

# Food Code Fact Sheet #26

*What you should know about the Code*

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## Raw Molluscan Shellfish

### PUBLIC HEALTH REASONS:

#### 3-202.17 Shucked Shellfish, Packaging and Identification.

Plastic containers for shucked product bear specific information regarding the source of the shellfish as required by the NSSP Guide for the Control of Molluscan Shellfish. These containers must be nonreturnable so that there is no potential for their subsequent reuse by shellfish packers which could result in shucked product that is inaccurately identified by the label.

#### 3-202.18 Shellstock Identification.

Accurate source identification of the harvesting area, harvester, and dealers must be contained on identification tags so that if a shellfish-borne disease outbreak occurs, the information is available to expedite the epidemiological investigation and regulatory action.

#### 3-202.19 Shellstock, Condition.

Dirty, damaged, or dead shellstock can contaminate and degrade live and healthy shellstock and lead to foodborne illness.

#### 3-203.11 Molluscan Shellfish, Original Container.

Lot separation is critical to isolating shellfish implicated in illness outbreaks and tracking them to their source. If the lots are commingled at retail, traceability is undermined and the root of the problem may remain undetected.

#### 3-203.12 Shellstock, Maintaining Identification.

Accurate records that are maintained in a manner that allows them to be readily matched to each lot of shellstock provide the principal mechanism for tracing shellstock to its original source. Records must be kept for 90 days to allow time for hepatitis A virus infections, which have an incubation period that is significantly longer than other shellfish-borne diseases, to come to light. The 90-day "clock" starts at the time the container of shellstock is emptied.

It is critical that molluscan shellfish (oysters, clams, mussels and scallops) are properly handled and stored in food service facilities to prevent possible foodborne illness. Records need to be kept for shellfish products in case of an outbreak to trace the product back to its commercial harvesting area.

The definitions involving shellfish in the Food Sanitation Rules are:

**"Molluscan shellfish"** means any edible species of fresh or frozen oysters, clams, mussels, and scallops or edible portions thereof, except when the scallop product consists only of the shucked adductor muscle.

**"Shellstock"** means raw, in-shell molluscan shellfish.

**"Shucked shellfish"** means molluscan shellfish that have one or both shells removed.

Grocery stores are not approved sources for shellfish to be used in restaurants.



**Keep shellfish in their original container with their tags**

Raw shucked shellfish must be in nonreturnable packages with a legible label that identifies the name, address, and certification number of the shucker, packer or repacker of the molluscan shellfish; and the "sell by" or "best if used by" date for packages less than one-half gallon or the date shucked for packages of one-half gallon or more.

	DEALER NAME	CERT. NO.
	Dealer Address	
	City, State Zip Code	
	ORIGINAL SHIPPER'S CERT. NO. IF OTHER THAN ABOVE:	
	HARVEST DATE:	
	HARVEST LOCATION:	
TYPE OF SHELLFISH:		
QUANTITY OF SHELLFISH:		
THIS TAG IS REQUIRED TO BE ATTACHED UNTIL CONTAINER IS EMPTY AND THEREAFTER KEPT ON FILE FOR 90 DAYS.		

**RETAILERS, INFORM YOUR CUSTOMERS:** Thoroughly cooking foods of animal origin such as beef, veal, pork, fish, lamb, poultry, or shellfish reduces the risk of foodborne illness. Individuals with certain health conditions may be at higher risk. If these foods are consumed further information. Contact your physician or public health official for

**Example of a Dealer's tag with the minimum required information.**

### Source and labeling:

All shellfish must be from an approved source listed on the Interstate Certified Shellfish Shippers (ICSS) list.

### Storage:

All shellfish products must be stored below 41F and above/away from any other types of raw animal foods.

Shellstock may not be combined with shellstock from different lots, growing regions, container codes and/or shucking dates.

Keep each lot of shellstock separate from older/newer lots. Cloth towels may not be used to cover shellfish. FDA recommends covering live shellstock with ice in a self-draining pan.

Raw shellfish are not required to be date marked.



**Record retention requirements do not apply to commercially vacuum packed shellfish.**

Check shellstock upon receipt and daily to remove any dead shellfish or shellstock with broken shells.

**Maintaining Shellfish identification:**

The tags or labels must be kept with the original container until it is empty. After the container is empty, write the last date of use on the tag/label and keep it for 90 days for shellfish that are served raw or undercooked.

Keep the tags/labels in chronological order so they are easy to find in case of a recall. For shucked products served undercooked, the lids should be dated and kept for 90 days as well.

**Consumer Advisory:**

All undercooked or raw shellfish products must have a consumer advisory on the menu to alert consumers. See Fact Sheet #6 for more information.



**Shells from products like oysters may not be reused**

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	HARVESTER IDENTIFICATION NO.:	
	HARVEST DATE:	
	HARVEST LOCATION:	
	TYPE OF SHELLFISH:	
	QUANTITY OF SHELLFISH:	
<b>THIS TAG IS REQUIRED TO BE ATTACHED UNTIL CONTAINER IS EMPTY AND THEREAFTER KEPT ON FILE FOR 90 DAYS.</b>		

**Example of a Harvester’s tag with required information**