

SHELLFISH – TRACEABILITY & SAFETY

GENERAL ADVICE FOR FOOD RETAILERS AND CATERERS

TRACEABILITY

In the event of an incident or recall it is important that we be able to trace where the shellfish came from. For that reason it is important that you retain information as to who supplied the shellfish and its origin.

In order to do this shellfish is usually accompanied by a health mark. In the case of live shellfish this will come in the form of an indelible, water resistant label showing the establishment code (in the oval shape) and other information. By law you must keep this information (the “health tag”) for 60 days. If there is no health mark we recommend that you do not accept the delivery.



SHELFLIFE

All shellfish should be consumed as soon as possible after purchase. The length of time they are kept before consumption varies depending upon their quality and storage conditions after harvest. However, we recommend that they be consumed within 4-7 days of harvest/dispatch. As a result, you should ensure that they are being provided with sufficient shelf-life for their intended use.

STORAGE & PREPARATION

The way you store, handle and prepare live shellfish is important. There are some general points below but make sure your food safety management procedures reflect any necessary controls. (Remember also that shellfish are recognised as an allergen which may result in the need for further HACCP based controls depending upon your operation).

- If shellfish are not tightly closed or do not rapidly close when tapped they are dead and should not be used.
- Any cracked or broken shellfish should be discarded.
- Shellfish with visual anomalies (e.g. an odd colour or ‘cloudiness’) or malodour should be discarded.
- Optimum storage temperatures are from 4-7°C. Freezing will kill them.
- Do not store live shellfish in air-tight containers as this will kill them.
- When storing shellfish do not re-immerses them in water.
- Store shellfish separately from other food and fish.
- Due to the risk of norovirus oysters additional care should be taken to prevent cross-contamination in storage, handling and display.
- Oysters should be stored concave shell pointing downwards to avoid loss of fluid.
- Shuck oysters or debyss mussels just prior to use.
- Store so that any liquid may drain away.
- Do not subject live shellfish to physical shock.
- Discard any shells that do not open after cooking.



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