

# Requirements for Processed Meat Products: Meat Regulation 31

*Recent changes to the Meat Regulation 31 allow some businesses to process meat without a meat plant license. This fact sheet will help you know whether your business requires a license, if you fall under the Regulation, and how to comply if you do.*

## Meat plant license exemption

You require a meat plant license if you conduct Category 2 activities (see table below). As such, these activities will be inspected by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA).

You do not require a meat plant license if you conduct only Category 1 activities (see table below).

### Category 2: high-risk activities

High risk activities include but are not limited to:

- Canning, dehydrating or emulsifying meat
- Curing, fermenting or smoking meat
- Preparing mechanically separated meat
- Handling and processing meat from farm-slaughtered carcasses

### Category 1: low-risk activities

Low risk activities include but are not limited to:

- Aging or breaking down a carcass
- Aging, boning, comminution, cutting, marinating, slicing or tenderizing meat
- Packaging meat for wholesale or distribution

## Regulation exemption

Your business is exempt from the Regulation if it falls under one of the following exemptions:

### 1. Food Product Exemption

This applies to businesses that prepare **only** the following items:

- Sandwiches that contain meat as an ingredient
- Pizzas that include meat as an ingredient
- Fully cooked meat products, such as Jamaican patties and meat pies
- Edible oil or fat
- Bouillon
- Any other meat product, if the amount of meat contained in it is 25% or less by weight of the product's total ingredients.

### 2. Volume Distribution Exemption

This applies to businesses that:

- perform **only** Category 1 (low risk) activities and
- whose sale to wholesale markets do not exceed the greater of either:
  - 25% of meat products sold in a fiscal year, and
  - 20,000 kg of meat products sold in a fiscal year.

### 3. Food Service Exemption

This applies to businesses where greater than 50% of a business' sales are meals or meal portions prepared for immediate consumption.

## Regulation compliance

If your business falls under the Regulation:

- Use a validated recipe from a reputable source indicating measured ingredients, processing time, temperature and relative humidity.
- Ensure that the final pH and water activity (Aw) of jerky and fermented meat products meet at least one of the following three criteria to kill bacteria and achieve a shelf-stable state:
  - $\text{pH} \leq 4.6$
  - pH between 4.6 and 5.3 **and** Aw between 0.9 and 0.85
  - $\text{Aw} \leq 0.85$
- Ensure that whole muscle-dried cured meat is fully coated with salt and held at 0-4°C for a minimum of two weeks. When fully cured, the products must have a minimum of 2.5% salt content to ensure a shelf-stable state. Once the meat product is sliced, it must be refrigerated to prevent bacterial contamination.
- Create and implement a HACCP plan. You must document time, temperature, relative humidity, pH and Aw.

## Facility Inspections

Your local Public Health Inspector may conduct any of the following actions if processed meat products are found for sale:

- Request documentation of the scientifically validated recipe of the product
- Request removal of the product from sale or distribution until laboratory documentation is provided that proves the pH and Aw of the product
- Seize two (2) representative samples of product for laboratory testing by Public Health Laboratories
- Use the HPPA and seize and destroy the product if it is believed to be a health hazard

For more information about changes to the Meat Regulation 31, visit [www.omafra.gov.on.ca](http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca).

You may also contact a local Public Health Inspector at 1-800-265-7293 ext. 4753.

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