



Georgia Department of Agriculture

Capitol Square • Atlanta, Georgia 30334-4201

Tommy Irvin
Commissioner

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR SUBMITTING THE OPTIONAL WRITTEN FOOD SAFETY PLAN REFERENCED IN 40-7-18

This document is intended to be used as a guideline on how to submit a Written Food Safety Plan to the Georgia Department of Agriculture. The Written Food Safety Plan is an optional plan that is submitted by the company to the Department in lieu of the testing requirements stated in 40-7-18-.06.

The Georgia Department of Agriculture Chapter 40-7-18 Additional Regulations Applicable to Processing Plants are applicable to food processing plants pursuant to the Georgia Food Act and comply with Senate Bill 80 (O.C.G.A § 26-2-27 et seq.) that was passed during the 2009 legislative session.

Chapter 40-7-18-.06 specifies the testing requirements.

Initially each processing facility will be assigned a risk level according to the highest risk product produced at that facility. A committee, designated by the Commissioner, will continuously evaluate these risk levels using sound science including; known food safety hazards, recent food recalls, previous positive product samples, potential for contamination or foodborne illness and guidance from federal food safety agencies, academia, and industry.

The risk level of the facility will determine how often finished product or finished ingredients are to be tested. The three designated risk categories and minimum testing requirements are:

- Low risk facilities – quarterly testing.
- Moderate risk facilities – monthly testing.
- High risk facilities – bimonthly testing.



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The type of products tested must adequately represent the facility. A company producing multiple products should not be testing the lowest risk product that is infrequently produced each time they test. Each facility knows their product and the appropriate test(s) sufficient to detect the presence of poisonous or deleterious substances or other contaminants that would cause a food or ingredient to be injurious to health. When the Inspector conducts his/her inspection of each facility they will review testing records to confirm the test(s) conducted are consistent with current product information.

A list of facilities that would be exempt from the testing requirements are listed in Chapter 40-7-18-.10

Chapter 40-7-18-.09 describes the Written Food Safety Plan:

Facilities that choose to submit a plan will submit a summary of the Written Food Safety Plan to Natalie Adan by email: Natalie.Adan@agr.georgia.gov fax (404) 463-6428, or by mail:

Attn: Natalie Adan
Georgia Department of Agriculture
19 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. SW Room 318
Atlanta, GA 30334.

The Written Food Safety Plans summary will be reviewed in the Atlanta office and then the Inspector will review the complete plan on site and verify the implementation of the plan. In the interim, we will contact the facility to let them know the plan is pending acceptance. The Department will accept, deny, or request modifications to the plan.

The Department will initially focus on the Written Food Safety Plans submitted that do not include any finished product/finished product ingredient testing or below half the required amount prescribed in Chapter 40-7-18-.06. If a company has a Written Food Safety plan that includes at least half of the required finished product testing as validation, this plan will be reviewed during the next routine inspection to determine compliance.

Food Safety Plans are designed to be living documents that are subject to frequent revisions due to changes to manufacturing process, equipment, addition/subtraction of ingredients, ingredient sources, personnel, scientific knowledge, etc. These types of ongoing changes will be addressed during the inspection of the facility by the Inspector. Written Food Safety Plans should be reviewed annually to establish any discrepancies.



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List of the minimum standards and requirements for a written food safety plan include:

Records	Prerequisite program	Other components
Description of ingredients & product contact materials	Building plans	Food Safety documents
Description of finished product & hazard categorization	Cleaning, sanitizing & maintenance	Food Safety policy
Description of intended use	Prevention of cross-contamination	Supporting scientific data
Flow diagrams	Pest control	Emergency preparedness and response
Identification of hazards	Employee hygiene	Traceability system
Control Measures	Employee food safety training	Calibration of verification tools
Monitoring procedure(s)	Recall procedures	Control of nonconforming product
Verification	Sampling & testing information	Audits
Validation	Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures	

Reporting:

Any finished foods or finished food ingredients with the presence of a substance that would cause a manufactured food bearing or containing the same to be adulterated with the presence of poisonous or deleterious substances or other contaminants, shall be reported within 24 hours of obtaining confirmed results. This will include microbiological, physical & chemical contaminants that would be injurious to health.

Report all positive test results within 24 hours of receiving the result to the Georgia Department of Agriculture by e-mail positiveresults@agr.georgia.gov.

May 17, 2010