
Food Act (Low-Acid Canned Food) Regulations

S.I. 37 of 1992

(1st March, 1992)

1. These Regulations may be cited as the Food Act
(Low-Acid Canned Food) Regulations, Citation.

2. In these Regulations - Interpretation

"commercial process" means the operation of a commercial processor to which these Regulations apply;

"commercial processor" includes a person engaged in the processing of food for the purpose of trade or for any institution;

"commercial sterility", in relation to thermally processed food, means the condition achieved -

- (a) by the application of heat which renders food free of -

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- (i) micro-organisms capable of reproducing in food under non-refrigerated condition of storage and distribution; and
 - (ii) viable micro-organisms, including spores, of public health significance; or
- (b) by the control of water activity and application of heat, which renders the food free of micro-organisms capable of reproducing in the food under normal non-refrigerated condition of storage and distribution;

"critical factor" means any property, characteristic, condition, aspect or other parameter, variation of which may affect the scheduled process and the attainment of commercial sterility;

"hermetically sealed container" means a container that is designed and intended to be secure against the entry of micro-organisms and thereby maintain the commercial sterility of its contents after processing;

"incubation" means the holding of a sample at a specified temperature for a specified period of time for the purpose of permitting or stimulating the growth of micro-organisms;

"institution" includes a school , hospital, prison or working place;

"low-acid food" means any food, other than alcoholic beverages or tomatoes or tomato products having finished equilibrium pH less than 4.7 , with a finished equilibrium pH greater than 4.6 and a water activity greater than 0.85;

"minimum thermal process" means the application of heat to food, either before or after sealing in a hermetically sealed container, for a period of time and at a temperature scientifically determined to be adequate to ensure destruction of micro-organisms of public health significance;

"retort" means the process selected by the processor of food as adequate under the conditions of manufacture for a given product to achieve commercial sterility;

"water activity" means a measure of the free moisture in a product obtained by dividing the water vapour pressure of the substance by the vapour pressure of pure water at the same temperature.

3. These Regulation apply to a commercial processor of thermally processed low-acid food which is packaged in hermetically sealed container. Application.

4. the operation of a commercial processor to which these Regulations apply, shall be under the supervision of a person who is knowledgeable in food preservation technology. Supervision of commercial process.

5.(1) A commercial processor and a person in charge of the operations of a commercial processor shall ensure that the raw materials used in a scheduled process are suitable for the purpose for which they are intended prior to processing the materials. Production control.

(2) A commercial processor and person in charge of the operations of a commercial processor shall ensure that there is established by a person who has the required expertise in thermal processing requirements for low-acid food in hermetically sealed containers a scheduled process for each product produced by a commercial process.

(3) A scheduled process established under subregulation (2)-

- (a) shall be no less than the minimum thermal process necessary to achieve commercial sterility for the product; and
- (b) shall specify the critical factors which may affect the process.

(4) A commercial processor and person in charge of the operations of a commercial processor shall ensure that -

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- (a) production in respect of a commercial process is organized and conducted in such a manner as to ensure that food produced by the commercial process is processed in accordance with the scheduled process;
 - (b) water used for cooling processed low-acid food is chlorinated or otherwise treated so as to avoid product contamination;
 - (c) necessary checks are made of critical factors and a written record of these checks are kept;
 - (d) whenever a process is found to be less than the scheduled process, the food processed by the scheduled process is reprocessed or set aside for further evaluation and a record is kept of the evaluation;
 - (c) furnished products of the commercial process are tested, where necessary, to ensure that the products have achieved commercial sterility.

Equipment.

6. A commercial operator shall ensure that -

- (a) retorts used in a commercial process are -
 - (i) equipped with easily readable thermometers, pressure gauges and steam controllers to maintain retort temperature;
 - (ii) fitted with steam inlet of sufficient size for proper operation and other additional plumbing such as steam spreaders, venting and air or water cooling necessary for the intended use of the retorts;
- (b) thermometers used with retorts are tested against known standard, and retested at least once a year thereafter, to ensure their accuracy and that records of the test specifying the date of the test, standard used and name of the person performing the test are kept;

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- (c) there are accurate timing devices in close proximity to the retorts.

7.(1) A commercial operator and person in charge of the operation of a commercial process shall ensure - Containers.

- (a) that regular checks of containers for closure defects are made by a qualified closure inspector and that such checks shall include visual examinations as well as teardown examination to ensure can seam integrity;
 - (b) that each hermetically sealed container of a low-acid food produced by the commercial process is marked with -
 - (i) identifying code that is traceable to the commercial process where the container is packed;
 - (ii) the day and year when the container is packed.
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