

Guidance for Retail Vendors Processing Meat & Poultry Products

Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets
Meat Inspection Service

References:

1. Vermont Meat and Poultry Inspection Laws: [Title 6 Chapter 204 of Vermont Statutes](#)
2. Title 9 of the Federal Code of Regulation: [Subchapter III](#)
3. Code of Vermont Rules [20-023-001 Part 300](#)

Licensing Requirements for Retail Vendors

[Title 6 Chapter 204 § 3306](#) provides that all retail vendors engaged in commerce in the business of buying, selling, preparing, packaging, storing, transporting, or otherwise handling meat or poultry products must hold a valid license issued by the Agency. The [application for a retail license](#) can be found on the Agency's License and Registration page on its website.

Retail Processing License

The retail processing license allows a person or business to prepare meat and poultry products for sales direct to consumers. There are two separate retail processing categories that can be applied for based on the size of the meat or poultry product processing and display areas.

- A retail small processor has less than 300 square feet of processing area and a meat display space of less than 20 linear feet.
- A large processor has 300 or greater feet of processing space and 20 or more feet of linear meat display space.

The following are a few of the important regulatory requirements for retail processing licensure. The full listing of the requirements are found in the [retail inspection regulations](#).

- The area that meat and poultry is prepared, processed, offered for sale, and stored in must be separate and have a separate entrance from living quarters as per [CVR 20-023-001](#) Part 305.2(D). **Home kitchens will not be approved for retail processing.**

- Only USDA or State of Vermont inspected and passed meat and poultry may be used as source material for retail prepared meat and poultry.
- Meat and poultry products held in a walk-in cooler or freezer must be stored at least 4 inches off the floor.
- The processing area where meat and poultry products are handled and prepared must:
 - be separate from the retail space where product will be displayed and offered for sale to the consumers,
 - not be located beneath a sewage line,
 - have washable walls and floors,
 - have a dedicated hand washing sink with hot and cold running water, soap, and disposable paper towels, and
 - have washing facilities with ample amounts of hot and cold running water to clean and sanitize equipment and utensils. (Typically, this is a 3-bay sink)
- Equipment and utensils used in the preparation of meat and poultry must be composed of washable material that are impervious to moisture.
- If the water supply is from a private well, the water must be tested for potability. Recommended testing frequency is at least twice per year or every 6 months.
- Refrigerator/cooler temperatures must be maintained at 40°F or less. Freezer temperatures must be maintained at 15°F or less. Product temperature must be maintained during transportation and at farmers markets.
- Product prepared by the retail store must be properly labeled. Please see attachment 1 Labeling Guidance.
 - If affixing labels with a “sell-by date”, a dating policy must be posted where it can be easily read by the consumer. Letter size for the written policy must be at least 3/8 of an inch in size. A sperate policy poster must be displayed for every 30 feet of meat display space.
- **Retail prepared meat and poultry products cannot be distributed into commerce for re-sale.** Sale of meat and poultry products prepared by the retail store can only be sold to:
 - Household consumers
 - Hotels, Restaurants, and institutions (HRI)(total yearly sales to HRI consumers cannot exceed 25% of the retail firm’s total sale)
 - **NOTE: Retail exempt store prepared meat and poultry that is cooked, smoked, cured, rendered, or refined cannot be sold to HRIs.**
- Retail vendors are required to maintain records, such as bills of sale or cash register receipts, and raw ground beef production records a prescribed in [9 CFR 320.1](#). Please see attachment #2 for more information about ground beef production record keeping requirments.

- If the retail area is accessible to consumers and raw whole major muscle cuts of meat or poultry are being sold, nutritional information must be available for consumers. If individual packages of product do not have nutritional information present on their labeling, the following informational posters can be used:

Beef and Veal

Pork and Lamb

Chicken and Turkey

- Vermont rules limit the activities traditionally conducted by retail vendors to:
 - Cutting up, slicing, and trimming carcasses, halves, quarters, or wholesale cuts into retail cuts such as steaks, chops, and roasts, and freezing such cuts;
 - Grinding and freezing products made from meat;
 - Cooking and re-smoking,
 - Breaking bulk shipments of products;
 - Wrapping or rewrapping products

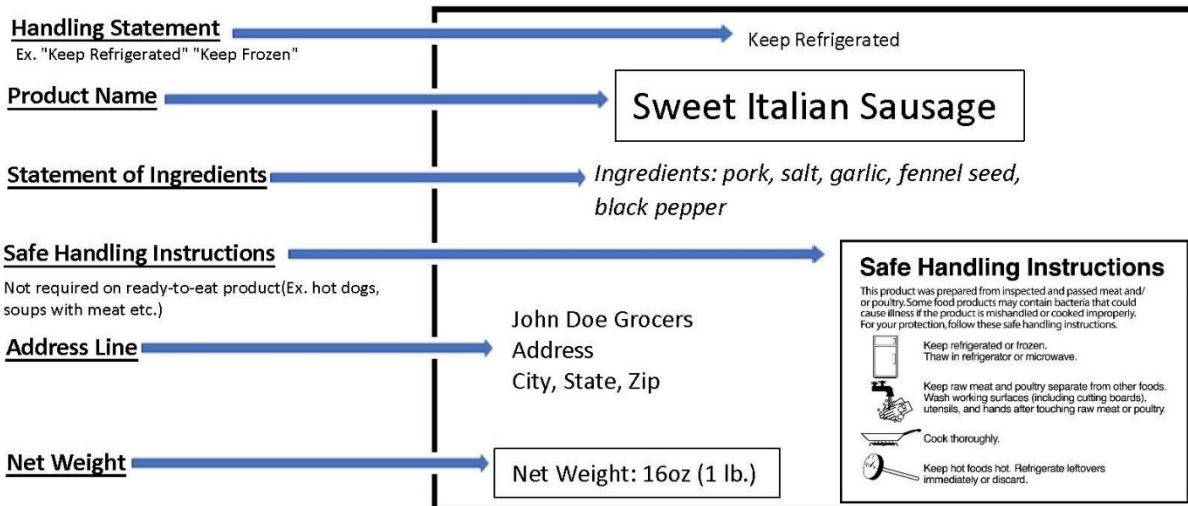
**NOTE: Cured, smoked, and dried meat and poultry and rendered or refined livestock fats cannot be produced under the retail exemption without applying for a [variance](#) to the current adopted rules . An application for variance can be found here: [Special Process Variance Application](#)
Slaughtering and retort canning of meat products is not allowed under the retail exemption.**

Attachment #1

Guidance For Labeling Meat and Poultry Products Prepared Under the Retail Exemption.

The misbranding provisions of the Federal Meat Inspections Act and the [Vermont Meat and Poultry Inspection Laws](#) apply to meat and poultry food products that are prepared under the retail exemption from inspection requirements. Labeling of retail exempt meat and poultry food products is enforced by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets MIS Investigators and Inspectors. Absent the following label features, per 9 CFR 301.2 *Misbranded*, a retail meat or poultry food product would be misbranded, **if in a package or container**, unless it bears a label showing:

- a) Address Line: the name and place of business of the manufacturer, packer, or distributor; 9 CFR 317.2(g), 381.122.
- b) Net Weight: an accurate statement of the quantity of the contents in terms of weight, measure, or numerical count; 9 CFR 317.2(h), 381.122.
- c) Safe Handling Statement: any word, statement, or other information (such as Safe Handling Instructions for meat products **that are not Ready-To-Eat**) required by or under authority of the Act; 9 CFR 317.2(l), 381.125(b).
- d) Product Name: the common or usual name of the food, if any there be; 9 CFR 317.2(c)(1), 381.117.
- e) Statement of Ingredients: the common or usual name of each ingredient if the product is fabricated from two or more ingredients; 9 CFR 317.2(f), 381.118.
- f) Handling Statement: a handling statement such as "Keep Refrigerated" or "Keep Frozen" if product requires special handling to maintain its wholesomeness; 9 CFR 317.2(k), 381.125(a).
- g) nutrition labeling as specified in 9 CFR 317 & 9 CFR 381.400, Subpart B Nutrition Labeling, unless an exemption in 9 CFR 317.400 or 9 CFR 381.500 applies.

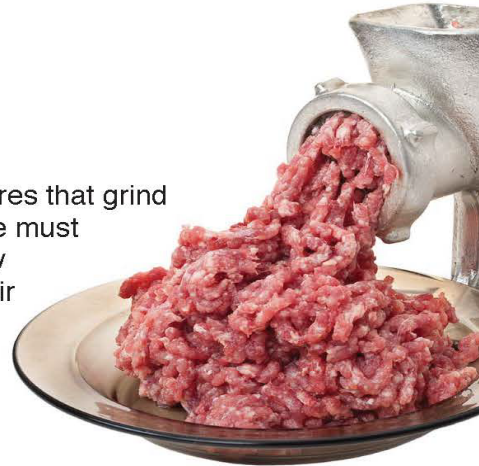


Do you have your records?



WHO?

All official establishments and retail stores that grind raw beef products for sale in commerce must keep records that will fully and correctly disclose all transactions involved in their businesses that are subject to the Federal Meat Inspection Act.



WHAT?

Records must be kept for any raw grind beef product, including veal.

Examples: raw meatballs, raw meatloaf, raw ground beef, raw ground veal

1. The establishment numbers of the establishments supplying the material.
2. All supplier lot numbers and production dates.
3. The names of the supplied materials, including beef components and any materials carried over from one production lot to the next.
4. The date and time each lot of raw ground beef is produced.
5. The date and time when grinding equipment and other related food-contact surfaces are cleaned and sanitized.

WHERE?

For beef grinding logs, the records must be kept at the location where the beef is ground. For example, this can be in the office or in the meat department but the grinding logs must be in the retail store.

HOW LONG?

Beef grinding records are required to be kept one year after the date of the recorded grinding activity.