



Wisconsin Food Code Fact Sheet



WHEN A RETAIL FOOD ESTABLISHMENT LICENSE OR MEAT ESTABLISHMENT LICENSE MAY APPLY TO A VENISON PROCESSOR

Scope

This document is designed for agent and state inspectional staff, along with venison processing industry members.

Definitions

Amenable species: “amenable” means an animal species, or products made from an animal species, that are subject to mandatory inspection under state or federal meat and poultry inspection regulations.

Guidance

Type of Venison Processing Operation	License Required Yes/No
Cut/grind/wrap customers’ venison only.	No, exempt from a retail food establishment license.
Cut/grind/wrap customers’ venison with only spices added (example- venison breakfast sausage).	No, exempt from a retail food establishment license.
Cut/grind/wrap customers’ venison with meat from an amenable species (often beef or pork) added to final product.	Yes, venison processor must hold a retail food establishment license. Added meat must be from an approved source. *Licensed retail food establishments must meet all applicable requirements of ATCP 75 before licensure.
Cut/grind/wrap customers’ venison with customers’ own pork/beef/other amenable species added to final product (product example- fresh sausage).	Yes, this custom-exempt meat processing activity will require the venison processor to hold either a federal grant of inspection or a meat establishment license from the Bureau of Meat and Poultry Businesses.

*Additional information about wild game processing

Retail Food Establishment License: Wild game processors who manufacture wild game ground product or sausages using other meats, such as pork or beef trimmings and/or beef or pork fat, must be licensed by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) or a local health department serving as an agent for DATCP. Specifically, wild game processors who only use inspected meats for mixing with the wild game must be licensed



as a retail food establishment either through DATCP's Division of Food and Recreational Safety's (DFRS) Bureau of Food and Recreational Businesses (BFRB) or by a local health department agent program.

Meat Establishment License: Wild game processors who receive and use additional meat, such as beef and pork, from their customers to be added into their customers' wild game products are required to be licensed as a meat establishment with the DFRS's Bureau of Meat and Poultry Businesses (BMPB) or have a federal grant of inspection. The processor is not selling any meat to the customer and is providing a service only for the processing of the wild game.

Wild Game Product Handling

A meat establishment operator may custom process legally harvested wild game at a meat establishment if the establishment notifies DATCP's BMPB of its plans and the establishment complies with processing, labeling, and recordkeeping requirements applicable to custom processing of wild game under Wis. Admin. Code ATCP §§ [55.03\(11\)](#) and [55.08](#). Operators are to handle, store, and process wild game products in a manner that prevents contamination of other meat or poultry products. Garbage bags and other non-food grade containers or bags are not permitted for use in receiving or storing wild game. Wild game is only to be accepted by the meat establishment if the wild game carcasses are clean and unadulterated.

Wild game processors are to process wild game during times that do not interfere with the slaughter or processing of other food animals. Adequate separation by time or space is required for these operations. All wild game processing, cutting, and smoking must be done at times or in areas where no other meat processing is being conducted. All areas and equipment where wild game processing occurs must be cleaned and sanitized before processing other meat products. At all times, wild game product(s) are to be stored separately from other meat or poultry products and clearly identified as a wild game product. Wild game products are to be labeled, including clear identification of the species.

Identification of Wild Game in Meat or Food Establishments

Identification of wild game is imperative for wild game processors to ensure the wild game does not enter commerce and is returned only to the owner. Wild game is often received either as whole carcasses or as boneless trimmings. Wild game processors who receive wild game carcasses are to affix identification to the carcass upon receipt. This identification would include affixing the game tag or marking the carcass with "Not for Sale" along with the owner's name. Likewise, boneless trim is to be properly identified upon receipt by affixing the game tag or a label stating "Not for Sale" and the owner's name to the storage container. This assures that the carcass or boneless trim can be returned to the owner.

Finished products of wild game, including carcass parts, cuts, ground product, and/or sausage, must be labeled at the time of packaging, including all boxes, cartons, packages, or containers which contain wild game products. Sausage products that have a diameter of more than 1 ½ inches, if those sausages are individually packaged or if they are shipped or stored in unsealed containers, must be individually labeled. The label shall identify the species along with the words "Not for Sale" in block lettering at least 3/8" high, and the Wisconsin meat establishment number (if applicable) or the name of the processing plant.

Refer to Wis. Admin. Code §§ ATCP [55.03\(11\)](#) and [55.08\(2\)](#) for more information on wild game processing and labeling requirements at licensed meat establishments.

Contacts:

Meat and Poultry Business Licensing: datcpmeatpoultrylicensing@wisconsin.gov

Retail Licensing: datcpdfslicensing@wisconsin.gov

Retail Technical Questions: datcpdfsretail@wisconsin.gov



Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
Division of Food and Recreational Safety
2811 Agriculture Dr., P.O. Box 8911, Madison, WI 53708
<https://www.datcp.wi.gov>