

OPI: S&T/FESD

COMMON AREAS IN FEDERALLY INSPECTED ESTABLISHMENTS

I. PURPOSE

This directive provides guidelines to inspectors to ensure that contact with unsanitary common areas does not cause product to become adulterated. Common areas are areas in meat and poultry establishments which are used in common by employees of two or more federally inspected establishments.

II. [RESERVED]

III. [RESERVED]

IV. REFERENCES

MPI Regulations, Sections 305.1, 308.3(a), and 318.2(d)
FSIS Directive 5400.1, Rev. 2, dated 1/29/92
FSIS Directive 8820.1, Rev. 1, dated 3/1/91
FSIS Directive 8830.1, dated 3/1/91
FSIS Directive 11,150.1, dated 10/22/92

V. FORM

The following form will be referenced in this directive:

FSIS Form 5200-5, Submission and Approval of Plans and Specifications

VI. POLICY/BACKGROUND

A. FSIS is responsible for inspecting meat and poultry establishment premises, facilities and equipment to ensure that they are clean and sanitary and will not adulterate meat or poultry products. Section 8 of the Federal Meat Inspection Act and section 7 of the Poultry Products Inspection Act provide that each official establishment slaughtering livestock or poultry, or preparing meat or meat food products, or processing poultry products for commerce or otherwise subject to inspection under these Acts, shall operate in accordance with sanitary practices.

B. FSIS is concerned about meat and poultry products that may become contaminated from foreign material and/or pathogenic bacteria. Section 305.1 of the MPI Regulations permits persons operating as separate entities in the same building to operate under his or her own grant of inspection. Under such circumstances, all separate entities in the same structure operating under a grant of inspection are required to comply with the Federal Meat Inspection Act and regulations in both their own

establishments and in common areas, including hallways, stairways and elevators. FSIS currently permits limited common areas in federally inspected meat and poultry establishments.

C. Because the use of common areas by different establishment employees provides greater potential for unsanitary conditions due to "shared" responsibility for cleanliness, such areas are a source of potential contamination of meat and poultry products and use of common areas should be carefully controlled. FSIS limits the use of common areas to areas used primarily for the movement of packaged product and people, areas used primarily to house utilities, and the USDA office. These areas should be arranged so that employees of one establishment do not need to pass through the non-common facilities of another establishment, such as a processing room, to reach a common area or part of their own facilities.

D. The MPI Regulations require that each applicant for inspection submit detailed drawings and specifications of the facility to the FSIS Administrator before inspection can be granted. Drawings and specifications must also be submitted for existing facilities in which remodeling, modification or expansion is planned. FSIS's Facilities, Equipment and Sanitation Division (FESD) reviews and evaluates the drawings and specifications of proposed new facilities or the modification or replacement of existing facilities. FESD will not approve an arrangement of common areas which requires the employees of one establishment to pass through the non-common facilities of another establishment to reach a common area or part of their own facilities.

VII. Inspection Procedures

A. The inspector shall inform all entities in the same structure operating under separate grants of inspection that each entity is responsible for keeping common areas in the structure clean and sanitary.

B. The inspector should ensure that common areas are limited to:

1. areas primarily used for movement of packaged product and people, such as hallways, stairways, elevators, shipping and receiving docks or areas, and welfare facilities,
2. areas used primarily to house utilities, such as boiler rooms, compressor rooms, refrigerator rooms, and electrical control rooms, and
3. the USDA office.

C. If the inspector finds that the arrangement of the facilities requires employees of one establishment to pass through another establishment's non-common area, such as a processing room, to reach a common area or part of their own facilities, the inspector shall:

1. inform management of all facilities sharing the common areas of the situation, and

2. inform management of all facilities that share the common areas that each must simultaneously submit to FESD a completed FSIS Form 5200-5 and an updated set of drawings and specifications showing the arrangement of the common areas.

VIII. Inspector Responsibilities

A. In slaughter establishments, the inspector shall tag a common area with a "U.S. Rejected" tag if the inspector finds a common area which is unsanitary. The inspector shall remove the "U.S. Rejected" tag after the common area is cleaned.

B. In slaughter establishments, if product contamination resulting from exposure to common areas is suspected or found, the inspector shall:

1. tag the common area with a "U.S. Rejected" tag,
2. tag and retain the carcasses or parts,
3. reinspect the carcasses or parts after the establishment has taken appropriate action acceptable to the inspector, and
4. remove the "U.S. Rejected" tag from the common area after the establishment has taken appropriate action acceptable to the inspector.

C. In processing establishments, if product contamination resulting from exposure to common areas is suspected or found, and/or unsanitary conditions are found, the inspector shall take corrective action as specified in FSIS Directive 8820.1, Rev. 1, and FSIS Directive 8830.1.

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