

# fish retail

## Guideline for the Exemption of Certain Species of Tuna and Farmed Fish from the Parasite Destruction Processes (Freezing) Prior To Service In a Raw or Lightly Cooked Form

Prepared by:  
Food Protection Services  
BC Centre for Disease Control

Contact:  
604.707.2440

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BC Centre for Disease Control  
AN AGENCY OF THE PROVINCIAL HEALTH SERVICES AUTHORITY



## **GUIDELINES FOR EXEMPTION OF CERTAIN SPECIES OF TUNA AND FARMED FISH FROM PARASITE DESTRUCTION PROCESSES (FREEZING) PRIOR TO SERVICE IN A RAW OR LIGHTLY COOKED FORM**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The following guideline provides recommendations on the exemption of certain species of tuna and farmed aquaculture finfish (salmon and other aquaculture species) from parasite destruction processes (freezing) prior to service in a raw or lightly cooked form.

### **REGULATIONS AND CODES:**

The *Food Premises Regulation*<sup>1</sup> states:

- i) Section 11 (b) that all food must be obtained from a source that is approved, and,
- ii) Section 14 (1) states that every operator must ensure that the food is processed in a manner that makes it safe to eat, and,
- iii) Section 23 (2) states that every operator must have written procedures to ensure a health hazard does not occur.

Section 3.3.12 of the *Food Retail and Food Services Code*<sup>2</sup> states that fish intended to be consumed raw or partially cooked shall be frozen as specified.

Section 3-402.11 of the *US Food and Drug Administration Food Code*<sup>3</sup> states that certain species of tuna may be exempt from freezing as they are not susceptible to parasites of concern. This exemption is based on information provided in the US Food and Drug Administration's *Fish and Fisheries Products Hazards and Controls Guidance*<sup>4</sup>.

### **POSITION OF THE CANADIAN FOOD INSPECTION AGENCY (CFIA) and HEALTH CANADA:**

On Tuna: The CFIA has stated that if the USFDA's *Fish and Fisheries Hazards and Controls Guidance*<sup>4</sup> lists certain species of tuna as not being susceptible to parasites of concern, and are therefore exempted from the freezing requirement, and if there is no other evidence to the contrary, then they would accept this source as a justification that the hazard is not reasonably likely to occur. The CFIA also suggests that in such cases a HACCP plan is necessary from the supplier, which includes staff having the necessary training or experience to recognize and ship only the acceptable species of tuna.

On Farmed Fish: Health Canada determined that the parasite hazard for aquaculture finfish was "not likely to occur" due to the practice of feeding farmed finfish pelletized foods. Pelletized foods are heat treated and therefore are not considered to be a source of parasite contamination. As a result of this

determination measures to control parasites, such as freezing, are not required for aquaculture finfish. However, as far as the possibility of aquaculture finfish being fed processing waste or by catch fish, this is not a usual practice among the Aquaculture Industry. If it was found that aquaculture finfish were being fed in this manner, measures aimed at controlling the parasite hazard would be required.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

### **I. Tuna**

The *USFDA Food Code*<sup>3</sup> exempts six species of tuna destined for raw or lightly cooked consumption from freezing, as they are not susceptible to parasites of concern. CFIA recognizes the source documentation as being acceptable to them. Hence tuna destined to be eaten in the raw or lightly cooked form need not be frozen to destroy parasites provided:

- a) The tuna are of the species
  - *Thunnus alalunga* (Albacore tuna),
  - *Thunnus albacares* (Yellowfin tuna),
  - *Thunnus atlanticus* (Blackfin tuna),
  - *Thunnus maccoyii* (Bluefin tuna, Southern),
  - *Thunnus obesus* (Bigeye tuna), or
  - *Thunnus thynnus* (Bluefin tuna, Northern).
- b) The food establishment includes within their Food Safety Plan that the tuna be obtained from an approved source, and institute procedures to ensure the exempted product is clearly identified through all steps from receiving to service.
- c) That the approved source has a Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point plan specifically addressing parasite hazards in fish.
- d) The source provides paperwork on each shipment, confirming that the tuna destined for the raw or lightly cooked market is one of the species listed in (a).
- e) These records are maintained at the food establishment for 1 year beyond the time of service.

### **II. Farmed aquaculture finfish**

- a) The food establishment includes within their Food Safety Plan that all fish be obtained from an approved source,
- b) That the approved source has a Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point plan specifically addressing parasite hazards in fish, and that only heat-treated palletized feed is used, and that by-catch is excluded,
- c) The source provides paperwork on each shipment, confirming that the fish destined for the raw or lightly cooked market is aquaculture finfish,
- d) These records are maintained at the food establishment for 1 year beyond the time of service.

III. All other finfish served in raw or lightly cooked form subject to freezing requirements.

- a) The food establishment includes within their Food Safety Plan that all fish be obtained from an approved source,
- b) That the approved source has a Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point plan specifically addressing parasite hazards in fish, and that finfish are frozen per USFDA Food Code 3-402.11, CFISIG Food Retail Code 3.3.12, specifically,  
For parasites to be killed using a freezing method fish must be stored at either
  - -35°C (-31°F) for 15 hours, or
  - -20°C (-4°F) for 7 days, or
  - frozen at -35°C (-31°F) until solid and stored at -20°C (-4°F) or below.(Note that these conditions may not be suitable for freezing particularly large fish (e.g. thicker than six inches).
- c) The source provides paperwork on each shipment, confirming that the fish destined for the raw or lightly cooked market have been frozen according to the guidelines outlined in b), and
- d) These records are maintained at the food establishment for 1 year beyond the time of service.

## **REFERENCES**

1. Food Premises Regulation, BC Reg. 210/99
2. Food Retail and Food Services Code (February 2001). Canadian Food Inspection System Implementation Group.
3. 2001 Food Code. U.S. Food and Drug Administration.
4. Fish and Fisheries Products Hazards and Controls Guidance. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (June 2001). U.S. Food and Drug Administration.