

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE  
WASHINGTON, DC

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# FSIS DIRECTIVE

5420.7,  
Revision 1

1/26/2005

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## HOMELAND SECURITY THREAT CONDITION RESPONSE - HUMAN HEALTH MONITORING AND SURVEILLANCE

### I. PURPOSE

A. This directive details the emergency procedures that the Food Safety and Inspection Service, Human Health Sciences Division (FSIS HHSD) personnel will follow in the event that a Threat Condition Elevated (Yellow), High (Orange), or Severe (Red) is declared by the Department of Homeland Security. HHSD personnel should only begin implementing these procedures outlined in this directive when instructed to do so by the Assistant Administrator (AA) of the Office of Public Health and Science (OPHS) or designee.

B. This Directive also:

- provides specific information on how the Meat and Poultry Hotline (the Hotline), the Consumer Complaint Monitoring System (CCMS), and Public Health and Epidemiology Liaisons (PHELs) will provide emergency coverage during threat conditions; and
- provides specific information on how information concerning human health issues will be disseminated to the public.

### II. CANCELLATION

FSIS Directive 5420.7, dated 6/25/04

### III. REASON FOR REISSUANCE

This directive is reissued in its entirety to provide clarification of responsibilities in the event of a Threat Condition Elevated (Yellow).

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**DISTRIBUTION:** Inspection Offices; T/A Inspectors;  
Plant Mgt; T/A Plant Mgt; TRA; ABB; PRD; Import Offices

OPI: OPPED

#### **IV. REFERENCES**

Directive 5420.1, Rev. 1, Homeland Security Threat Condition Response – Food Security Verification Procedures

#### **V. BACKGROUND**

In 2002, the White House Office of Homeland Security established a Homeland Security Advisory System based on color to provide a comprehensive and effective means to disseminate information regarding the risk of terrorist acts to Federal, State, and local authorities and to the American people. A declaration of a Threat Condition Yellow by the Department of Homeland Security indicates that there is an elevated risk of terrorist attacks. A declaration of a Threat Condition Orange by the Department of Homeland Security indicates that there is a high risk of terrorist attacks. A declaration of a Threat Condition Red reflects a severe risk of terrorist attacks. While the threat may or may not involve the nation's food and agriculture sector specifically, it is imperative that any such declarations be communicated effectively and rapidly to all program areas within FSIS so that appropriate actions can be taken in response to the threats and to ensure the security of meat, poultry, and egg products.

#### **VI. NOTIFICATION**

A. During normal operating conditions, HHSD, through the PHELS and CCMS staff, is responsible for monitoring and reporting foodborne illness information. The CCMS staff maintains a national database on consumer complaint information it receives from the Hotline and the FSIS District Offices – Enforcement and Investigation Analysis Officers (EIAO). The PHELS and FSIS' liaison to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) receive illness information on a continuous basis from State Health and Agriculture officials and from CDC, respectively.

B. In the event of a declaration of any Threat Condition:

- Elevated (Yellow), when there is a significant risk of terrorist attacks
- High (Orange), when there is a high risk of terrorist attacks, or
- Severe (Red) which reflects a severe risk of terrorist attacks,

by the Department of Homeland Security, the Office of Food Security and Emergency Preparedness (OFSEP) will inform the FSIS Administrator and senior executive leadership of all FSIS program areas. The Office of the Administrator will issue an e-mail letter to all employees notifying them of the heightened threat condition.

## **VII. SPECIFIC THREAT CONDITION ACTIVITIES**

The following are the actions to be taken by HHSD in the event of a declaration of:

### **A. Threat Condition Elevated (Yellow), High (Orange) or Severe (Red) with no threat to the food and agriculture sector.**

HHSD will continue normal operations and take no further action unless instructed to do so by the Assistant Administrator or designee, as outlined in VI. Notification.

### **B. Threat Condition High (Orange) with a specific threat to the food and agriculture sector.**

The CCMS staff and the Hotline Staff, upon notification by the appropriate AA or designee, will:

1. Operate under special hours of operation. In addition, the CCMS staff will increase its monitoring of the CCMS to reflect expanded hours of coverage by district-based personnel, as determined by the Office of Field Operations (OFO).

2. The FSIS website [www.fsis.usda.gov](http://www.fsis.usda.gov) will be updated with food security information, as it becomes available for public dissemination.

3. CCMS staff will provide to OPHS and OFSEP daily summary statistical reports (containing information about numbers, categories, and geographic locations of complaints and plants), prepared by the Automated Information Systems Division (AISD).

4. PHELS will request and pursue daily contact with designated representatives from each State and territorial public health jurisdiction. Contact with these representatives and reporting of activities may be in person or by phone, fax or e-mail.

5. The FSIS liaison to CDC will provide OPHS and OFSEP daily updates on foodborne disease activity being monitored at CDC that might be associated with FSIS regulated products.

6. HHSD will assist the Office of Public Affairs, Education and Outreach in developing appropriate notices for distribution to public health officials via the CDC's Health Alert Network (HAN).

### **C. Threat Condition Severe (Red) with a specific threat to the food and agriculture sector.**

1. The CCMS staff will increase monitoring and surveillance of all reported cases of human illnesses and consumer complaints. A Red Alert triage team will augment the CCMS staff during expanded hours of operation.

2. The CCMS staff and the Hotline Staff will operate under special hours. In addition, the CCMS staff will increase its monitoring of the CCMS to reflect expanded hours of coverage by district-based personnel, as determined by OFO.

3. The FSIS website, [www.fsis.usda.gov](http://www.fsis.usda.gov), will be updated as needed.

4. The CCMS staff will provide to OPHS, OFO, and OFSEP daily (or more frequent, as circumstances dictate) summary statistical reports (containing information about numbers, categories, and geographic locations of complaints and establishments), prepared by AISD.

5. PHELS will request and pursue daily real-time contact with designated representatives from each State and territorial public health jurisdiction. Contact and reporting of activities may be in person or by phone; supplementary contact and reporting activities may be by fax or e-mail.

6. The FSIS liaison to CDC will provide OPHS and OFSEP daily updates on foodborne disease activity being monitored at CDC that might be associated with FSIS-regulated products.

7. Additionally, OPAEO will issue press releases as needed, advising the public of the availability of the Hotline for food safety and food security information.

D. Downgrading of a Threat Condition will be communicated by OFSEP, to HHSD through the senior executive leadership in OPHS.

Direct all questions related to this directive through supervisory channels.

*/s/ Philip S. Derfler*

Assistant Administrator  
Office of Policy, Program, and Employee Development