

Sanitation Requirements in the Food Code for Processing Venison in a Retail Food Establishment

Use Approved Water System

- Verify your water supply is from a safe and approved source.
- Have well water tested annually, and keep a copy of the results on file.

Employee Health Requirements

- Prevent employees diagnosed with or having symptoms of an illness, wound, or other affliction that might contaminate product from processing carcasses.

Protect Equipment and Utensil Food Contact Surfaces

- Check the condition of all food contact surfaces before and after processing venison, including cutting boards, knives, grinder, gloves, and outer garments
- Schedule routine cleaning and sanitizing of all food contact surfaces before and after processing venison.
- Conduct routine cleaning and sanitizing every four hours unless the processing room is refrigerated.

Prevent Cross-Contamination

- Separate raw and ready-to-eat foods, and prevent overcrowding in freezers, coolers, processing, and storage areas.
- Follow flow of venison throughout the store and design handling procedures to prevent cross contamination.

Keep Food Safe and Unadulterated

- Protect food, food packaging materials, and food contact surfaces from adulteration resulting from microbiological, chemical, and physical contamination.
- Keeping carcasses stored at 41°F prevents decomposition and limits the growth of pathogenic bacteria found on raw meat carcasses.
- Protect exposed food from contamination:
 1. Condensate and floor splash (microbiological contamination)
 2. Fuels and lubricants (chemical contamination)
 3. Metal shavings from a grinder blade (physical contamination)

Protect, Label, Store, and Use Toxic Compounds Properly

- Improper use of a toxic compound is a frequent cause of product adulteration.

Control Pests

- Exclude all pests from the storage and carcass processing areas.

How and When to Wash Your Hands

- Wash hands by vigorously rubbing together the surfaces of lathered hands and arms for at least 20 seconds and thoroughly rinse with clean warm water.
- Wash hands before and after working with venison; and after eating, drinking, smoking, using the restroom, handling raw meat, touching hair, mouth, nose, or face; or wash any time your hands are unclean.

Hand Washing Facilities

- Provide handwashing sinks in both the processing and toilet room areas.
- Supply handwashing sinks with hand soap and paper towels.
- Keep toilet rooms clean and in good repair.

Food & Dairy Division Regional Offices

Region 1 – Upper Peninsula
Region 2 – Northern

James Padden, Supervisor
Traverse City, MI
(231) 922-5210

Region 3 – West Central
Region 5 - Southwest

Susan Brace, Supervisor
Grand Rapids, MI
(616) 356-0600

Region 4 – East Central

Michael Juhasz, Supervisor
Saginaw, MI
(989) 757-7501

Region 6 – South Central

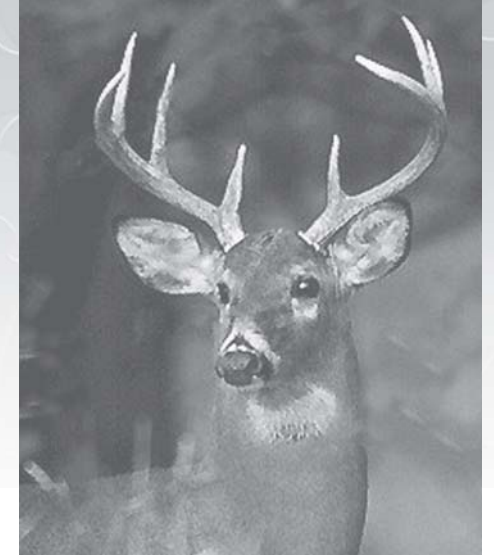
Sandra Walker, Supervisor
Lansing, MI
(517) 373-1060

Region 7 - Detroit

Karen Butler, Supervisor
Detroit, MI
(313) 456-1300



Venison Processing



Processing Guide and Sanitation Requirements for Retail Food Establishments

Revised November 2008

Food & Dairy Division
P.O. Box 30017
Lansing, MI 48909
Phone: (517) 373-1060
www.michigan.gov/mda

Checklist for Processing Venison in a Retail Food Establishment

Receiving & Inspection

- Check that only animals taken wild are being received for processing
- Was the deer harvested in a Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) surveillance zone, if so: only boned meat, cape, and clean skull plates may be removed from the CWD surveillance zone.
- Deer from CWD positive areas* must be processed separately after all other deer.
- Processors must inspect all carcasses prior to accepting them from the hunter.
- Inspection of the carcass must be performed in a sanitary location with adequate lighting.
- Accept only carcasses which are:
 1. Free of signs of illness such as unhealthy body condition (starved appearance or visible infections).
 2. Free of lumps or nodules in the chest cavity. For further information on Custom Processing and Bovine Tuberculosis, please go to: <http://michigan.gov/mdacpm>
 3. Field dressed with the hide intact.
 4. Free of visible decomposition or contamination.
 5. Identified with owner's name and proper DNR tag.

Carcass Storage

- Carcasses with hides should be stored at 41°F or less in a secure manner and be physically separated from all other food.
- Carcass handling and processing should be conducted using “first in/first out” rotation.

Note: Proper refrigeration is necessary to prevent decomposition and limit the growth of pathogenic disease-causing bacteria found on raw meat carcasses.

Head & Hide Removal

- Minimize handling and cutting of brain or spinal tissues and lymph nodes:
 1. Use designated saw to remove antlers.
 2. Do not cut through spinal column except to remove head. Use a knife designated for that purpose that is maintained in a sanitary condition.
- Head and hide removal must take place in a dedicated area. It must be strictly segregated from food storage and handling such as outside or in a specialized room.
- Storage for all non-edible portions (hides, legs, heads) should not be inside the store. A secured, separate area that does not attract pests should be used.
- Heads, legs, and other body parts, unless returned to hunter, must be disposed of in a licensed incinerator or buried in a licensed landfill.

Carcass Processing

- Wear intact rubber or disposable gloves in good repair. Promptly wash off any deer blood and saliva that comes in direct contact with your skin.
- Processing of hunter-owned deer must take place after all commercial food handling has ceased. There must be no way to cross contaminate other food.
- All processing and handling equipment, food contact surfaces, and floors in the shared food handling areas must be washed and sanitized immediately after processing. Processing of commercial foods cannot take place until this is done.
- Bone out meat from the deer, removing fat and connective tissue. This will also remove lymph nodes.
- Outer garments and aprons must be changed, washed, and sanitized after processing venison.

Lead Fragments in Venison and Processing of the Carcass

As you are probably aware, recent studies have found tiny lead fragments in venison from deer shot with lead ammunition. Some of the fragments have been found far from the wound channel in the meat, and are too small to be seen during processing. There is currently no evidence linking venison consumption to lead poisoning in humans; however, lead is a neurotoxin, meaning it affects the brain and the rest of the central nervous system. The risk depends on how much lead is consumed and how often. It can affect the nervous system even at levels too low to cause outward signs of illness. Care should be taken to minimize any contamination.

You can take some steps to keep any lead contamination in venison to a minimum by following a few guidelines:

1. Use care when selecting meat for grinding.
2. Do not use deer with excessive shot damage.
3. Trim a generous distance away from the bullet wound channel and discard any meat that is bruised, discolored, or contains hair, dirt, bone fragments or grass.
4. Very generously remove meat from the bullet path, **beyond what has been common practice.**

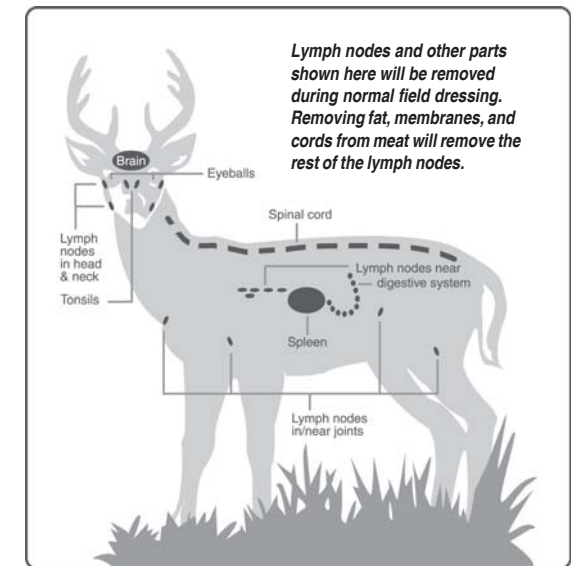
Chronic Wasting Disease Information for Processing

The abnormal proteins (called prions) thought to cause CWD are found in the brain, spinal cord, eyes, lymph nodes, and spleen of affected deer and elk and potentially in blood and saliva. This guide has been revised to include procedures that minimize exposure to those tissues.

Venison Product Storage

- Processors must implement procedures to maintain the identity of venison products so as not to confuse them with commercial meat.
- Processed hunter-owned venison should be wrapped and each package identified with the name of the owner. Packages should be stamped “Not for Sale.”
- Venison held for further processing (jerky, sausage, etc.) should be stored in covered containers, separated from commercial foods by a physical barrier and properly identified.

*Hunters harvesting a deer or elk from Colorado, Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, South Dakota, Utah, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Alberta, Saskatchewan, or other CWD positive areas, are restricted to bringing into Michigan only deboned meat, antlers, antlers attached to a skull cap cleaned of all brain and muscle tissue, hides cleaned of excess tissue or blood, upper canine teeth, or a finished taxidermic mount.



Drawing collaboration between Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, and Michigan Department of Agriculture