



SHELL EGG PRODUCER GUIDELINES FOR OFF-FARM SALES



These Guidelines are intended for Shell Egg Producers who sell eggs off the farm and are USDA Exempt (flocks of 3,000 or fewer hens). The requirements are basic in design and cost to enable the 3,000 or fewer hen egg producers to put shell eggs into commerce while maintaining Good Manufacturing Practices. It is understood that as the egg production increases, the complexity of the operation may increase and require additional facilities and/or equipment to maintain Good Manufacturing Practices.

LICENSE

1. Contact the WSDA Food Safety Program for an Egg Information Packet. 360-902-1876. This Packet contains a license application from Washington State Master License Service for an “Egg Handler/Dealer” license endorsement.
2. “Egg Handler” or “Dealer” means any person who produces, contracts for or obtains possession or control of any eggs for the purpose of sale to another dealer or retailer, or for processing and sale to a dealer, retailer, or consumer. (RCW 69.25.020)
3. “Egg” means the shell egg of the domesticated chicken, turkey, duck, goose, or guinea or any other species of fowl. (RCW 69.25.020)
4. The Egg Information Packet includes a copy of Good Manufacturing Practices (Code of Federal Regulations 21 Part 110) and an Egg Grading Manual (USDA AMS Agricultural Handbook No. 75).

FACILITIES

1. Establish a designated work area separate from domestic living areas.
 - **Acceptable designated** work areas may be an area in the basement, garage, or outbuilding.
 - **Unacceptable** work areas are domestic living areas, kitchens, laundry rooms, and bathrooms.
2. The work area requires a sanitary work surface that is smooth, durable, and easily cleanable. This work surface must be cleaned and sanitized before each use. Any sinks, drain boards, or other equipment used for the egg handling operation must be cleaned and sanitized before each use.
3. Designated storage areas are required for new packaging materials, utensils, and equipment that may be used for the egg handling practices. These items must be protected from contamination (e.g. moisture, strong odors, dust, or insects).
4. Potable water is required for egg handling practices. Individual water wells require an annual bacteriological test (i.e. coliform bacteria). Commercial bottled water may be used.
5. Hand washing stations must be conveniently located in the egg handling work area and near your toilet facilities. Hand washing at the work area may be provided by a hot and cold plumbed hand sink or a portable hand wash “system” such as a five-gallon insulated container, with a continuous flow spigot, filled with warm water between 100° F and 120° F. A pump-type liquid soap dispenser, paper towels, and a five gallon pail to catch wash/rinse water completes the “system”.
6. A designated refrigerator is required. The refrigerator is not required to be new or of a commercial type and may be placed in the garage, etc. Equip the refrigerator with a suitable thermometer so you can routinely verify that the 40° F to 45° F egg storage temperature is being maintained.

EGG HANDLING

1. Hands must be thoroughly washed before starting egg handling and during egg handling to minimize cross-contamination of “finished” eggs.
2. Maintain clean and dry nest boxes, change nest material as needed to reduce dirty eggs. Gather eggs at least once daily.

3. Clean eggs as needed soon after collecting. (Cleaning eggs refrigerated below 55° F may cause shells to crack or check.) Minimal cleaning protects the natural protective covering on the shell.
 - **Acceptable** egg cleaning methods include: a.) dry cleaning by lightly “sanding” the stains or minimal dirty areas with sand paper; b.) using potable water in a hand spray bottle and immediately wiping dry with a single service paper towel, and/or; c.) briefly rinsing with running water spray and immediately wiping dry with a single service paper towel. The “wash” water shall be a minimum of 90° F, which is warm “to the touch”, and shall be at least twenty degrees warmer than the temperature of the eggs to be washed.
 - **Unacceptable** cleaning methods include: submerging shell eggs in water or any other solution or using cleaners that are not food grade and approved for shell egg cleaning. The porous egg shell is not impervious to odors, chemicals, and “off” flavors.
4. Refrigerate the “cleaned” eggs immediately to 45° F or less. The “cleaned” eggs can be packaged later. Store “finished” packaged at eggs 45° F or less.

PACKAGING AND LABELING

1. Use new packaging (pulp cartons, etc.). Packaging may be purchased online, group buying, small farm co-operatives, etc.
2. Self-adhesive attractive labels may be easily produced on a computer. The labels must include:
 - Common name of the food – “Eggs”;
 - Quantity, the number of eggs, “One Dozen”;
 - Name and Address of the egg producer;
 - The statement “Keep Refrigerated”;
 - The statement “SAFE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS: To prevent illness from bacteria: Keep eggs refrigerated, cook eggs until yolks are firm, and cook foods containing eggs thoroughly.”
 - Domesticated chicken hen eggs are subject to Grading and Sizing. Quality designations and sizing weight ranges are determined by candling and weighing. (16.104 WAC and USDA Egg Grading Manual)
 - If the eggs are ungraded and not weighed, the packages/cartons shall not be labeled with a grade or size.
 - A “Pull Date” or “Best By” date must be stated. It may be hand written on the end of the carton or in a conspicuous location that is clearly discernible. Shell eggs are a perishable food item. The “Pull Date” must first show the month then the day of the month (e.g. Jun 14 or 06 14). (16.142 WAC) Recommended dates are 30 days after production, not to exceed 45 days.
3. Labeling includes a “stick on” Egg Seal on each “Dozen” package. Payment of assessment per dozen eggs is required for the sale of eggs in intrastate commerce such as sales at farmer’s markets and retail outlets. Stick on egg seals can be purchased for \$2.68 for 1,000 “Dozen” from the Washington State Department of Agriculture.

To obtain the Egg Seal order form contact the WSDA Food Safety Program at 360-902-1876 or if this is an electronic document, open the link with a CTRL+click on the “Egg Seal” in the top right hand corner of this page.

DISTRIBUTION

Transport refrigerated egg packages/cartons in an easily cleanable, portable cooler with frozen gel packs to maintain 45° F or less temperature until eggs are distributed to retail outlet or sold to consumers.

WSDA FOOD SAFETY PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION

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