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# FSIS Constituent Update

Protecting Public Health Through Food Safety and Food Defense

## Send Food Safely During Holidays

During the holiday season, many Americans enjoy cooking foods that are family favorites and mailing these items to family and friends. Others choose to order food from catalogs, over the Internet or by phone.

Perishable foods, such as meat, poultry, fish and soft cheeses must be kept at or below 40 °F to remain safe. These foods can only be safely held at room temperature for two hours, so tolerating a week or more in the mail without a cold source is unsafe. If these foods aren't kept cold during delivery, they may become unsafe and cause foodborne illness when eaten.

The following food safety tips can help the giver and the receiver to enjoy the holidays:

- Make sure the company sends perishable items, like meat or poultry, cold or frozen and packed with a cold source and in foam or heavy corrugated cardboard.
- Food should be delivered as quickly as possible - ideally overnight. Make sure perishable

items and the outer shipping package are clearly labeled "Keep Refrigerated" to alert the recipient.

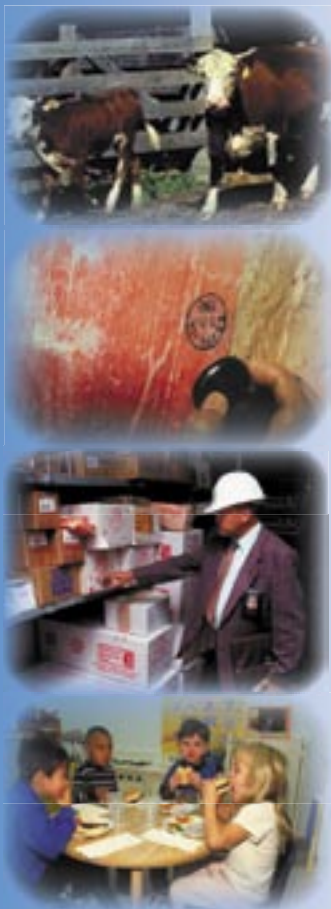
- Tell the recipient if the company has promised a delivery date, or alert the recipient that "the gift is in the mail" so someone is ready to receive it. Don't have perishable items delivered to an office unless you know it will arrive on a work day and there is refrigerator space available for keeping it cold.

- When receiving a food item marked "Keep Refrigerated," open it immediately and check its temperature. The food should arrive frozen or partially frozen with ice crystals still visible. If perishable food arrives warm - above 40 °F as measured with a food thermometer - notify the company.

Here are some tips for sending non-refrigerated food gifts through the mail:

- Dried food items including beef or poultry products such as jerky, dried fruits, canned nuts,

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## Export Requirement Updates



The Library of Export Requirements has been updated to reflect changes in export requirements for the following:

### Colombia

### Taiwan

### Thailand

Complete information can be found at [www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations\\_&Policies/Export\\_Information/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&Policies/Export_Information/index.asp).

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## Food Safety Education Fact Sheets

• *Holiday or Party Buffets*  
[www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/Focus\\_On\\_Holiday\\_or\\_Party\\_Buffets/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Focus_On_Holiday_or_Party_Buffets/index.asp)

• *Cooking for Groups*  
[www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/Cooking\\_For\\_Groups\\_Index/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Cooking_For_Groups_Index/index.asp)

• *Food Safety for Those Glorious Holiday Goodies*  
[www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/pubs/holiday\\_goodies1.pdf](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/pubs/holiday_goodies1.pdf)

## Mailing Tips ...

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dehydrated soups or drink mixes and commercially packaged trail mix are safe to mail. Bacteria can't grow in foods preserved by removing moisture.

- Canned meat and fish specialties, dips and cracker spreads also make nice treats. Recipients should be cautioned not to use any cans that appear to be damaged or swollen.

- Condiments such as hot sauce and Cajun seasonings in packets or unbreakable jars are great gifts for aspiring chefs and spice lovers. Foods should not be mailed in glass containers because they can break during delivery.

- Dense and dry baked goods such as fruit cakes and biscotti are good choices for mailing because they will not mold. Other suitable baked goods include

commercially packaged cakes, cookies and crackers shipped in airtight tins.

- When mailing baked goods like sugar cookies or homemade candies, wrap each piece individually and pack items in Styrofoam packing peanuts or foam to help cushion food during the trip. Place the food gifts in a sturdy box and seal it securely with packing tape.

- Hard candies and homemade sweets such as pralines and toffee are safe to mail because their high sugar content prevents bacterial growth.

For more information, call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854), or visit the FSIS Web site at [www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/Mail\\_Order\\_Food\\_Safety/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Mail_Order_Food_Safety/index.asp).

## FSIS Issues Notices and Directives

FSIS issues notices and directives to enhance the agency's efforts in protecting public health.

The following notices and directives were recently issued:

- Notice 82-07 - *Cancellation of Obsolete Issuances*. This notice officially cancels all parts of the *Meat and Poultry Inspection (MPI) Manual*, all MPI bulletins, all MPI directives, all regional

notices and any letters containing instructions to field personnel dated prior to 2002.

- Notice 83-07 - *Planned Development of FSIS Directives and Notices for Egg Products Inspection*. This notice provides FSIS inspection program personnel with information on the agency's intention to develop and issue FSIS notices, directives and guidance material on the

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## Keeping Food Safe During An Emergency

FSIS issued a consumer alert on Dec. 10 to provide recommendations to the regions affected by severe winter weather in the Midwestern U.S.

USDA is hopeful that this information will help minimize the potential for foodborne illnesses due to food spoilage from power outages and other problems that are often associated with severe weather events.

“Power outages can occur at any time of the year and it often takes from a few hours to several days for electricity to be restored to residential areas,” said USDA Under Secretary for Food Safety Dr. Richard Raymond. “Foods stored in freezers and refrigerators can become unsafe in just a few hours if bacteria begin to grow and if these foods are consumed, people can become very sick.”

To learn how to keep food safe during an emergency, visit FSIS’ Web site at [www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/Emergency\\_Preparedness\\_Fact\\_Sheets/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Emergency_Preparedness_Fact_Sheets/index.asp).

## Notices and Directives ...

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policies and instructions found in the *Egg Products Inspector’s Handbook* and other agency-issued guidance documents.

- Directive 6100.3 - *Ante-Mortem and Post-Mortem Poultry Inspection*. This directive instructs public health veterinarians (PHVs) and off-line and on-line inspection program personnel on how to perform ante-mortem and post-mortem inspection of poultry and of the conditions under which the birds are processed. This directive instructs PHVs on how to make dispositions for some poultry diseases post-mortem and how to document the findings.

- Directive 6170.1 - *Ratite Ante-Mortem and Post-Mortem*

*Inspection*. This directive instructs inspection program personnel on how to perform ante-mortem and post-mortem inspection of ratites. In addition, it provides direction on how to make dispositions for some ratite diseases post-mortem and how to document the findings. This directive provides information about the compliance guidelines for the proposed performance standards for the production of processed meat from ratites.

Notices and directives are available on FSIS’ Web site at [www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations\\_&\\_Policies/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/index.asp).