

# Shellfish Processing: Rules and Regulations

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Shellfish products in Florida include, edible species of oysters, clams, mussels, either shucked or in the shell, fresh or frozen, and raw in-shell scallops. All shellfish offered for commercial or retail sale must be processed at a certified shellfish facility. The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Division of Aquaculture is responsible for inspecting and certifying all shellfish processing facilities. The following are requirements to become certified:

- Shellfish Processing Certification License Application;
- Wholesale Saltwater Products License or Aquaculture Certificate of Registration;
- Dealer Tags;
- Required processing equipment;
- Facility source water analysis;
- HACCP plan;
- Certification Inspection; and
- Employee training program.

Certified facilities are classified as a shellstock shipper, shucker-packer, or repacker. Once certified, a facility is inspected quarterly by the division to ensure compliance and consumer safety. Rules governing shellfish processing are in [The Comprehensive Shellfish Control Code, Rule Chapter 5L-1, F.A.C.](#), and located on the Division's website: [www.FDACS.gov/Agriculture-Industry/Aquaculture/Shellfish-Processing-Facility-Certification](http://www.FDACS.gov/Agriculture-Industry/Aquaculture/Shellfish-Processing-Facility-Certification)

## BUILDINGS

Buildings and structures need to be suitable in size and design to facilitate sanitary operations for food processing. There must be sufficient space for the placement of equipment, storage of materials and food processing activities. The building must be constructed so that floors, walls and ceilings may be kept clean to prevent contamination of food, food packaging materials and food contact surfaces. It must provide adequate lighting and ventilation, a sufficient, sanitary water supply and a proper wastewater or sewage treatment system.

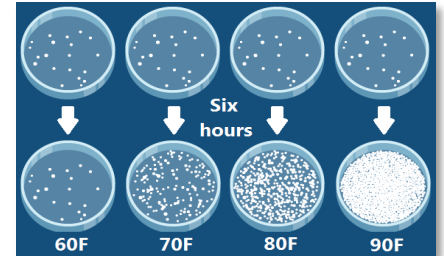
All facilities must provide employees with sanitary and accessible toilet facilities. Handwashing facilities must also be established in easily accessible locations where employees handle food, food packaging materials or food contact surfaces.



Typical oyster shucking station

## EQUIPMENT

All equipment must be constructed so that it is smooth and easily cleanable to prevent the contamination of food. Food-contact surfaces - any surface that comes in contact with food - must be corrosion-resistant, made of nontoxic materials and designed to withstand the processing environment.



Bacterial growth at various temperatures

## REFRIGERATION / COOLING

Shellfish intended for raw consumption are classified as a high-risk food due to the presence of naturally occurring pathogenic bacteria in their tissues. Post-harvest temperature control is critical to minimize bacterial growth and prevent consumer illnesses.

As such, shellfish received from a harvester must be placed under refrigeration at or below 45°F by specific times. These times vary based on the type of shellfish being harvested, month of harvest and the cooling option being used. For more information on specific harvest times, see the [Refrigeration Requirements for Shellfish at a Certified Dealer](#) fact sheet.

Shellfish received from another certified shellfish processing facility must be pre-chilled, shipped under refrigeration and have accompanying documentation of the vehicle temperature and time of shipment. Once shellfish are received, they must be immediately placed under refrigeration at or below 45°F (*Unless under an approved tempering plan*). Shellfish must remain under refrigeration except during necessary periods in processing; **they are not permitted to be out of refrigeration for more than two cumulative hours at any point during processing.**



## TAGGING

Shellfish processors must meet the requirements of [Rule Chapter 5L-1.007, F.A.C.](#) in The Comprehensive Shellfish Control Code. A dealer tag is required to be affixed to each container of shellstock prior to being offered for sale. The dealer tag must be durable, waterproof, have a minimum size of 2<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> by 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches, and contain legible information arranged in the specific order as follows:

- 1) Processor's name and address
- 2) Processing facility certification number
- 3) Original shipper's certification number, including the state abbreviation
- 4) Date of harvest
- 5) Harvest area identification; for Florida harvest areas use the four digit code
- 6) Type of shellfish (*common name*)
- 7) Quantity of shellfish
- 8) The following statement in bold capitalized type:

**“THIS TAG IS REQUIRED TO BE ATTACHED UNTIL CONTAINER IS EMPTY AND THEREAFTER KEPT ON FILE, IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER, FOR 90 DAYS.**

**RETAILERS: DATE WHEN THE LAST SHELLFISH FROM THIS CONTAINER SOLD OR SERVED**

\_\_\_\_\_.”

- 9) All oyster shellstock must display the terminal sale date (DD/MM/YY) not to exceed 14 days after the harvest date or the statement **“Sell Within 14 days of the Harvest Date.”**

- 10) For shellstock exceeding time or temperature requirements, see [Rule 5L-1.008 \(5\), \(7-10\), F.A.C.](#), tags shall be green and contain the additional language in bold, 14-point font **“FOR SHUCKING ONLY BY A CERTIFIED FACILITY”** or **“FOR POST HARVEST PROCESSING ONLY.”**

**Containers of oysters shall not be tagged with both a green tag and a white tag at anytime.** See [Shellfish Tagging Requirements](#) for more information.

PERISHABLE KEEP REFRIGERATED	NAME OF FIRM
	MAILING ADDRESS OF FIRM CITY, STATE & ZIP CODE
	Phone # (____) _____
Cert. # FL ####-SS, SP, OR PHP*    Wholesale # WD _____	
ORIGINAL SHIPPERS CERT. NO. IF OTHER THAN ABOVE: _____	
DATE OF HARVEST: _____	2 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> ”
HARVEST AREA, NAME, OR #: _____	
TYPE OF SHELLFISH: _____	
QUANTITY OF SHELLFISH: _____	
SELL BY: _____	
THIS TAG IS REQUIRED TO BE ATTACHED UNTIL CONTAINER IS EMPTY AND THEREAFTER KEPT ON FILE, IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER, FOR 90 DAYS.	
RETAILERS: DATE WHEN THE LAST SHELLFISH FROM THIS CONTAINER SOLD OR SERVED _____	
5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> ”	

*Example shellfish processor tag*

## HAZARD ANALYSIS CRITICAL CONTROL PERMIT (HACCP)

Every shellfish processor must establish and follow a HACCP plan, which identifies food safety hazards at each step of processing and necessary safety controls. Records must be maintained and reviewed according to the facilities HACCP plan. See the [Guidebook for the Preparation of HACCP Plans](#) for more information on developing your facility's plan.

Division staff can also assist processors develop an effective HACCP plan.

## SANITATION REQUIREMENTS

All shellfish processors must establish a sanitation monitoring routine and keep a sanitation record of monitoring. Record example forms can be found on the Division's website at: [www.FDACS.gov/Agriculture-Industry/Aquaculture/Shellfish-Processing-Facility-Certification](http://www.FDACS.gov/Agriculture-Industry/Aquaculture/Shellfish-Processing-Facility-Certification)

Sanitation monitoring activities must include the following:

- Safety of water for processing;
- Condition and cleanliness of food contact surfaces;
- Prevention of cross-contamination;
- Maintenance of hand-washing, hand sanitizing and toilet facilities;
- Protection from adulterants;
- Proper labeling, storage and use of toxic compounds;
- Control of employees with adverse health conditions; and
- Exclusion of pests.

## ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Certified shellfish facilities are inspected for the condition of the following:

- Plants and grounds;
- Plumbing and related facilities;
- Utilities;
- Disposal of other waste;
- Equipment condition and cleaning, maintenance and construction of non-food contact surfaces;
- Shellfish storage and handling;
- Heatshock (*if applicable*);
- Supervision;
- Transportation;
- Labeling and tagging; and
- Shipping documents and records/written recall procedures.

## PROCESSING AND HANDLING

Shellfish processors may choose to incorporate additional types of processing such as shucking shellstock, heat shock, we storage or post harvest processing. Additional requirements for these processing methods can be found in [Rule Chapter 5L-1, F.A.C.](#), and need to be incorporated into the facility's certification.

**Once a facility becomes certified, it will be routinely inspected quarterly by the Division. For more information or copies of forms and factsheets, contact the Division or visit: [www.FDACS.gov/Agriculture-Industry/Aquaculture/Shellfish-Processing-Facility-Certification](http://www.FDACS.gov/Agriculture-Industry/Aquaculture/Shellfish-Processing-Facility-Certification)**

