hunter upon receipt of the carcass or wild game parts
- Legibly marking wild game products as “Not for Sale,” which may be placed directly on the product packaging, on a tag or card securely attached to the meat, on the immediate container, or on paper wrapping the meat

Cooking or Smoking of Wild Game Products

9 CFR 303.1(b)(1), M.S. 34A.02 subd.8

Wild game processors that cook product must heat it to a time and temperature combination sufficient to kill pathogens and ensure products are safe and wholesome. The specific requirements for these activities include:

- Recording cooking temperatures and times for every batch of product produced on a handwritten log, chart recorder, data logger, or by other means
- Reprocessing or discarding products that do not meet cooking or smoking temperatures necessary to kill pathogens
- Using a time and temperature combination to ensure pathogen destruction. Most wild game facilities will use a time and temperature combination found in USDA FSIS Appendix A or the MN Food Code. Other regulatory or peer-reviewed scientific documents are also options

For more information, contact the MDA Dairy and Meat Inspection Division at 651-201-6300 or MDA.meatpoultryegg@state.mn.us, or visit www.mda.state.mn.us/food-feed/wild-game-processing.