



Summary of recommendations for restaurant operators serving raw oysters

– see full report for additional information¹

Rec. #	Recommendations
Ordering and Receiving Practices	
1	All oysters for raw consumption and other shellfish must be received fully immersed in ice or by another method to keep products at 4°C or colder.
2	All oysters for raw consumption and other shellfish must be accompanied with an approved ² shellfish tag.
3	All oysters for raw consumption and other shellfish must be received and quickly put under refrigerated control. When oysters are received in packaging that maintains temperatures at or below 4°C, best practices are to refrigerate oysters immediately or within 30 minutes following receipt with a maximum delay of two hours after receipt ³ Oysters exposed to room temperature air for two hours but less than 4 hours must either be discarded or immediately diverted to cooked product. Oysters exposed to room temperature air for 4 hours or more must be discarded.
4	Operators should purchase a temperature monitoring tool, such as an infrared laser thermometer. This can be used to quickly check the surface temperatures of incoming raw oysters and other perishable goods.
5	Operators are recommended to periodically check the temperatures of trucks delivering their perishable foods, and verify incoming shipments of fresh foods (e.g., oysters) are received at 4°C or colder.
6	Premises should use a shellfish log to track incoming shipments, especially when two or more shipments are received per week. Shellfish tag and receiving temperature should be recorded in this log. Corrective action should be taken when acceptance criteria is not met (i.e., if the shipment is rejected and what happens to the product). This should be incorporated into the premises food safety plan.
Handling and Preparation	
7	Oyster tag information and traceability must be maintained during refrigerated storage. The original tag or a reproduction must be retained with the raw oysters. If the original tag is not retained, a label on the oyster container must be traceable back to the shellfish log which is filled out at the time of receiving.
8	Labels on containers (e.g., plastic tubs, bus-boys) should, at minimum, indicate the date of receipt and oyster variety. These labels can be of any format (tape, cardboard, or photocopy of the original tag etc.) as long as the information is readable.
9	Each storage container should contain only one variety of oysters. If required, premises should purchase smaller containers.
10	Refrigerated storage of oysters should prevent oysters from contaminating other foods and oysters should be protected from contamination by other foods or sources, such as by covering with a wet cloth or paper towel. Best practices are to use single use wetted paper towels, alternatively clean wetted cloths may be used if they are washed and sanitized following each use.
11	Ice containers used to hold oysters must allow for excess melted liquid to drain away from the oyster.

¹ McIntyre, L. Oyster restaurant recommendations to EHOs and restaurant operators. Results from a risk-based audit of selected restaurants in British Columbia selling raw oysters in 2016. January 23, 2017. Environmental Health Services, BC Centre for Disease Control.

² Approved tags are compliant with the Canadian Shellfish Sanitation program shellstock labelling requirements in chapter 7.3, <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/food/fish-and-seafood/manuals/canadian-shellfish-sanitation-program/eng/1351609988326/1351610579883?chap=10>

³ Per Canadian food retail and food services code (2016) 3.3.8 a room temperature holding for PHF



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Handling and Preparation																	
12	Pre-shucking of raw oysters for same day service is acceptable when the oysters are stored under refrigerated conditions at or below 4°C. Shucked oysters should be covered with plastic wrap if not served within 2 hours of shucking. Pre-shucking oysters for storage longer than one day is not recommended. Oysters should be shucked in small batches to meet the demand, quality and safety of the operation.																
13	Best practice is to pre-rinse all incoming oysters prior to shucking to remove visible dirt or debris.																
Temperature control, sanitation and food safety plans																	
14	All premises serving oysters for raw consumption must monitor and record temperatures of the refrigerated storage coolers where raw oysters are stored, at a minimum frequency of once daily, with twice daily monitoring or more as optimal.																
15	Oysters being processed (e.g., rinsed, labelled, shucked etc.) should not be removed from refrigerated temperature control for more than one hour.																
16	All premises that have front of house raw oyster displays must use ice to keep in-shell oysters cold. Melted ice-water must be allowed to drain. Ice must be below and overtop the oysters to ensure oysters are kept as close to 4°C as possible.																
17	Premises are recommended to periodically check temperatures of oysters on display using a temperature monitoring tool (e.g., an infrared laser thermometer) to verify the oysters are cold, at least every four hours, with more frequent checks recommended. Verification of the activity by recording the time/date and temperature onto a temperature control log is recommended, and this should be incorporated into the premises food safety plan.																
18	Sanitation and food safety plans should cover basic requirements to control hazards. The plans need to be kept up to date and accessible to all staff.																
Service of raw oysters																	
19	Oysters should be served over shaved or small cubed ice to keep them cold during service.																
20	Large orders of oysters should be served in smaller batches to customers who pre-order large volumes (e.g., during buck-a-shuck hours).																
21	Operators are encouraged to describe the varieties they serve, both on their menu and to their customers, even if the varieties change seasonally. Servers are similarly encouraged to name the varieties of oysters served to the customer.																
Shellfish tag management																	
22	Premises must keep all shellfish tags for a minimum of 90 days. Premises must not discard duplicate tags.																
23	Premises should organize all shellfish tags (oyster and other bivalve shellfish) by date and by volume. <table border="1" data-bbox="354 1570 1287 1738"> <thead> <tr> <th>Volume Category</th> <th>Oysters received per week</th> <th>Expected # of Tags*</th> <th>Time Interval for Tag Storage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Low</td> <td>Up to 70 dozen</td> <td>14</td> <td>By Month</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Moderate</td> <td>Up to 350 dozen</td> <td>70</td> <td>By Week</td> </tr> <tr> <td>High</td> <td>More than 350 dozen</td> <td>Up to 200</td> <td>By Day</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Sequential ordering of tags BY DATE RECEIVED/SERVED is strongly recommended.</p>	Volume Category	Oysters received per week	Expected # of Tags*	Time Interval for Tag Storage	Low	Up to 70 dozen	14	By Month	Moderate	Up to 350 dozen	70	By Week	High	More than 350 dozen	Up to 200	By Day
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Low	Up to 70 dozen	14	By Month														
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24	Shellfish tags should be kept dry or protected from moisture and deterioration.																
25	Stored shellfish tags should specify the date range of the tags by date used/served.																



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26	Premises not currently grouping shellfish tags based on the above time interval can upgrade their existing procedures with minimal effort by using an elastic band to bundle tags daily (if normal practice is to bundle weekly) then placing tags in the weekly container at the beginning of each morning shift or bundle weekly (if normal practice is to bundle monthly) then placing tags in the monthly container every Monday.
29	Operator knowledge of the hazards associated with food products they serve should be improved.
Collecting information during illness complaints and investigations	
30	During complaint and illness investigations, operators should ask complainants if they received a till receipt that described the variety of oyster eaten.
32	Premises with the capability of tracing information back to the customer order should be asked to provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Date and time meal was eaten o Oyster varieties and quantities that were consumed
33	Premises that do not currently collect complaint information should implement a system to record customer complaints and illness incidents. All premises should report illnesses to their Health Authority.
35	Illness information collected by premises helpful to an illness investigation should be requested. Examples of information that can be requested include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o How many other meals of the same type were consumed o Email contact for the consumer o How many guests were in the group that included the complainant

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