

**Massachusetts Department of Public Health**

Bureau of Environmental Health

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**Food Protection Program**

**Policies, Procedures and Guidelines**

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| **Issue: The Use of Mobile Poultry Processing Equipment under USDA No:** **FP-08** **Exemptions as Outlined in the Poultry Products Inspection Act**  |

Nationwide, there is a trend for sustainable community farming practices, including on-farm slaughtering. The purpose of this policy is to outline requirements for the use of approved mobile poultry processing units (MPPUs) in Massachusetts for the retail sale of poultry slaughtered on these mobile units. The policy outlines requirements for producers who use mobile units. MPPUs are being used in many States to safely process poultry products by small farmers and poultry producers. Producers using mobile units must comply with federal law regarding exemptions from continuous inspection by United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), as outlined in the *USDA Poultry Products Inspection Act*.

Streamlining local and state public health regulations and providing food safety support to small farmers is important to both farmers and consumers, while public health regulatory oversight is essential in the food safety system to verify safe food-handling practices and to maintain consumer confidence. For several years, the Massachusetts Food Protection Program, in partnership with other state and local agencies, studied the use of MPPUs in a pilot program. This policy document was developed as a result of the success of the pilot program.

**Regulatory and License Requirements**

* All poultry producers producing poultry for sale must have a license from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH), Food Protection Program (FPP) to slaughter poultry as required by M.G.L. c. 94, section 120.
* The licensee must comply with all applicable sanitation requirements of 105 CMR 500, including the *Supplemental Regulations for Meat and Poultry Slaughter and Processing* found at 105 CMR 500.030 and 105 CMR 500.031.
* All producers using MPPUs must have local board of health approval to proceed with slaughter activities in their community (M.G.L. c. 111, section 151).
* MPPU operations are seasonal. Licensees may only operate from April 1 - November 30.

**Training Requirement**

* In order to hold a license to use a MPPU, producers operating under a Poultry Act exemption are required to pass a state-approved training program.
* The state-approved training program is monitored by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR).
* Upon completion of the training, a certificate of training is issued to the producer by the MDAR. The certificate is valid for five years.
* After the five years, the producer must complete a refresher training program.

**Physical Requirements**

* All MPPUs operating in Massachusetts for the purposes of slaughtering/processing poultry are required to be approved by the MDPH, Food Protection Program before operating to process poultry.
* All mobile units must have designated fixed equipment (including the killing cones, scalder, plucker, evisceration stations, and hand washing sinks) affixed to a trailer or mobile base.
* MPPUs may be open to the air or fully enclosed.
* MPPUs must contain, at a minimum, the basic equipment: killing cones, scalder, plucker, evisceration tables, cooling containers, drainage rack, packing table, and hand washing sink(s).
* Small equipment, including knives and thermometers, must be provided by either the MPPU operator or the MPPU user.
* Equipment must be easily cleanable and durable for the use intended.
* Stainless steel or galvanized metal is recommended for most surfaces.
* When processing, MPPUs must provide hot and cold running water at all times.
* In the event of unforeseen problems during processing, all MPPUs must have a source of back-up supplies for commonly used items, including gloves, knives, thermometers, hot water generator, and propane fuel.
* MPPUs shall operate in compliance with standards for waste water and solid waste disposal developed jointly by MDPH, MDAR, and Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP).
	+ These standards include, but are not limited to, water use limits on the unit; collection of solid wastes and disposal to an appropriately sized compost area; collection of liquid waste with disposal to an appropriately sized compost area, or spreading on active, non-food crop growing field, or collection in a tight tank for pick-up by an approved waste hauler.
	+ Point source discharge of liquid wastes is to be kept to a minimum.
	+ The MassDEP guidance statement for MPPU use limits the total number of poultry produced during one season on one farm to 2500 birds without triggering the need for a discharge permit.

**Record Keeping Requirements**

* All MPPUs operators are required to develop and maintain a Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) plan for the processing operations of the unit.
* Poultry slaughtered by MPPUs must be obtained from distributors providing pullorum testing. MPPU operators are required to keep on file a pullorum certificate of testing from the supplier of their poultry stock.
* If using a private water source, MPPU operators must maintain on file an annual water test for coliform and nitrates.
* Operators using a public water supply are not required to maintain on file water test results.
* Processing records must be maintained by the producer for two years.
* Producers must maintain adequate records of customer information, in order that customers may be notified in case of a recall or a food emergency.
* If adequate records of customers are not be maintained, during a recall or food emergency, a public notice or press release will be required.

**Operations**

All operators using a MPPU to slaughter and process poultry must follow the *Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures* (SSOPs). These SSOPs are included in the document, *MPPU Food and Farm Safety Management Guide for Small-Scale Poultry Producer Processors Using a Massachusetts-Inspected Mobile Poultry Processing Unit (MPPU) under Massachusetts Department of Public Health Licensure*. This document was prepared by the New England Small Farm Institute and New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, and is part of the approved training program for MPPUs.

Basic components of the MPPU Management Guide include:

* temperature monitoring for poultry being processed,
* accurate record-keeping procedures, as required under the HACCP plan,
* required minimum numbers of staff per number of poultry to be processed,
* required number of pounds of ice per number of poultry being processed, and
* correct cleaning and sanitizing procedures for the unit.

In order to rapidly achieve required cooling temperature, the FPP recommends providing five pounds of ice per one chicken being processed (larger birds, such as turkey, will require additional ice). Chill tanks must remain at 40°F or below at all times. Seasonal variations in air temperature may increase the amount of ice needed for adequate cooling. The FPP recommends staffing levels for processing on the mobile units, at a minimum of two staff per every 50 birds being processed.

Poultry processed on MPPUs in Massachusetts may be offered for market only by retail sale. No wholesale distribution or wholesale sale of MPPU-processed poultry is allowed without a MDPH granted variance.

The number of poultry processed on mobile units is limited to 2500 birds per farm per season (consistent with MassDEP waste guidance document dated May 29, 2009, see Appendix).

Producers having a license to slaughter and process poultry using a MPPU will be routinely inspected by the Food Protection Program. As necessary, and as a standard procedure, inspections will include notice of violations. The noting of violations will require the submission of a Plan of Correction. A re-inspection may occur to verify corrective actions.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health may interpret any provision of this policy with respect to any particular case when, in its opinion, the enforcement thereof would do manifest injustice; provided, that the decision of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health shall not conflict with the intent of the policy and cause a risk to public health.

Appendix 





