

OPI: MPITS/PPID

EXPANDED OPERATING SCHEDULES FOR TOTAL QUALITY CONTROL ESTABLISHMENTS

I. PURPOSE

This directive provides guidelines to inspection personnel on total quality control (TQC) establishments that may request approval to expand their operating schedules under sections 318.4 and 381.145 of the Federal meat and poultry inspection regulations. Additionally, this directive clarifies FSIS policy on TQC establishments currently approved to produce and hold product after their first 8 hours of operations.

II. (RESERVED)

III. REASON FOR ISSUANCE

To provide and clarify procedures and conditions for permitting TQC establishments to operate beyond their 8-hour operating schedules.

IV. REFERENCES

Sections 307.4, 318.4, 381.37, and 381.145 of the Federal meat and poultry inspection regulations.

V. ABBREVIATIONS

The following appears as abbreviated in this directive:
FSIS - Food Safety and Inspection Service

IIC - Inspector in Charge

TQC - Total Quality Control

VI. POLICY

A. General.

1. Under conditions specified in sections 318.4 and 381.145 of the Federal meat and poultry inspection regulations, TQC establishments may request approval to expand their operating schedules to up to 12 hours per shift. If approval is granted, establishments may produce product, in compliance with Agency requirements, during expanded hours of operation and, if desired, may ship such product. All provisions required of the approved TQC system during the first 8 hours of operation shall apply also during the expanded hours of operation.

2. In some instances, TQC establishments may have obtained

prior approval from FSIS to produce product after their first 8 hours of operations provided they hold that product until the inspector's next tour of duty to allow opportunity for inspection prior to shipping. These establishments now have the following options:

a. They may continue to operate under the "produce and hold" policy provided they comply with B.1.b. and B.2.e. below requiring that all raw materials to be used after the first 8 hours of operation are on hand at the establishment and available for inspection prior to the end of the first 8 hours of operation, or

b. They may apply for approval to expand their operating schedules as set forth in 1. above permitting them to ship the product produced after the first 8 hours of operation.

3. Any TQC establishment may be authorized to produce and hold, provided its TQC program is amended to comply with B.1.b. and B.2.e. of this directive.

B. Requests for Expanded Operations

1. Any TQC establishment may request approval to expand its operating hours to up to 12 hours if:

a. The establishment has operated satisfactorily under a TQC system for at least 1 year,

b. All products produced after the end of the first 8 hours of operation will only be a continuation of the processing monitored by the inspector and conducted during the last hour of the first 8 hours of operation, and

c. All immediate containers of products produced and packaged will bear code marks unique to any period of production beyond the first 8 hours of operation.

2. An establishment's request for expanded hours of operation shall contain the following information:

a. Date the establishment received approval of its TQC system and the date TQC was implemented.

b. Proposed schedule of operations.

c. Procedures for informing the IIC of daily production schedule and of products/process to be continued during expanded operations.

d. Description of the coding system for products produced during expanded operations. The codes must be unique to a specified period of production. At a minimum, the codes must indicate whether the products were produced during the first 8 hours of operation or during the expanded operating schedule.

e. Statement assuring that all raw materials to be used are on hand at the establishment and available for inspection prior to the end of the first 8 hours of operation.

C. Review of Establishment Requests

1. The establishment's request shall be submitted through the IIC to the Circuit Supervisor who reviews it and submits it to the Regional Director through the Area Supervisor.

2. The Regional Director shall review and approve acceptable requests.

3. Upon approval of an establishment's request, the establishment shall amend its TQC system within 10 days from the date of the approval letter from the Regional Director to comply with the provisions contained in its request.

D. Monitoring Expanded Hours of Operations

1. The inspector shall be accountable for reviewing and verifying the available products and those records that are required of industry and for taking corrective action when necessary.

2. The inspector shall monitor expanded hours of operation by:

a. Reviewing the intended production schedule.

b. Assuring that production is not a new process, but only a continuation of a process that was monitored during the last hour of the first 8 hours of operation.

c. Observing raw materials on hand intended for use during the expanded hours of operation. If not available, the process may not continue under the provisions of the expanded operation.

d. Conducting post review of the production process by:

(1) Comparing production volumes to raw materials on hand from the previous day,

(2) Evaluating establishment records from the expanded hours of operation, and

(3) Inspecting or taking verification samples, if product is still available.

e. Assuring that the establishment informs him/her in writing of the code marks used and that product containers bear such codes.

E. Inspection Coverage During Expanded Hours of Operations

1. The work performed by an FSIS inspector outside the basic tour of duty may be scheduled in accordance with rules, regulations, and Agency policy.

a. Call-back work shall be authorized by the Circuit Supervisor after discussion with the IIC and/or inspector. In this case, an inspector will be scheduled for a minimum of 2 hours of work.

b. The scheduling of overtime work periods contiguous to the inspector's basic tour of duty shall be authorized by the Circuit Supervisor after discussion with the IIC and/or inspector.

c. The inspector may also arrange a proposed tour of duty that will include starting times that are staggered in such a way as to provide inspectional coverage of establishment operations during extended working hours that will be appropriate to fulfill the inspection requirements. The inspector shall submit a proposed tour of duty to the supervisor for approval.

2. Establishments shall incur some overtime charges if the Circuit Supervisor determines inspection coverage is warranted during expanded hours of operation.

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