

Retail Food Establishments: Freezing for Parasite Destruction

Regulation 61–25: Retail Food Establishments



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Five Key Risk Factors

*repeatedly identified in
foodborne illness outbreaks:*

1. Improper Holding Temps
2. Inadequate Cooking
3. Contaminated Equipment
4. Food from Unsafe Sources
5. Poor Personal Hygiene

Item 2 and 4 is addressed on this sheet.

Regulation 61-25

Citations 3-402.11 & 3-402.12

Parasite Destruction
3-402.11

Record Creation and
Retention 3-402.12

Public Health Reasons

Lightly cooked, raw, raw-marinated and cold-smoked fish may be desired by consumers.

In order to ensure destruction of parasites, fish may be frozen before service as an alternative to adequate cooking.

The FDA Office of Seafood Safety has found that certain species of seafood may contain hazardous parasites when not properly cooked or frozen.

Freezing Requirements as a Public Health Control

Parasites are a natural occurrence in some types of fish and do not necessarily come from contamination. When fish is cooked to an internal temperature of at least 145°F for 15 seconds, parasites are killed.

Fish served or sold raw, undercooked, or raw-marinated in “ready-to-eat” form must be processed using a parasite destruction procedure.

Examples of menu items containing raw or undercooked fish:

- » Ceviche
- » Sashimi
- » Sushi
- » Gravlox
- » Gravlax
- » Drunken Crabs
- » Cold-smoked fish
- » Undercooked grilled fish

Freezing Methods for Fish

There are three acceptable time/temperature methods to accomplish parasite destruction.

- » Frozen and stored at -4°F or below for at least 7 days, or
- » Frozen and stored at -31°F or below for at least 15 hours, or
- » Frozen solid at -31°F or below and stored at -4°F or below for at least 24 hours

When Freezing is Not Required as a Public Health Control?

Parasite destruction procedures do not apply to:

- » Molluscan shellfish
- » Fish eggs
- » Tuna species: Atlantic, Bluefin, Yellowfin, and Bigeye
- » Aquacultured fish raised per 3-402.11(B)(4)
- » Scallop products consisting only of the shucked adductor muscle

Recordkeeping:

- » **Fish frozen in the retail food establishment:** Records documenting the freezing temperature and time for the fish must be maintained in the retail food establishment for 90 days beyond the time of service or sale. These records must be maintained individually for each lot of fish as it is placed into and taken out of the freezer.
- » **Fish frozen by an approved supplier:** A written purchase agreement or a letter of certification from the supplier stating the fish was frozen solid to a time/temperature as specified in 3-402.11(A) may be substituted for freezing records. The freezing record or written purchase agreement must be maintained for at least 90 days after the last product of each lot is sold.
- » **Farm-raised (aquacultured) fish:** A statement from the supplier stating that the fish were raised and fed formulated feed must be retained at the food establishment for 90 calendar days beyond the time of service or sale of the fish.

Recommendations:

- » Freezing for parasite destruction should be performed using a dedicated freezer.
- » Temperatures should be continuously monitored by using a data logging device, with daily visual checks to ensure that the freezing temperature specifications are being met consistently.

