



REQUIREMENTS FOR FROZEN PRODUCT EXAMINATION

Purpose

This instruction defines policies and procedures for examining and accepting products for specification and contractual freezing requirements where products are to be at a specified temperature within a given timeframe.

Policies

When specified in contractual documents, Meat Grading and Certification (MGC) Branch personnel will examine products or production lots for temperature requirements within required timeframes. When product is scheduled for further processing or shipment prior to the specified time, the vendor must contact the MGC Branch and request a temperature examination. Vendors are responsible for making necessary arrangements to have freezers readily available during weekdays, weekends, and holidays for temperature examinations. If products are examined early and the temperature requirements are not in compliance, vendors may return the product to the freezer and reschedule the temperature check at the required time. Production lots shipped prior to required temperature examination will be rejected.

Timeframes

Unless otherwise specified in contractual documents, timeframes are established as follows:

Requirement	Time Begins...
"Product placed in freezer within ___ hours of production."	With each completed pallet. Time is noted on the top of each completed pallet.
"Product frozen to ___ degrees within ___ hours of production."	When the last pallet of the production lot is completed.
"Product frozen to ___ degrees within ___ hours of placement in the freezer."	When the last box or pallet is required to be in the freezer.

Freezer Capability

Cold storage warehouses must demonstrate the capability of freezing product to the required temperature or lower internally within the required time after placement into the freezer. Initially, every production lot is checked for compliance with time and temperature requirements. Once the freezer has established a satisfactory record, sampling may be reduced to at least one randomly selected lot out of every ten lots of like items produced. Examples of "like" items include (read down columns):

Roasts	Bulk pack coarse ground beef	Patties
Steaks	Ground beef chubs	
Diced items	Boneless Beef	

Procedures

1. Before examining any product, make sure the thermometer is properly calibrated.
2. Randomly select three shipping containers or pieces, as applicable, per production lot.
3. Remove packaging material to expose the meat. For ground products in chubs, cut away a small portion of the film to expose the product. Do not drill through the packaging material or pierce with the thermometer.
4. Drill a hole in the product slightly larger than the diameter of the thermometer. Sanitize the drill bit before each use.
5. Allow adequate time for the thermometer reading to stabilize.
6. A thermometer tolerance of $\pm 2^{\circ}\text{F}$ is permitted.
7. If any one sample does not meet specified temperature requirements, the lot is rejected.
8. Maintain complete records of temperature verification, using Form TEMPCK 1.

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