

**Code of Practice  
on the  
Risk Categorisation,  
Inspection and Sampling  
Frequencies of Meat  
Manufacturing Premises  
Producing Solely for  
the Domestic Market**

**Code of Practice  
No. 3  
2000**



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Sampling Frequencies of  
Meat Manufacturing Premises  
Producing Solely for the Domestic Market**

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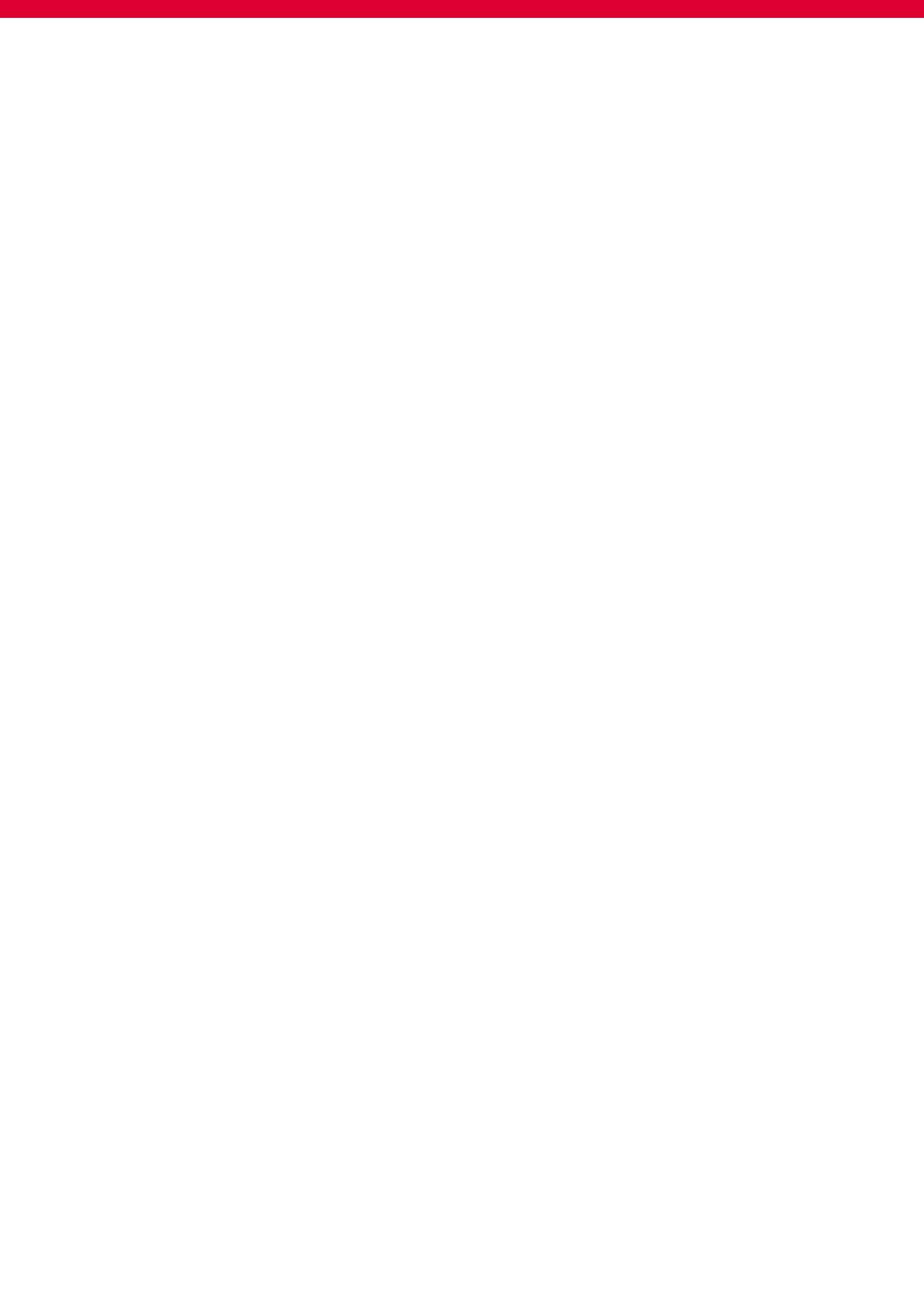
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# Contents

INTRODUCTION	i
PURPOSE	1
SCOPE	1
RISK CATEGORISATION	1
INSPECTION FREQUENCY	2
SAMPLING PROTOCOL	2
WATER SAMPLING (ALL PREMISES)	3
RAPID HYGIENE TESTS	3
HAZARD ANALYSIS CRITICAL CONTROL POINT AUDIT (ALL PREMISES)	3



## Introduction

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998, facilitated the establishment of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) to perform the functions assigned to it by this Act. The principal function of the Authority shall be to take all reasonable steps to ensure that:

- (a) food produced in the State (whether or not distributed or marketed in the State), and
- (b) food distributed or marketed in the State,

meets the highest standards of food safety and hygiene reasonably available. It shall, in particular, take all reasonable steps to ensure that such food complies:

- 1) with any relevant food legislation in respect of food safety and hygiene standards, or
- 2) in the absence of any such legislation, with the provisions of generally recognised standards or codes of good practice aimed at ensuring the achievement of high standards of food hygiene and food safety.

The FSAI believes that codes of practice (COP) have a major role to play in helping both the regulators and the food industry achieve a higher degree of compliance with Regulations and with good practice generally. A good, well prepared, COP must, if it is to achieve these objectives, provide regulators and industry alike with clear guidance on the application of the relevant law. While a COP is not, of course, a substitute for the Regulations, the FSAI believes that adherence to it should make compliance easier by providing the basis for a high degree of consistency in application of those Regulations. In other words, the FSAI believes that a good COP will enhance respect for and compliance with the law and that all parties, especially consumers, will benefit.

We hope this series of COPs will meet the aims we have set out here and that they will contribute to the development of the high standards we aim to achieve in the food inspection services.

## Purpose

The purpose of this Code of Practice is to outline risk categorisation, inspection and sampling frequencies for meat manufacturing premises producing solely for the domestic market.

This COP has been developed by agreement between the FSAI and the local authority veterinary inspectors.

## Scope

This COP applies to all those food businesses supplying the domestic market and covered under the following Regulations:

- European Communities (Fresh Meat) Regulations, 1997 (S.I. No. 434 of 1997)
- European Communities (Meat Products and Other Products of Animal Origin) Regulations, 1995 (S.I. No. 126 of 1995)
- European Communities (Meat Products and Other Products of Animal Origin) Amendment Regulations, 1997 (S.I. No. 175 of 1997)
- European Communities (Minced Meat and Meat Preparations) Regulations, 1996 (S.I. No. 243 of 1996).

## Risk Categorisation

The main types of manufacturing premises are listed below. Risk categorisation for premises, at which more than one type of manufacturing operation is taking place, will be determined by the highest risk categorisation applicable to the various operations occurring.

Manufacturing premises will be categorised as follows:

Low-risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meat Distribution Centres</li></ul>
Medium-risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Raw Meat Cutting Premises</li><li>• Raw Poultry Processing Premises</li><li>• Raw Wild Game / Farmed Game Premises</li></ul>
High-risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sausage Manufacture, Pudding Manufacture, Brine Immersion / Pumping Premises</li><li>• Minced Meat / Meat Preparation Premises</li><li>• Meat Cooking Premises</li></ul>

## Inspection Frequency

- High-risk premises will be inspected at a minimum of once a month.
- Medium-risk premises will be inspected at a minimum of once every two months.
- Low-risk premises will be inspected at a minimum of once every three months.

Inspections should generally be unannounced. Where appropriate, individual premises may be inspected more frequently than listed above.

## Sampling Protocol

Sampling should be related to throughput and type of product produced in a premises. Samples should be taken as determined by the inspecting officer having regard also to the 'own checks' programme.

Results of 'own-checks' should be assessed at each routine inspection with a minimum frequency of twice a year in medium-risk premises and four times a year in high-risk premises.

Samples must be tested only at approved laboratories.

The following table lists some of the parameters an inspecting officer may include in his/her sampling plan. It should be noted that these are suggestions and that the choice of parameters is at the discretion of the inspecting officer.

Type of Premises	Test Parameters
Meat Distribution Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Microbiological sampling plan as determined by the inspecting officer</li> </ul>
Meat Cutting Premises and Wild Game / Farmed Game Premises	<p><b>Meat samples</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aerobic plate count</li> <li>• <i>E. coli</i></li> <li>• VTEC</li> <li>• <i>Staphylococcus aureus</i></li> <li>• <i>Salmonella</i></li> <li>• Other as determined by the inspecting officer</li> </ul>
Poultry Processing Premises	<p><b>Meat samples</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aerobic plate count</li> <li>• <i>Salmonella</i></li> <li>• <i>Campylobacter</i></li> <li>• Other as determined by the inspecting officer</li> </ul>

Type of Premises	Test Parameters
Premises engaged in the following processes: Sausage Manufacturing, Pudding Manufacturing, Brine Immersion / Pumping	<p><b>Meat samples</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aerobic plate count</li> <li>• <i>Salmonella</i></li> <li>• <i>E. coli</i></li> <li>• <i>Staph. aureus</i></li> <li>• <i>Yersinia enterocolitica</i></li> <li>• Other as determined by the inspecting officer</li> </ul> <p><b>Brine samples</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aerobic plate count</li> <li>• <i>E. coli</i></li> <li>• Other as determined by the inspecting officer</li> </ul>
Minced Meat / Meat Preparations	<p><b>Meat samples</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aerobic plate count</li> <li>• <i>E. coli</i></li> <li>• VTEC</li> <li>• <i>Salmonella</i></li> <li>• <i>Staph. aureus</i></li> <li>• Other as determined by the inspecting officer</li> </ul>
Meat Cooking Premises	<p><b>Meat samples</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aerobic plate count</li> <li>• <i>E. coli</i></li> <li>• VTEC</li> <li>• <i>Salmonella</i></li> <li>• <i>Staph. aureus</i></li> <li>• <i>Campylobacter</i></li> <li>• Other as determined by the inspecting officer</li> </ul>

## Water Sampling (all premises )

- Water from a public supply should be sampled once a year.
- Private well / group scheme supply should be sampled once a year.
- 'Own checks' to include more frequent sampling as directed by the inspecting officer.

## Rapid Hygiene Tests

Rapid hygiene tests may be used to augment laboratory analysis and to assist in training of plant personnel.

## Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) Audit (all premises)

An audit of the HACCP Plan of each premises should be carried out once a year.







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