

Shipping, Receiving, Handling and Storage



In the food industry, incoming and outgoing materials need to be properly shipped, received, handled, and stored to prevent the risk of biological, chemical, or physical hazards.

Shipping

Vehicles and containers that transport food products should be used only for the intended purpose and should have both sanitary design and pest control procedures in place. (E.g., truck's doors should be sealed to prevent entry of pests.)

Refrigeration equipment in vehicles and temperature measuring devices should be calibrated and in good working order.

Mechanical refrigeration should be provided for perishable food such as meat, fish, poultry, milk and eggs.

Inspection of vehicles

Designated employees should evaluate and document the condition of trucks, containers, and carriers of finished products before loading. The following should be verified before loading:

- cleanliness of the truck
- no odors or obvious dirt or debris
- no evidence of chemical contamination such as fluids, powders, chemical residues
- correct temperature in the truck
- temperature measuring devices will work properly during transportation

Documentation

Maintain a log to verify inspection and cleaning tasks. Indicate type of loads, cleaning and sanitation procedures, inspections, etc.

Receiving

Inspect incoming materials as soon as they are received to ensure established specifications such as product temperature, packaging conditions, etc. are met. A designated employee should verify and document:

- incoming raw materials – all are from an approved supplier
- cleanliness of the truck – no foreign material, dirt, odors, rodents, insects or other pests
- temperature of the truck – proper level to maintain products, according to specifications
- condition of door seals – close-fitting doors with no spaces at sides or bottom
- general truck conditions – no cracks, insulation in good condition, etc.

Loading and unloading

Considerations for loading and unloading include:

- Employees responsible for loading and unloading food materials should follow company standards for hygiene and sanitation practices.

- Food products should be packaged in suitable containers to prevent product damage.
- Proper product temperature must be maintained during transport, loading and unloading. Movers should be aware of the product temperature requirements.

Documentation

Document specific information when receiving any ingredients. This is important for tracing shipments in case of a recall and should include:

- time of receipt
- type of product
- ingredient and product packaging
- labeling
- lot number
- pallet tag, quantity, size and weight

Handling

Food products should be handled according to Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs).

Handling procedures should include controlled temperature, humidity, personal hygiene, etc. This will protect food from contamination by pests, microbiological, physical, or chemical hazards, and prevent deterioration or spoilage.

Storage

Products should be stored adequately to maintain package/pallet integrity:

- Allow maximum air circulation and stock rotation.
- Assign different storage areas for different products (ingredients, raw materials, finished products) to avoid cross contamination.

- Food should be used within the manufacturer's specified time period to maintain shelf life requirements. Appropriate rotation of food and packing materials -- first in, first out (FIFO) -- helps minimize food product contamination, damage and spoilage.

Allergen control precautions for raw materials purchasing, transportation and storage

Ensure suppliers have documented and implemented an allergen control plan.

Check labels on incoming ingredients to ensure supplier has not sent the wrong product, a substitute product or used the wrong label.

Ensure vehicles and shipping containers are cleaned before shipping.

Clearly label raw materials to indicate they contain food allergens (e.g. color-coded containers, tags).

For more information on food safety please contact the Food Safety and Inspection Branch at foodsafety@gov.mb.ca.