

Canadian Regulations and Guidelines for Listeria

Terry Peters

Microbiology Program Specialist
Canadian Food Inspection Agency

OUTLINE

- Canadian Regulations
- Field Compliance Guide for Foods Contaminated with *L. monocytogenes*
 - categories of foods
 - allowable levels
 - actions to be taken



Corbis.com

City of Vancouver Street and Traffic Bylaw

32. Stopping at “Stop” Signs

- The driver of every vehicle shall stop such vehicle immediately before entering any intersection or traversing any level railway crossing where “stop” signs have been placed.



Food and Drugs Act

4. No person shall sell an article of food that.
 - (a) has in or on it any poisonous or harmful substance;
 - (b) is unfit for human consumption;
 - (c) consists in whole or in part of any filthy, putrid, disgusting, rotten, decomposed or diseased animal or vegetable substance;
 - (d) is adulterated; or
 - (e) was manufactured, prepared, preserved, packaged or stored under unsanitary conditions.

Food and Drugs Act

7. No person shall manufacture, prepare, preserve, package or store for sale any food under unsanitary conditions.

Definition

"Unsanitary conditions" means such conditions or circumstances as might contaminate with dirt or filth or render injurious to health, a food, drug or cosmetic.

Food and Drugs Act

5. (1) No person shall label, package, treat, process, sell or advertise any food in a manner that is false, misleading or deceptive or is likely to create an erroneous impression regarding its character, value, quantity, composition, merit or safety.

High Risk Foods

Ready-to-eat foods which are capable of supporting growth of pathogenic organism include:

- (frozen) dairy products
- cheese
- ready-to-eat meats and poultry
- tofu and ready-to-eat other soybean products
- alfalfa and other sprouts
- refrigerated prepackaged foods with extended shelf life
- certain health foods
- fresh apple cider
- smoked fish and other marine products

FIELD COMPLIANCE GUIDE

RTE Foods Contaminated With *Listeria Monocytogenes*

RTE foods have been placed into three categories based on health risk:

- category 1
- category 2
- category 3

Category 1

- causally linked to outbreaks of listeriosis
- highest priority for inspection and compliance activities.
- includes:
 - soft cheese,
 - liver pâté,
 - coleslaw mix with shelf-life > 10 days,
 - unacidified jellied pork tongue,
 - hot dogs/wieners,
 - cold smoked rainbow trout and
 - processed deli turkey meat.

Category 1 Action

- presence of *L. monocytogenes* in these RTE foods will automatically trigger a Class I recall with consideration of a public alert
- except in the following cases:
 - where the measured pH and/or water activity of the food will not permit the growth of *L. monocytogenes* in that food; or
 - where the manufacturer/importer is able to present data that demonstrates that the product will not support the growth of *L. monocytogenes*.

Category 2

- all other RTE foods capable of supporting growth of *L. monocytogenes* with a shelf life exceeding 10days.
- second highest priority in inspection and compliance activity.
- Includes:
 - vacuum packaged meats,
 - MAP sandwiches,
 - cooked seafood,
 - packaged salads,
 - refrigerated sauces.

Category 2 Action

- presence of *L. monocytogenes* in these products requires a Class II recall
- public alert may be issued if illness has been specifically linked to the product.
 - unless the manufacturer/importer is able to present data which demonstrates that the product will not support the growth of *L. monocytogenes*.

Category 3

Contains two types of RTE food products;

- those supporting growth of *L. monocytogenes* with < 10days shelf life and
- those not supporting growth of *L. monocytogenes*.
- lowest priority for inspection and compliance action.
- Includes:
 - cooked seafood,
 - packaged salads,
 - ice cream,
 - hard cheese,
 - dry salami,
 - salted fish,
 - breakfast and other cereal products.

RTE food not supporting growth of LM

- includes the following:
 - (a) pH 5.0 -5.5 and a w < 0.95
 - (b) pH < 5.0 regardless of a w
 - (c) a w < 0.92 regardless of pH
 - (d) frozen foods

Category 3 Action

- For Category 3 RTE foods, the following factors are considered in the compliance action taken:
 - adherence to GMPs,
 - levels of *L. monocytogenes* in the food,
 - shelf life and/or
 - result of health risk assessment

Category 3 Action (cont'd)

- L. monocytogenes counts are >100 CFU/g.
 - class II recall and stop sale
- L. monocytogenes is <100 CFU/g, but GMP's are absent or inadequate
 - class II recall should also be considered
- L. monocytogenes is <100 CFU/g, but GMP's are adequate
 - sale considered.

SUMMARY

CATEGORY	Action Level for LM	GMP Status	Immediate Action	Follow-up Action
1. RTE foods causally linked to listeriosis	> 0 cfu/50g	n/a	a.. Class I recall to retail level b. Consideration of Public Alert c. Appropriate follow-up at plant level	
2. All other RTE foods supporting growth of LM with refrigerated shelf-life > 10 days	> 0 cfu/25g	n/a	a. Class II recall to retail level b. Health Alert Consideration c. Appropriate follow-up at plant level	
3. RTE foods supporting growth of LM with refrigerated shelf-life < 10 days and all RTE foods not supporting growth	< 100 cfu/g	Adequate GMP	Allow sale	Appropriate follow-up at plant level
	< 100 cfu/g	Inadequate or no GMP	Consideration of Class II recall or stop sale	
	> 100 cfu/g	n/a	Class II recall or stop sale	

What is a Food Recall?

A Food Recall is.....

- An effective method of removing or correcting violative products that may represent a health hazard to the consumer or user.
- An action taken by manufacturers, distributors or importers to protect public health and well-being

Recall Classifications

Class I: “situation in which there is a reasonable probability that the use of, or exposure to, a violative product will cause serious adverse health consequences or death”.

Class II: “...temporary adverse health consequences or the risk of serious adverse health consequences is remote...”

Class III: “...not likely to cause any adverse health consequences...”

Thank you

Terry Peters

Phone: 604-666-1080

Email: tpeters@em.agr.ca

Further information available from these websites

- **Listeria Field Compliance Guide (CFIA)**
 - <http://inspection.gc.ca/english/anima/fispoi/product/listeriae.shtml>
 -
- **Food Safety Facts on Listeria (CFIA)**
 - <http://inspection.gc.ca/english/corpaffr/foodfacts/listeriae.shtml>
- **CFIA**
 - <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/>
- **Health Canada Standards and Guidelines for Microbiological Safety of Food**
 - http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/food-aliment/english/publications/compendium/volume_1/index.html